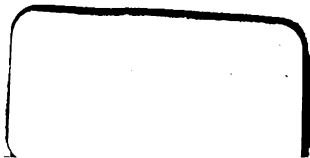
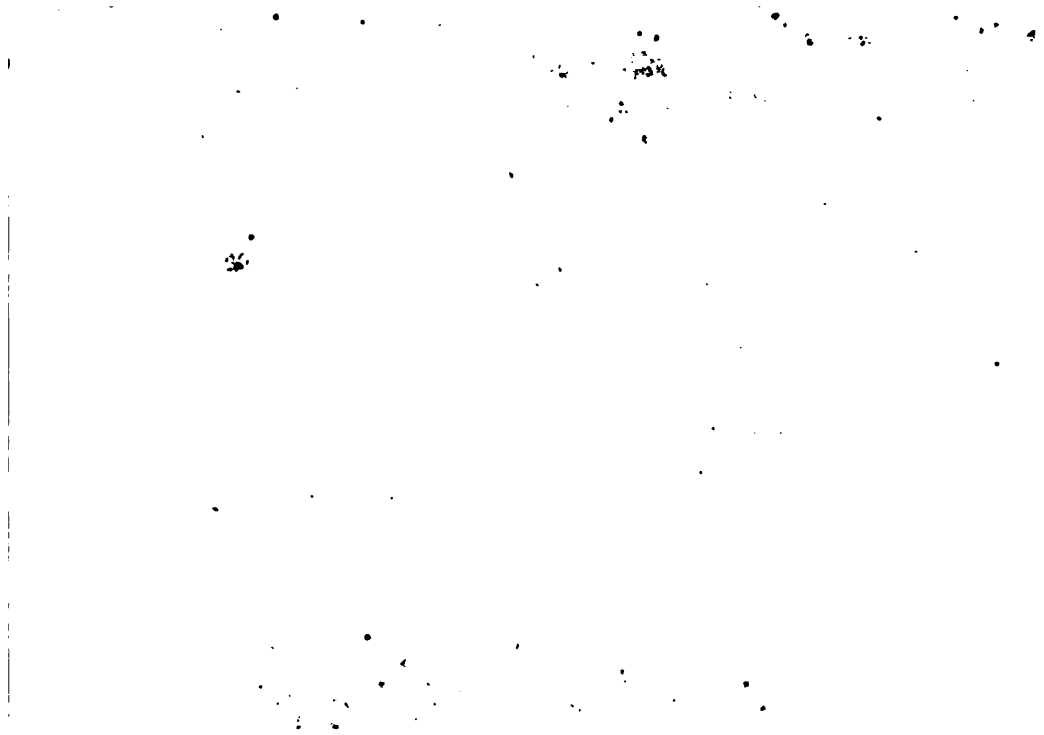


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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXXII.

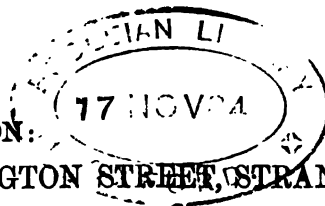
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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 759. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER CUDLIP).

CHAPTER IV. MR. BOLDERO AT HOME.

THE "Society Journals" have made us acquainted with the sacred domestic interiors of many eminent men. But they have never depicted a scene of greater comfort and refinement, of purer cultured taste and delicate adjustment of all things to the occupant's individual tastes, than was set forth in Mr. Boldero's house on the borders of Exeter.

He had come, a young man, into the district eight or ten years before the opening of this story, and, without social introductions or business credentials, he had worked his way to the very front ranks of the best local society, and into intimate business relations with the most influential men.

And this he had done without any of that pushing, or cringing, or complacency with which speedily-made men are so frequently unjustly accredited. He had always deported himself well and manfully, never seeking, never seeming to expect anything of any man. He had bided his time, and nature and his fellow-creatures had been finally compelled to be good to him.

From the date of his first introduction to Mr. Ray, of Moor Royal, he had taken a genuine interest in the family and its affairs. It should be added that this introduction had taken place about five years ago, when Jenifer was just seventeen.

The girl in her richly formed beauty had been very pleasant to his eyes then, just as a high-bred, handsome, spirited young filly would have been. He liked watching her as she galloped about a paddock with her brother's pointers, and setters, and greyhounds. He

liked the courage and skill with which Miss Ray would treat a young horse fresh from the hands of the breaker. He liked to witness the exhibition of her pride in, and love for, her mother and her brother Hubert. He liked to dance with her, because she danced every note of every bar, as if her feet made the music instead of the music moving her feet. In short, he liked her altogether, but he never had a warmer feeling than liking for her, until he saw how she held herself up without flinching under the hearing of the words he read from her father's will, which declared her penniless until her mother's death.

But as he saw her turn to her mother consolingly, without pang or thought for herself, as he read the thought which made her knit her brow and draw her breath when Jack's slender portion was proclaimed, he felt that he loved her, and anathematised his poor chance of ever gaining her.

"She must have had no end of fellows after her, and the lot of a rising country lawyer's wife isn't likely to appeal very powerfully to her imagination," he told himself sensibly enough. But at the same time he resolved to make it appeal to her in some way, if it lay within the limits of his power to do so.

He commenced by steadily ignoring her. From the first he made it to be clearly understood that he considered Miss Ray quite apart from all business relations with her family. Whatever might come, he would never have it said of him that he traded on his professional power. If Jenifer had been the daughter of the lowest labourer on the Moor Royal estate, Mr. Boldero could not have treated her more absolutely as an outsider, and an utterly uninterested person, than he did now.

Yet for all his complete disregard of her as a Ray, there was something about his manner to her as a woman that Jenifer liked. For one thing he took it for granted that she was going to be precisely the same Jenifer Ray she had been always, though fate and her father had cast her from opulence into poverty. He never seemed to be anxious to proffer her either pity or advice, but just assumed that she was as able as ever to look to herself, and adjust that self to all the rough-hewn places into which it might be forced.

But he thought about her much, and frequently painted vivid mind-pictures for himself of the way in which she would probably deport herself under widely differing circumstances.

Mrs. Jervoise, in enquiring about him, had asked if he was "old and a fogey," and Mrs. Ray, the younger, had replied that he "was neither that, nor young and beguiling, but worse."

And it is a fact that he was a difficult man to describe. There was about him neither heroic beauty nor professional suavity, nor social veneering of any kind. He had passed into middle age; he did not tower to any remarkable height, he was rather stout, and more than rather bald. The best things that he ever uttered were said to one or two chosen associates at his own dinner-table. Yet other men found that women's attention flagged towards them when Boldero came on the scene, and women found that other men disregarded their fascinations in favour of a talk with Boldero.

Perhaps, after all, the real secret of the sway he exercised was to be found in the conviction, that forced itself upon everyone with whom he came in contact, of his profound, unswerving honourableness and integrity. Essentially it was felt above all that he was to be trusted. And trusted he was by many a man and woman, who would not have revealed that which they confided to him to any other human being.

It was this instinct about him which had led Mr. Ray to make Boldero one of the witnesses to the contents of the sealed letter, and its keeper during the three years which were to elapse before it was to be read to Hubert Ray.

There was one other signature as witness to this document—that of an Admiral Oliver Tullamore, a friend of Mr. Ray's of thirty years' standing. But as he resided on his own demesne of Kildene, in Kerry, the curious around Moor Royal gained no

insight into the real state of the case from Admiral Tullamore's knowledge of it.

Mr. Boldero's house on the borders of Exeter was built on one of those Nature-favoured spots that abound in Devonshire. It stood in a sheltered hollow at the base of a well-wooded gentle slope. Its lawn was bounded by a rapidly running, gracefully winding river, in which were numberless little cascades, caused by the check and resistance which the many moss-grown boulders offered to the stream. A rustic bridge enabled one to pass from the lawn over to the orchard, which was a bloomless, leafless, barren-looking place enough in these December days, but which in April and May would gladden the heart of a pre-Raphaelite painter by its lavish display of every shade of blossom, from the pear-tree's snowy whiteness, through all the pink apple-blossom tones, to the rich rose-colour of the peach.

It was difficult to tell whether the irregular picturesquely-built house was of brick, or granite, or of common stucco, so completely was it covered with ivy, myrtle, magnolias, and other evergreen climbing-plants. In summer, roses transformed the house into a huge bouquet—roses that had struggled free of the evergreens and straggled up to the roof, where they made themselves quite at home among the chimneys.

The entrance-door led straight into a warmly-carpeted hall, where huge logs of wood burnt all through the winter days upon dogs on the open hearth. On the right hand an open door gave callers a tempting glimpse of the perfect arrangements which had, at some time or other, conduced to the good appetite of most of them. And a little further on, at the end of the hall on the opposite side, you passed by folding-doors into Mr. Boldero's study.

Every inch of the walls on three sides was covered with books. The fourth side was given up to pictures, of which there were five only. Two were portraits by a modern master, one of a young sister of Mr. Boldero's, the other of a little boy, her son and his god-child. Five or six fine bronzes stood on marble pedestals in different parts of the room, notably a bull by Rosa Bonheur, which, being first favourite, had a place immediately opposite to the chair in which Mr. Boldero habitually sat when reading or thinking.

He was occupying this chair about ten o'clock on the morning of the day following that on which old Mrs. Ray had joined her

children at the dinner-table for the first time since their father's death. But he was neither reading nor buried in thought, but was merely prosaically instructing his housekeeper as to the sort of dinner which he would wish to have provided that night for himself and a party of three guests. When he had concluded all the remarks he had to make on the subject, he turned to pick up the novel he had been reading before her entrance, but Mrs. Williams, who had been cook at Moor Royal for many years before she got the promotion of coming as housekeeper to Mr. Boldero, still lingered.

"What is it?" he asked, looking up. His morning read was very precious to him, but he was not a man to betray impatience to a powerless inferior. To anyone strong enough to resent it, and hurt him, he might possibly have done so.

"Excuse the liberty, sir, you be sure to know more about it than anyone, but they do say that old Mr. Cowley have given up the home-farm."

"At Moor Royal?"

"Yes, sir, at Moor Royal; a farm the Cowleys have held as long as the Rays have held Moor Royal. Mr. Hubert will get himself ill-wished if he goes on like this. Then you didn't know it, sir?" she added cheerfully, for it was delightful to her to give novel intelligence to anyone.

"No, I had not heard of it." He did not add, "And I am sorry to hear of it now," but he thought this, and though his eyes sought the page again at the passage at which he had been interrupted, he read fiction no more that day.

It was half-past ten, and at twelve he had an appointment with a client at his office in Exeter. Before starting he had to see to the well-being of his four fine horses, of his conservatories, and hot-beds, and, indeed, of his little dominion. He never scolded his servants, he rarely rebuked them. That quiet daily presence of his, in quarters that perhaps they had found other masters wont to neglect, was quite sufficient incentive to the doing of their duty on the part of every one in his employment.

He had got on his coat, and had picked up his hat and gloves, when a ring at the hall-door bell, followed by the sound of a ringing voice that he knew and liked well, but that he had never heard in his house before, made a bright light come into the clear, steady, brave-looking grey

eyes, and a warmer tone of colour mount to his brow.

In another moment Jenifer Ray was ushered into the room.

She came in bringing a rush of keen sweet air with her, her youth, and health, and beauty triumphant over the anxiety that was in her heart. She looked graceful, strong, and determined in her well-fitting black habit, and plain round felt hat; but he saw that she was nervous and trembling a little, in spite of her erect bearing and brave front.

"I have come to speak about something important—so important to us, and you are just going out and have no time for me."

Even to detain her in his house for a precious minute or two, he would not tell a polite lie, and say "time was no object to him." He told her:

"I was just starting for my daily round of my premises; will you come with me, Miss Ray, or shall I give the time to you in here? I will give it delightedly. I needn't be in Exeter till twelve."

"I will go with you," she said, turning to the door again, and together they went out into the garden.

She opened her mission at once.

"I know how much my father thought of your judgment, Mr. Boldero; I know he would have consulted you in such a strait as we are in now; and so, even against my mother's wish, and unknown to my brothers, I have come over to ask for your opinion and aid."

"In what matter?"

"In a matter that may bring ruin upon Jack if he is not advised against it, and made to give it up. My brother Hubert has put old Mr. Cowley out of the home-farm, and has offered to let it to Jack; and Jack has accepted the offer, and—I can't word my fears to you about him, but they are many."

She looked at him so appealingly, and withal seemed so confident of his assistance, that it pained him horribly to be compelled to say:

"Miss Ray, I am unable—I am bound not to interfere by word or act."

"Bound not to advise and aid my father's children!" she said incredulously. "I thought that possibly you might not like to seem adverse to the wishes of my brother Hubert; but I did think that you would have opposed even Hubert where Jack's welfare is concerned."

"Miss Ray, whatever my own wishes

may be with respect to the course of conduct either of your brothers may pursue, I am bound not to express them."

They had crossed the little bridge into the leafless orchard, and were standing under the interlacing bare boughs looking out over the low boundary hedge of holly on to the road that led into Exeter, as he said this. He, looking down very kindly and gravely into her upturned face; she trying to tear the whole of the reason why he spoke and acted thus out of him with her beseeching eyes.

"Mr. Boldero, I will tell you more than I came intending to tell—hoping that I may melt you even now. It is not Hubert's act this pushing poor Jack into the home-farm. It's the doing of his wife and her sister, Mrs. Jervoise. For some reason or other they want to keep Jack down here, where he'll lead a life of comparative idleness. Mr. Boldero, what can that reason be?"

"I don't know," he answered curtly, for her eyes were beginning to torment him.

"But you guess, perhaps, and won't tell me. Nor will you say why you think I am so anxious to get Jack away into a new groove, where he will have plenty of work, and where he will be free from some old associates who are not good for him."

"Your last words have told me your reason; but I will make no comment on it. Miss Ray, I dare not—I cannot make any comment to you or to anyone else about your brothers or their conduct. I am bound not to do it."

"Will you hold yourself 'bound' still, even when I tell you that Jack has taken to spending his evenings away from home, and that he is oftener at Thurtle's house than at Moor Royal?"

"Thurtle was your father's gamekeeper, I believe?"

"He was, and is Hubert's."

"May it not be that Jack has to consult him frequently about sport? I hope that it may be so, for your sake."

He said these last three words with a tender thrilling intonation for which he blamed himself instantly. But it was too late. They had touched Jenifer's heart. Bending forward her head in one last attempt to win him to her ends, she caught him by both hands and cried:

"Then, for my sake, get Jack to give up the home-farm, and go to London. Thurtle has a very pretty daughter. Oh,

Mr. Boldero, help me to save my brother Jack!"

A pony-carriage had come along the road unobserved by either of them as she was speaking. And now as she paused, still keeping his hands in hers, two clear, ringing, merry voices cried out:

"Why didn't you wait for us; it's rather a shame not to have given us the chance of invading Mr. Boldero's famous fortress;" and they looked up, to see Mrs. Ray and Mrs. Jervoise enveloped in sealskin, radiant with merriment, and evidently delighted at the discomfiture of the pair in the orchard.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LANCASHIRE. PART III.

WE are standing on some commanding brow in the heart of the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, on a fine Sunday evening when the engine-fires have been out for a space of twenty-four hours or so. They are lighting them now though, in readiness for the coming week of toil, and from each tall unlovely chimney a column of smoke is slowly rising, lurid in the light of the setting sun, but still with pale blue sky above, melting into the sea-green, streaked with soft rosy bands, of the horizon, against which rises the gaunt framework of some colliery, with its continual clanking, creaking, and subterranean groaning; with clusters of workmen's cottages bare and desolate-looking, and fields between; with trees stunted and blackened, and cinder-paths running between. Who that has seen such a scene can fail to remember it in its melancholy, almost repellent sternness, and yet with touches of natural grace here and there—inky streams that the sun turns to molten gold, or the steam of a passing train that rises in violet-coloured wreaths against the sky.

It is Bolton, perhaps, on whose moors more wealth has been gathered than in all the fertile meadows in the rural shires; or Blackburn, that is almost the cradle of the cotton manufacture; or Ashton. These are places which no one would visit in mere gaiety of heart without some definite purpose in view, and yet full of a vivid living interest, the ebb and flow of lives and fortunes, now the strenuous fight against adversity, and now the triumphant march to wealth. But you would never be able to realise that this was once the

quietest, most retired spot in all England—Christ's Croft it was called.

When all England is alofte,
Safe are they that are in Christi's crofte ;
And where should Christi's crofte be,
But between the Ribble and Mersey.

An industrious race, too, were these Christ's crofters, as you may well suppose, always agate at something, to use the vernacular expression, weaving and spinning, whether it was wool or flax, or the then less familiar fleece, which out of deference to the original staple we have called cotton-wool. Cotton, indeed, as a material for wicks, and probably also for night-caps, had been known from at least the thirteenth century, and by the sixteenth century had come into considerable use—for coarse strong fabrics that is, and for mixing with wool and flax. English cotton cloth was at that date exported to Rouen, and Leland, visiting Lancashire in that same age, notes that Bolton Market "standeth chiefly by cotton." The finer cotton fabrics were articles of luxury, imported through Venice and the Mediterranean ports, and it was not till 1681 that the Indian source of supply was directly opened, when Calicut, then the great port of the Malabar coast, gave its name to the now familiar calico. A more delicate fabric was obtained from the merchants of Mosul, a fabric worn perhaps by the fair Zobeide, or that bound the sacred brows of the Commander of the Faithful, and this muslin, hence called, became fashionable wear among English dames. To make these greatly admired and highly-profitable fabrics became an object of longing desire to the weaver of the north, and the means of fulfilment were as anxiously sought as the philosopher's stone. But the so finely-spun cotton of Eastern spinners could not be equalled by the fingers of Lancashire lasses, not, perhaps, from want of dexterity in the fingers, but because a warm moist temperature is most favourable for the production of these gossamer threads. Already, however, wideawake people were speculating whether something more might not be done: such as John Carey, who, writing in 1695, suggests that if encouragement were given to fine spinning, "no doubt we might in time make calicoes enough, not only for our own expense, but also for exportation."

All this time the supply of cotton had been small and uncertain, from Cyprus and Smyrna, and the Levant generally, but

towards the end of the eighteenth century cotton began to arrive in considerable quantity from our American plantations, and the manufacture in Lancashire began to assume larger proportions, so that we find early in the eighteenth century the Lancashire county gentry eager to bind their younger sons to the trade.

Up to this time the weaver of Christ's Croft had only the primitive loom—such a one as Penelope might have used for her web—in which the shuttle was thrown by the weaver from hand to hand, as in the Indian loom still in use. But in 1738 a Lancashire man, one John Kay, invented the fly-shuttle, driven to and fro by a spring, and a quarter of a century later, his son Robert introduced the drop-box, an invention by which several shuttles, containing different kinds of weft, may be made to function at the weaver's will. With these improvements the weavers began to distance the spinners. The demand for the new fabrics was everywhere increasing, and the weavers were running about from house to house almost begging for yarn, which could not be produced fast enough for their needs.

Invention soon followed necessity, and the first inventor was found in one Hargreaves, a carpenter, of Blackburn, who invented the jenny—a modification of the old spinning-wheel, itself a great mechanical advance upon the distaff and spindle of the Dark Ages. And soon after a barber of the same district—Arkwright, afterwards knight and millionaire—adapted an earlier invention of spinning and drawing out the fibre by means of rollers revolving at different rates of speed—a machine called the water-frame, because it was originally driven by water-power, or, more poetically, the throstle, from the warbling noise, like a thrush's note, of the machinery. But with machinery came discord in Christ's Croft. The weavers and spinners had an instinctive notion that these inventions boded no good for them. Hargreaves and Arkwright were both obliged to fly, and establish their machinery elsewhere.

In spite of the workmen, however, the new machinery came everywhere into use. Factories sprang up here and there, although the old-fashioned home manufacture still flourished. The weavers especially found a golden age, an Indian summer of fleeting prosperity. In 1793, we are told, they wore top-boots and ruffled shirts, and sometimes brought home

their work in glass coaches. They would carry bank-notes sticking in their hats, and their high spirits and prosperity found vent in rough humour, and rude practical jokes.

A glance at the people of this past world and of the life in Christ's Croft may be had in the life of Samuel Crompton, the greatest inventor of them all. Close by Bolton there stood, and still stands, unless it has been recently removed, an old manor-house called Hall-in-the-Wood—a great, roomy, timber-framed mansion, with gables, and porches, and projecting storeys, and a bell-turret at the top, with an old clock that gave the hours to the surrounding neighbourhood. In this old hall, deserted by the family that built it, and even by the family ghosts, had settled a colony of three or four industrious families, the children playing hide-and-seek among the nests of little rooms, and chasing each other up and down the grand oak staircase and along the dark passages that led to nothing. Among these families were the Cromptons, the father dead, but Betty Crompton, the mother, energetic and austere, farming, carding, spinning, weaving; and her son Sam being made to take his full share in all the work that was going. We have a glimpse, too, of an uncle, Alexander, lame and unable to leave his room, but working always steadily at his loom, selling his fustians, and saving money. On Sundays, when the church-bells begin to ring, Uncle Alec dresses himself in his best and dons his Sunday coat, reads the Church Service solemnly to himself, and then the best coat is taken off and put by for another week. And young Sam grows up at his loom, thoughtful and spiritual, with a love of music deep in his soul. His mother, a strict taskmistress, exacts the daily tale of work, and he often has to grieve over the bad yarn that keeps him from his books and from the violin, that is his great friend. Sam's impatience of his work sets him thinking and contriving, with his quiet calm insight into things; and so with wood and wire, and an occasional bit of iron shaped by the blacksmith, he begins to work out the machine of the future. He wants tools and many other things as the work goes on; and here his fiddle comes to his aid. He gets a place in the orchestra of Bolton Theatre, and fiddles industriously at eighteenpence a night. And by the time he is one-and-twenty the machine is perfected—it works, it spins, that is; not coarse stuff, like the jenny, nor fibrous un-

certain twist, as the noisy throstle; but he has combined the two and added his own beautiful invention, the crux of the mystery, the spindle-carriage, that keeps the strain off the yarn till it is properly twisted.

And now, in this bare tumbledown old mansion, Sam Crompton held a genie captive that he might have compelled to furnish him with all the riches of earth. Wealth beyond the dreams of avarice was in his grasp; all the stories and fables of gardens hung with gems and leaves of gold—all these might have seemed poor and trivial to the wonderful fortune that awaited him. He was half-conscious of this, and the people about him began to realise what he had done. The house was besieged with watchers; people climbed up to the upper windows to catch a glimpse of his contrivances. He had only to hold his hand for a while, to keep his own counsel, and the world was at his feet. Burly Arkwright—the portraits of them both are in the South Kensington Portrait Gallery, and you may read their histories in their faces: the thoughtful, patient, noble face of the creator and designer, the bold, brazen front of the grasper and adapter—Arkwright would have shared his millions and made still more millions to share with the great inventor. The Peels were there too, ready to take him by the hand—that hand with untold riches in its grasp—and with the smallest share of Crompton's wonderful invention they might have purchased a dukedom more wealthy than that of Lancashire. And then, with an abnegation sublime beyond anything recorded, if the man really knew the value of what he gave away, Samuel Crompton broke his Aladdin's lamp, released the genie to work for the whole world, to which he offered his invention, trusting to the gratitude of those who made use of it, a gratitude that was worth nearly a hundred pounds to him, all told—a sublime example and incentive to inventors!

Something should here be said of the Peels, who were of Blackburn. Old Robert Peel, a farmer in the Fish Lane, "a tall robust man, whose ordinary garb included a calf-skin waistcoat and wooden-soled clogs, hair grizzly, of a reddish colour." This at forty or so, when still obscure. In later and more prosperous days at Burton-on-Trent, where he had set up print works, he wore a bushy Johnsonian wig, and carried a gold-headed cane. The Peels had not so

much to do with spinning cotton and weaving, as with printing calicoes—done in a rough way at first with wooden blocks; Nancy Peel, the daughter, making almost the first success with a sprig of parsley culled from the garden, the pattern rudely scratched on the back of an earthenware plate. A neighbour of old Robert was Yates of The Black Bull, and the two put their heads and purses together and started calico-printing. And at The Black Bull was a daughter named Ellen, a pretty little thing in those days, whom young Robert Peel, a grave and persevering youth, would take on his knee and call his little wife. Years after, when Peels and Yateses were rich, and little Ellen a fine, dashing, accomplished girl, Robert Peel came back to his first love as a wooer, and they were married, and a son of these two was the Sir Robert Peel whom people know about.

There is an old Lancashire proverb, or prophecy perhaps it may be called, "It's only three generations from clogs to clogs." And some have seen a kind of general application in the saying, foretelling not only the fate of particular families, but the destiny of the very industry itself. And as yet scarcely three generations have passed away since the homely weaver in his apron and clogs was driven out of the field, clogs superseded by cranks, as the power-loom came into use—looms driven first of all by water-power, sometimes, indeed, by horses, or even donkeys, and at first taken up not by practical men, but by such unlikely people as Cave of the Gentleman's Magazine, and Dr. James, the inventor of the fever-powders. A local bard alludes to these attempts:

Concerning looms from Doncaster,
And weyvin' done by wayter.

Indeed, practical men were a little shy of beginning operations which were naturally viewed with intense disfavour by a large section of the population. One of the chief inventors of the power-loom, as practically adopted, was a clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Cartwright, who devoted a considerable fortune to the cause. In 1790 one Grimshaw built a mill at Gorton near Manchester, with five hundred of Cartwright's power-looms in it. In a few weeks the building was burnt down, perhaps accidentally; but, anyhow, it was sixteen years before another attempt was made to introduce power-looms. But the machine rolled on at last, and the hand-loomers were crushed beneath it.

Some of the regrets attending this industrial revolution have come down to us, not musical, perhaps, but most melancholy. You have got to work in a factory now, says one bard in effect, and almost tauntingly, you can't walk in your garden for two or three hours a day. And another sings:

If you go into a loom shop, where there's three or four pairs of looms,
They all are standing empty, incumbrances of the rooms,
And if you ask the reason why, the old mother will tell you plain,
My daughters have forsaken them, and gone to weave by steam.

Which was all very well for the daughters, but for the elder people, and those who could not adopt new ways, the breaking up of homes, the wreck of family ties, the gradual sinking of wages to a starvation point, all this must have been very bitter in the bearing.

Some traces of the primitive world thus passed away are still to be found in Manchester, surviving here and there in the midst of the enormous growth of houses and buildings which have sprung up within the memory of living men. Narrow streets leading to a central market; the old church, now the cathedral, with the graveyard overlooking the river, once a bright stream sparkling beneath the red sandstone rock; the old inns where weavers, and spinners, and merchants met to quaff good old ale—even the modest brick warehouses where the first pioneers of the Manchester trade stored their miscellaneous wares—specimens of these may still be met with here and there, enabling us to realise the quiet market-town of other days; even as Leland describes it, "The fairest, best builded, quickliest, and most populous townne of all Lancastreshire."

The history of Manchester is curious, in that, although a rich and populous place, it seems to have had, till within recent days, no stirring towards municipal life, but remained content with the simple Saxon government of borough reeve and constables, under its Norman over-lord, who levied his tolls and taxes—after all, perhaps, with as much gentleness and consideration as the collectors of the present day. Thus the history of the manor is that of the town; held successively by the Greslets, the De la Warres, the Wests, in order of natural succession, and finally sold in 1596, for three thousand five hundred pounds, to Nicholas Moseley, citizen and alderman of London.

The descendant of the worthy alderman, Sir Oswald Moseley, sold the manor to the mayor and corporation—created as lately as 1838, under the new Act—for two hundred thousand pounds, a vast increment surely, whether earned or unearned is nothing to our purpose. In 1729, another Oswald Moseley had built the merchants an exchange, and the finest new street in the town was named after the ruling family, Moseley Street.

But to hark back a little to earlier times, the days of the De la Warres and the fifteenth century, when the old churches of St. Mary and St. Michael had fallen to decay, and the then lord, Thomas, founded the collegiate church. Manchester was then in the diocese of distant Lichfield, and the dean or warden of Manchester was a personage of great importance in the church of the west. And thus the church grew with ample contributions from the great families of Lancashire; the arms of Stanley, Radcliffe, and Byron, still remaining in the painted windows richly dight, testify to the benefactions of these families. There is a Stanley Chapel too, founded by James Stanley, the first earl's sixth son, and brother to George, the hostage of Bosworth Field, he who so narrowly escaped the tusk of the boar—James, who was Bishop of Ely and Warden of Manchester, and here lies under his funeral hearse. It was a grand old parish church that of Manchester—"th'oud church" as it was fondly called by all the people round—perhaps the grandest parish church in England, and some may think it hardly promotion to have become one of the small fry of cathedrals. A later warden it will be remembered was Dr. Dee, the celebrated astrologer and magician, none the worse at that in popular estimation for his holy calling, for the priesthood have ever been esteemed as magicians in posse at all events, and even now in rural parts abroad the curé's charm is thought the most potent of all.

Another Churchman and Lancashire man, though of Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, founded the free grammar-school in 1524. But the chief benefactor and worthiest to be remembered of the old days is Humphrey Chetham, of Clayton Hall and Turton Tower, worthiest of merchants and most enlightened of the age, who endowed the Blue Coat School, still large and flourishing, the blue-coats wisely suppressed; and founded the Chetham Library, free and open to all students, the earliest free library in England. Humphrey Chetham died in

1653, and, as a bridge over succeeding centuries, may be noticed the building of St. Ann's Church, in a cornfield, now the heart of Manchester. A nice, ugly old Queen Ann church—an altogether Ann-like church, built by a Lady Ann in the reign of Ann—with a comfortable old-fashioned square about it; red-brick houses of the cosy Georgian aspect, ancient dwellings of rich merchants; a place for the young bucks of the early century to sun themselves, and ogle the young women, now a good deal invaded by stirring commerce, the Exchange at one end—a new Exchange owing nothing to lords of the manor—and then the bustling Market Street, which, in spite of modern shops, recalls in its steep pitch the old market-street lane where carts stuck fast, and pack-horses could hardly win their way. And then there is Fountain Street, with a curious memory enshrined in its name like that of its neighbour Moseley Street—the memory of a natural fountain or spring that rose near the top of the present King Street; the water of which was conducted in pipes to the market, where a conduit with taps was erected; this conduit supplied the town up to 1775. Curious it is to contrast with this primitive arrangement the present enormous waterworks, in which a complete river, the Etherow, dividing Derby and Chester counties, is impounded and made to form a series of lakes in and about the beautiful valley of Longdendale, to say nothing of the still more grandiose project, for which an Act of Parliament has been obtained, of bringing the waters of Thirlmere all the way from Cumberland.

But we must go back to the old Manchester with streets of scattered houses leading to the cornfields; here and there a narrow wynd, inhabited by weavers, spinners, and other craftsmen; but the streets of good solid houses with big gardens behind, bits of ground that would now ensure a princely rental; the old conduit with its many taps dripping chillily, for it is a November day in the year 1745. Rumours are in the air; the wealthy merchants are a good deal disquieted, and some of the well-known Jacobites in the town openly exultant. In the midst of it all is heard the tap, tap, of a distant drum. It comes from the north, and at the sound the well affected, who bless King George, betake themselves to their homes, recognising the futility of resistance; and presently in marches a serjeant carrying his halbert proudly, a drummer behind him giving time to the

march, and then a sprightly girl with an apronful of white cockades. And the drum, and the serjeant, and the sprightly girl trip gaily through the town; and at each street-corner the serjeant doffs his hat and bids God bless King James—and who will join his Majesty's Manchester Regiment! Next day the Prince marches in with his Highlanders, "Bonnie Prince Charlie" in a light-plaid belted with a blue sash, a blue bonnet over a light wig, a white rose in his cap. And when the prince marches out on his way southwards, the Manchester Regiment marches with him, some three hundred strong, all raised in the town, with Francis Towneley as colonel. Old Dr. Deacon is among the crowd who cheer them out of the town—an old nonjuring divine—for his three sons are officers in the regiment. Jemmy Dawson, too, is among them—the son of Apothecary Dawson—brave lads all of them, full of life and hope.

In a week they are back again, the prince and all of them, not so hopeful now, and muttering curses against traitors—the Duke of Cumberland pressing on their tracks. Then a short stand at merry Carlisle, and the dismal drama is played out, and the drum beats that marshals them to the scaffold. As for Jemmy Dawson, he lives in the ballad that commemorates his fate. His sweetheart, Katharine Norton, accompanied him to the scaffold, and got a last glance from the faithful dying eyes; and then, as her coach drove away, she too gave up the ghost in one heart-broken sigh. At Manchester, too, as well as at Carlisle,

The auld, auld men came out and wept.

But there was one old man—the staunch old divine—Dr. Deacon, who wept not although he had lost his three sons; with him the sources of tears were dried up; and when the heads of the rebels were stuck, a ghastly show, on the top of Manchester Exchange, the old man did not flinch as he walked by. But he took off his hat and bowed his grey head reverently, each time as he passed, and that salutation became a custom among the Jacobites of the town.

And thus the Manchester Regiment was wiped out, only to appear again in these latter days, with no record on its colours of those gloomy times of civil conflict, but with a good record to commence with; the old Sixty-third, that we saw marching past the other day, with the crowds welcoming

it home from Egypt, and the Ninety-sixth, that has done plenty of good work in the past.

There have been dark days in Manchester since then; in 1819, for instance, when a public meeting was brutally dispersed by the local yeomanry, and many killed and wounded; the memory of the Manchester massacre, as it was called, ranking almost to this day. But darkest days of all, perhaps, were those of the Cotton Famine, with thousands on the brink of starvation—a proud and independent people living upon daily alms; a sharp and cruel experience that has left its traces upon the people, no longer perhaps so bright and light-hearted as of yore. Well might they sing, these poor people, in the homely concerts with which they kept up their spirits through that sad dull time, "Hard times come again no more."

WHEN THE SEA GIVES UP HER DEAD.

THEY tell us with the quiet voice
Of perfect faith, and hope, and trust,
That on the day when Christ shall come
To bid his chosen ones rejoice,
To breathe new life in death's dark dust,
To give new speech where death struck dumb,
From out the sad sea's restless bed,
Shall rise once more the hidden dead.

They tell us this with upraised eyes,
That gaze beyond the present's woe,
And whisper of a Heaven and God,
Draw pictures of star-laden skies,
Where angels wander to and fro.
When those now 'neath the churchyard sod,
Will rise from out their dreary bed,
The day the sea gives up her dead.

Yet will they raise once more the past,
Or give me back the faith that died,
Or breathe new breath in love's dead breast?
What for the love that did not last?
What for the days, when side by side
We wandered on, nor thought of rest,
Will these arise and leave their bed,
The day the sea gives up her dead?

Ah, nevermore! dead joy is dead,
The sunshine dead ne'er smiles again.
'Tis evening gathers on the shore,
Our kiss was kissed, our words were said.
Naught lasts for e'er save sin and pain,
Love dead, is dead for evermore.
Silent he lies, in his cold bed,
Though all life's seas gave up their dead!

TIME BARGAINS.

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

THE look of dejection on Linda's face deepened the moment she was left alone.

"A happy future!" she murmured. "How can I conceive of a happy future in which Cecil will have no part? Can it be possible that I am in the wrong? Sometimes I am beset by a horrible misgiving. Yet why should I be when even mamma

admits that, after all Cecil has said and done, I am perfectly justified in leaving him!"

She rose and opened her sunshade, and began to pace the lawn with restless steps.

"It is, and must be, he who is to blame—not I. But even if he were ever so much in the right, it is his duty, as a husband, to acknowledge himself in the wrong and ask my forgiveness. How I wish he would!"

The west wing at Brookfield opened by means of a glass door on to a verandah. Three or four shallow steps led from the verandah to the terrace, and that, in turn, gave access to the lawn. Through the glass door presently came Cuthbert Naylor.

Linda Dane had been gathering a few flowers here and there, and had now gone back to her seat under the elm, and was listlessly arranging them, evidently not heeding and scarcely knowing what she was about.

Cuthbert Naylor went slowly down the verandah steps and crossed the lawn in the direction of Mrs. Dane. His eyes were bent on the ground, and as he went he looked from side to side like one who has lost something.

"Mrs. Dane!" he exclaimed with a well-assumed start. "Pardon me, but do you happen to have seen a letter lying about?"

"A letter? No."

"My father lost one a little while ago. He fancied that he must have dropped it hereabouts."

"Was it of much consequence?"

"Yes and no. It was of no importance from a business point of view. It was a private communication, and the writer of it was a young lady—a young married lady."

"Indeed!"

The matter was one which evidently had no interest for Mrs. Dane.

"It was a sort of confession," resumed Cuthbert, whose eyes still wandered from side to side, "and was addressed to my father, who has known the writer since she was a child. The lady was married two years and a half ago, but not in accordance with the new Act. Neither she nor her husband believed in it."

Linda's fingers ceased from their occupation. Her cheeks flushed faintly, but she did not look at Cuthbert.

"They were united for life?" she said in a low voice.

"They were."

"And she is happy? Her letter is a confession to that effect?"

"On the contrary, she is miserable."

Now she looked at him.

"That is very sad," she said.

"She regrets most bitterly not having taken my father's advice. She now finds herself tied for life to a man between whom and herself there is nothing in common."

"I hope her husband does not treat her with cruelty?"

Cuthbert drew up a chair and sat down a little distance from Linda. He had succeeded in his object; he had interested her.

"In married life, my dear Mrs. Dane, cruelty assumes many forms. It is the Proteus of the conjugal ménage, hiding itself under ever fresh disguises."

At this moment Cecil Dane came sauntering round a clump of evergreens a few yards away. He started at sight of his wife and Naylor. The soft turf hushed the sound of his footsteps; they had not heard him.

"Mighty confidential, I must say," he muttered to himself with a shrug.

"What, for instance," continued Mr. Naylor, junior, "can be a greater refinement of cruelty than for a woman of elevated sentiments, of lofty ideals, of sympathies attuned by culture till, like an æolian harp, they vibrate to the slightest breath of pleasure or pain, of love or neglect, to find herself tied to a being of coarser fibre, of ruder tastes, between whom and herself can never exist that exquisite chord of sensibility that ought ever to make the bliss of married life? Is there not something terrible to contemplate in such a fate?"

This was a very pretty little speech on the part of Mr. Naylor, only, as it happened, it was not original. He had got it off by heart from some book he had once read; but Mrs. Dane was not to know that.

"Yes—oh, yes!" she murmured with something like fervour. She began to feel more sure that she must be in the right and her husband in the wrong.

"I am the being of coarse fibre, of ruder tastes," muttered Cecil. He had drawn sufficiently near to overhear what was being said. It was wrong of him, but he did it.

Cuthbert drew his chair a little closer to that of Mrs. Dane.

"And yet how many such unhappy cases come under our notice from time to time!" continued Cuthbert.

Linda looked down and sighed, but said nothing.

"Confound the fellow! What right has he to talk to my wife in that strain?" said Cecil as he savagely gnawed the end of his moustache.

"It seems ever women's misfortune to be misunderstood," went on Naylor.

"My own case exactly," said Linda with another sigh.

"Of course she agrees with that," muttered Cecil between his teeth. "It is I who am misunderstood if she only knew it."

"It seems ever the fate of those whose sensibilities are keenest, whose souls stand most in need of sympathy and love, to pine in the cold shade of neglect, unappreciated and oftentimes all but forgotten."

"I shall punch this fellow's head if I stay here much longer," growled Cecil. With that he turned on his heel and sauntered off into the shrubbery, his hands buried deep in his pockets, and a dark frown on his usually good-tempered face.

"I hope that is not the case with the lady who wrote the letter?" said Linda.

"I am sorry to say that it is."

"She is not the only unhappy woman in the world."

"But from her unhappiness she has no escape."

Linda rose. It struck her that this conversation with Cuthbert Naylor had gone quite far enough.

"You have not found the letter?" she asked.

"No; my father must be mistaken in thinking he lost it here. I am going as far as the rosery. Will you not walk that way?"

For a moment Linda hesitated; then she said:

"I dare say that way is as good as any other, and the flowers are exquisite just now." To herself she said: "Anything to escape from my own thoughts for a little while."

They moved away slowly, side by side, but were not yet out of sight when Lillian Ramsay and Captain Marmaduke emerged from the house and crossed the terrace.

"Cuthbert and Mrs. Dane together!" exclaimed Lillian with a little start.

"Why not, pray?" asked the captain quietly. "A few more hours and Mrs. Dane will be a free woman. Mr. Naylor made a free man of himself some days ago."

"What would you imply?" asked Lillian in a low voice.

"Nothing; I am merely dealing with facts, and Mr. Cuthbert Naylor is a great believer in facts. Your fortune was to him a very big fact indeed. That vanished, and you know what followed. Mrs. Dane is a rich woman, and in a few days she will be in a position to entertain a fresh offer of marriage."

"This is terrible in the way you put it. But you are right; Cuthbert is nothing to me now, nor I to him."

"With such an excellent example before your eyes, how can you do better than try to imitate it?"

"I fail to understand you."

"An unkind fate has bereft you of your fortune; but it has left untouched those charms of mind and person which nearly all young ladies nowadays seem to appraise at a definite and marketable value. The path of duty lies clear before you. You must do as others do—marry for money."

"And this is your advice."

"Is it not most excellent advice?"

"In plain English, you advise me to marry myself to the highest bidder?"

"'Tis the way of the world. Such bargains are going on around you every day. Why be different from other people?"

"Why indeed? In such bargains as those you speak of does affection count for nothing?"

"One can't have everything in this world, and the majority of people seem to find affection one of the trifles most easily dispensed with."

"And no doubt the majority are right."

There was an unmistakable ring of bitterness in Miss Ramsay's voice as she spoke these words.

They crossed the lawn in silence, and so came to a little wicket that opened into the park beyond. Here they paused.

Suddenly Marmaduke laid a hand lightly on his companion's arm.

"Listen! Do you not hear the lark?" he said. "It is the first I have heard since my return. What memories its song recalls!"

"I love best to hear it at sunrise," responded Lillian.

"When I was thousands of miles away, herding among savages, and hardly daring to hope that I should ever see my native land again, I used sometimes to wake up from dreams of sweet English hayfields, and of hearing the lark singing in the blue English sky, and my mother calling to me across the orchard, and then—why then I used to wish that I could die."

He spoke in a tone altogether unusual with him. Lilian began to suspect that in the nature of this quiet, self-contained, incurious man, with his half-kindly, half-cynical speeches, there might be depths of feeling, hidden springs of emotion, of which as yet she knew nothing.

The lark was still singing far up in the blue.

"See—there it is," said Marmaduke, pointing upward with his finger.

Lilian shaded her eyes with her hands.

"I cannot see it," she said.

"Now it is dropping."

"Dropping down to its nest in the grass. I see it now."

"It never flies far from home."

"Why should it? Its happiness is there."

"What gladness in its song!"

"Yet somewhere in that song there's one sad note."

"It would sing just as gaily were it caged."

"Even though its heart might be breaking all the time."

The bird ceased, and Marmaduke and his companion turned to retrace their steps. They walked in silence for a little while; then, as if following out some thread of thought, Marmaduke said abruptly: "Broken hearts! Can such things be in this enlightened age?"

"I never met with one," answered Lilian demurely.

"They are out of fashion nowadays. We patch the poor things up, and make believe that they go as well as ever."

They had just reached the steps which led from the lawn to the terrace, when they were met by a servant. Some poor woman had come up from the village, and was waiting to see Miss Ramsay. Lilian went at once.

"It is, perhaps, just as well that she is gone," mused Marmaduke, when left to himself. "Another minute and I might have said—I don't know what I might not have said. I think a quiet cheroot would not be amiss."

Taking out his cigar-case he strolled leisurely along the terrace, and was presently lost to view.

A few minutes later the tall figure of Mr. Cecil Dane might have been seen making its way through the shrubbery at the opposite end of the lawn. His club friends would hardly have recognised him had they seen him just now, so perturbed did he look, so far did he seem to have strayed from those serene heights of

Olympian indifference on which he habitually took his stand.

He sat down now where he had sat before, on the rustic seat under the elm. "What can Linda mean by philandering about with that noodle of a Cuthbert Naylor?" he grimly asked himself. "They are too confidential by half. And yet, what an ass I must be! A few more hours and she will be at liberty to philander with whom she pleases. And so shall I, for the matter of that. I wish there was some fighting going on somewhere. I wish someone would give me the command of a forlorn hope or a cutting-out expedition. I'm just in the humour for killing somebody or being killed myself; I don't much care which. My poor, pretty Linda! How I loved that girl once! For the matter of that, how I love her still! Perhaps if I had been more patient with her—perhaps if I had humoured her whims more—perhaps—but that 'perhaps' is the fiend's own word, and I'll have no more to do with it. By Jove! here they come, and still together!"

In fact at this moment Mrs. Dane and Cuthbert Naylor made their appearance at the other end of the lawn. They must have walked completely round the house to get there. Cuthbert, as usual, seemed to be doing most of the talking.

Linda started, and then came to a dead stand.

"My husband!" she exclaimed. "I must go to him. You will excuse me, will you not?"

The smirk vanished from Mr. Naylor's face; he coughed behind his hand.

"Not a word, I beg. Some other time, perhaps—"

"I shall be most happy."

"Your remarks on Japanese ceramic art were most interesting. Such originality of exposition!"

"Oh, Mr. Naylor, you cannot conscientiously say that."

"Pardon me for differing from you. But I won't detain you longer."

With that he raised his hat, bowed, turned on his heel, and marched slowly away.

As he went up the terrace steps he shot a backward glance.

"Her husband!" he muttered to himself. "To-morrow she will have no husband."

CHAPTER VI.

LINDA advanced a few steps and then paused. She was gazing fixedly at her husband.

"He is making believe that he doesn't see me," she said to herself, "and yet they call our sex artful! If he would but ask me to forgive him! If he would but admit that it is he who has been in the wrong!"

There was a flower-border close by; she stooped and gathered a few blooms.

Cecil was watching her out of a corner of his eye.

"If she would but come and put her arms round my neck, and lay her cheek against mine, as she used to do, I believe I should be weak enough to forgive her!"

"He won't speak; he won't look. How stupid of him!" Then she said aloud: "Cecil!"

"I am here," he answered, but without turning his head.

"That tone! He might be speaking to his groom or his valet. It is useless." Then aloud: "Can you tell me whether the afternoon post has arrived?"

He put his glass in his eye and turned half-way towards her.

"I have no information on the point, really," he said. "If you were to ask your uncle, now, or—or Mr. Cuthbert Naylor."

She had drawn a little nearer to him, and was plucking nervously at the flowers she had gathered.

"Mr. Cuthbert Naylor is a most superior person," she replied in her iciest tones.

"No one disputes Mr. Naylor's superiority."

"He gives his mind to something very different from horse-racing and betting."

"What happiness to hear this!"

"Sneer away, sir; it is your sole accomplishment." Cecil bowed gravely. "Mr. Naylor is a man of culture. His conversation is most interesting and—and delightful."

"A question of taste," responded Cecil with a shrug as he rose from his seat. Then, looking her full in the face, he said, not without a touch of sternness: "Mr. Naylor is aware that you have a fortune in your own right. Before you are two months older, Mr. Naylor will make you an offer of marriage."

"Oh, this is infamous!" cried Linda. Her cheeks flushed rosy red, tears of indignation sprang to her eyes, as, with a little passionate gesture, she flung away her flowers, and turning her back on her husband, she marched off with all the dignity that she was mistress of.

For a moment or two the unhappy young husband stood looking after his unhappy young wife with a strange choking sensa-

tion in his throat. Then he turned and went slowly off in the opposite direction.

He had not proceeded far when, at a turn of the footpath, he encountered Elliott. The latter seized him by the arm.

"Why, man alive, what's amiss with you?" he cried. "You look as if you were about to put an end to all your miseries."

Stephen himself did not look the most cheerful of individuals.

"Elliott, if those papers of mine don't come soon, I believe I shall go mad."

"Oh, philosophy, of what avail are thy precepts?" cried the latter with a somewhat forced air of gaiety. "But we are not without our consolations; the board of green cloth is still left us. Come along, old fellow; let us go and knock the balls about for half an hour. You shall give me twenty-five out of a hundred, and beat me at that."

Elliott linked his arm in Cecil's and led him back towards the house.

Mrs. Wapshot had encountered Linda even as Stephen had encountered Cecil, and was coming back with her. The two men went up one flight of steps that led from the lawn to the terrace just as the two ladies were ascending the other flight. On the terrace stood Mr. Naylor and his son, each of them with an open letter in his hand. At this moment the glass door was opened, and out came Mr. Jellicop with an open bag in his hand. Linda turned pale and began to tremble; Elliott felt his arm tightly pressed by Cecil's.

"So that tiresome post-bag has arrived at last," said Mrs. Wapshot to Mr. Jellicop.

"Yes, that tiresome post-bag has arrived at last, and a pretty dance I've had after all you good people."

The old boy had a fancy for giving out the letters to his guests with his own hand.

"Anything for me, sir?" asked Cecil in a voice which he strove to render as indifferent as possible.

"Steady yourself, my love," whispered Mrs. Wapshot to Linda.

Mr. Jellicop's hand was buried deep in the bag. "There's something here that feels like mischief," he said, and with that he reproduced two large-sealed, official-looking documents. He glanced at the addresses for a moment through his spectacles, and then in silence he handed one to Cecil and the other to Linda. Then turning to Vere Naylor, he said with all the bitterness of which he was capable: "A pretty piece of work this is to be proud of!"

The member for Fudginton shrugged

his shoulders, but did not speak. It was a moment of triumph for the principles he had so much at heart.

"Once more a single man!" said Cecil Dane as he turned and grasped Elliott by the hand.

"Once more a free woman!" exclaimed Linda in broken accents, as she turned and hid her face on Mrs. Wapshot's shoulder.

One of the pleasantest rooms at Brookfield was that which was known as the Blue Parlour. It was an apartment of considerable size; an archway at one end of the room, the curtains of which were now looped back, gave access to a small conservatory; at the opposite end two French-windows opened on to the south terrace.

In this apartment, on a certain afternoon, sat Mrs. Wapshot and Agnes Elliott. A tiny table was between them on which stood a tiny tea equipage. Confidential talk and tea seem to go naturally together.

"Most refreshing on a warm afternoon," remarked Mrs. Wapshot as she replaced her cup on the tray.

"When is a cup of tea not refreshing?" queried Agnes. "I think I understood you to say that Mr. Wapshot is not coming to Brookfield?"

"No. He is chipping rocks in the north of Ireland. He may possibly be away two months—or even longer. He is a man with a grand Platonic mind. By-the-bye, dear, when do you expect your child at Brookfield?"

"This afternoon. He and the nurse are coming down by train."

"How comforting for you! Of course you saw what it said about your husband in yesterday's Tittle-tattle?"

"A paper I never read. What did it say?"

"I think I can repeat the paragraph almost word for word—hem! 'We understand that Mdlle. Maurizio, the new prima donna, about whose beauty and talents everybody is raving just now'—note the 'raving,' my dear—'has commissioned Mr. Stephen Elliott to paint her portrait. It will doubtless be another feather in the cap of one of the most promising of our younger artists.' What do you think of that, my dear?"

For a moment or two Agnes did not reply. She was struggling with some hidden emotion. Then she said: "I know now why Stephen started for London this morning without saying why he was going. This woman was to sit to him to-day."

"Most probably. There are some strange

stories afloat concerning this Mdlle. Maurizio. Not that I make a point of always believing such things, but one can't help hearing them, you know. People do say that she—but it matters nothing to you, dear, what people say."

"And it is for creatures such as this that my happiness has been wrecked! Yet Stephen would have me believe that he cares for nothing but his art; that a beautiful woman is to him nothing more than an object to be transferred to canvas; that he takes as much delight in painting a patch of sunny common, an old wall covered with mosses, or a village pond rippled by a breeze."

"Why excite yourself, my dear?" said Mrs. Wapshot soothingly. "In a day or two you and your husband will be separated, and what he may do, or whom he may see after that, can only be a matter of indifference to you."

"A matter of indifference! And Stephen will then be at liberty to visit this Italian woman as often as he may choose!"

"What of that! You also will be free to do as you may choose."

"What will be the value of such freedom to me?"

"You are in a somewhat unreasonable mood this afternoon. Suppose we take a turn on the terrace."

They both rose.

At that moment Lilian Ramsay entered the room.

"I have a few words to say to Miss Ramsay," whispered the elder lady. "I will follow you in two minutes."

Mrs. Elliott crossed the room, and went out by way of the French-window. Just outside she encountered Captain Marmaduke. They stopped opposite each other. Agnes was waiting for Mrs. Wapshot; Marmaduke was in search of Lilian. The weather and other important topics engaged them in conversation for a minute or two.

"I hope, my dear, that you have not forgotten what I said to you the other day?" thus spoke Mrs. Wapshot to Lilian.

"I have not forgotten—I am not likely to forget."

"What are you looking for?"

"I have lost the third volume of my novel."

"My dear Lilian, you surprise me! Don't you think that instead of novel-reading you would be much better employed in rubbing-up your French and music, and in looking through your dresses

to see which of them would turn and make up again? By-the-bye, have you advertised yet?"

"Not yet," answered Lilian dejectedly.

"Then why not do so at once? Mr. Jellicop may be very kind, and Mrs. Jellicop may be very kind, but you are no relative of theirs, and no girl of spirit would condescend to keep on living here as a dependent on their charity."

Having thus contrived to render Lilian thoroughly uncomfortable, Mrs. Wapshot with a serene conscience followed Mrs. Elliott out of the room.

"A dependent on their charity!" exclaimed Lilian sadly. "She is right; I have my living to earn, and the sooner I set about it the better." She was sitting, buried in thought, with her eyes bent on the ground, and did not hear Marmaduke's footsteps on the carpet. "But what am I fit for? What is there that I can do?" she continued, asking the questions aloud, and little thinking there was anyone to overhear her.

"There is one thing you can do, Miss Ramsay."

Lilian started to her feet in some confusion. It took her a moment or two to recover herself.

"And that is?" she said enquiringly.

"Go with me as far as the home-meadow, where the haymakers are at work. Let us go and help them—let us transform ourselves for a little while into a couple of rakes."

Lilian shook her head, and looked seriously at him out of the depths of her brown eyes.

"Why, what's amiss?" queried Marmaduke. "A quarter of an hour ago you seemed as merry as a blackbird, and now—"

"I look as melancholy as an owl, and not half so wise."

"Mrs. Wapshot has been talking to you."

"For my good."

"I take the liberty of doubting that."

"She has, at least, reminded me of my duty."

"People who make such a point of reminding others of their duty are pretty sure to neglect their own."

"Captain Marmaduke, may I ask your advice? I want to advertise and I don't know how to set about it."

"The easiest thing in the world. The difficulty nowadays is not to advertise."

"I want to offer my services as governess, or as companion to a lady going abroad."

Marmaduke's face took an extra shade of gravity.

"Does Mr. Jellicop know of this sudden resolution on your part?"

"No."

"Nor Mrs. Jellicop?"

"No."

"Do you feel justified in taking so serious a step without their knowledge or sanction?"

"I don't know. I only want to act for the best. I know that they would like me to stay on with them here, but—but I feel that I cannot live as a dependent on their charity."

"That sounds very much like one of Mrs. Wapshot's phrases. But you asked my advice, did you not?"

"I did."

"Will you promise to abide by it?"

For a moment Lilian hesitated, then in a low voice she said:

"I promise."

"For the next month or two let the future take care of itself. Decide upon nothing without the full concurrence of Mr. Jellicop. Finally, attach no importance to anything Mrs. Wapshot may say to you."

"I have promised to abide by your advice, and I will do so, but with every day that passes I grow more anxious not to be a burden to anybody."

"As if you could be a burden to anybody. But enough of sermonising. You promised to visit the ruins of Dean Abbey with me. We shall have to fix an early day, as I leave here on Tuesday next."

"You leave here on Tuesday!"

"I came for two days, and I have stayed a week."

"We shall miss you very much."

"If I dared to think that you would miss me, it would not matter greatly about anyone else."

"Of course I shall miss you, as we all shall. Why, you have not told me—told us, I mean—half your adventures. And we may never meet again!"

"Why should we not meet again?"

"I cannot stay here for ever. Even if you were to come to Brookfield again in six weeks' time I should be gone!"

"Gone whither?"

"I cannot tell."

"Then why part at all?"

He sat down by her side, and took one of her unresisting hands in his. The clear light of love glowed in his eyes.

"Lilian, listen to me," he said.

But at that moment the door opened,

and Mr. Jellicop came in fussily, after his wont. Lilian started to her feet, her cheeks all aflame. Marmaduke smothered an ejaculation of annoyance.

FISH DIET.

AMONG the many marvels of the Fisheries Exhibition just opened, is an unassuming but very interesting case, which gives what may be called the bill of fare of a family of the neolithic period. The menu is of a far more varied character than might have been expected from their resources in the way of tools and weapons. For there were no trace of metals in the shell-mound from which these illustrations were taken—a shell-mound found on the old coast-line of the Island of Oransay in the Western Hebrides, and therefore of an age very far remote from any of which we have historic record. Their fish-spears, or harpoons, are of sharpened bone, and their kitchen utensils of flint or polished shell. And yet they must have contrived to capture the rorqual and the seal, the very fishiest kind of flesh that this imperfectly-educated family may have eaten as fish without knowing any better; then they had mullet and wrasse, dogfish and skate—these by way of delicacies, no doubt, while the regular homely fare of the period was made up principally of shell-fish. Altogether excellent living, if only there were enough of it, as to which the record is silent.

Perhaps the example of these fish-eating people is hardly encouraging, seeing that probably they were wiped out of existence by a more hardy race who had discovered the use of metals, and acquired skill in the art of slaughter in hunting the wild beasts of the forest. But we need not be prejudiced against a fish diet in consequence, or fancy that it entails any disadvantage in the struggle for existence. What we may lose in sinew, physiologists tell us we shall make up in brain, and for people who have not to make a living by the spade or the pick, the brain is the chief power after all. The theories of physiologists have not been largely verified by experience, indeed; the learned professions are not carried by storm by the sons of fishermen, nor is any abnormal proportion of distinguished thinkers furnished by the fishing towns, where people live mostly on fish, and ought to have brains of extraordinary power. But then it can be shown that many highly successful races have been greatly given to

fish. The Northmen, for example, a people who have made for themselves a great place in history, were always good fishermen as well as good fighters. It must be confessed, however, that the northern taste in the matter of fish was of a rather coarse and greasy nature. The whale, for instance, was so highly regarded as to be reserved for king or queen, and the porpoise and other cetacea, fish in general estimation, if not in the scientific sense, were always popular, and the Northman carried his tastes into warmer latitudes, so that the fishing for craspois, as it was called, a term explained a little farther on, was much practised and highly encouraged on the coasts of England and Normandy. Thus we are told by old Lambarde how the Conqueror granted to the monks of Battle, that if any fish called craspois, that is, gras poisson, a great or royal fish, as whales or such other, which by the law of Prerogative pertained to the king himself, came ashore upon Dengemariash—the marsh now protected by Dymchurch wall, and with Dungeness on its outlying promontory—the monks should have it, and if in any other man's land yet the monks should have the whole tongue and two-thirds of the body. There are similar grants to other monasteries in Normandy, and all this suggests the question, could a whale's tongue have ever been preserved and eaten as a delicacy? Certainly not the tongue of the "right whale," a mere gelatinous mass that the most robust appetite would refuse. But then there are whales and whales, and some of the species may possess a tongue which is really a dainty.

The taste for craspois came to an end in a rather dismal manner. The great pestilence of the fourteenth century, known in England as the Black Death, was said to have especially marked out the eaters of craspois as victims. Anyhow, the physicians of the period put their ban upon it, condemning at the same time many wholesome and splendid fishes.

Chiens de mer marsouins saumons
Congres tourboz et leur semblables
Qui sans escailles sont nuisables.

Thus classing the lordly salmon and the luscious turbot with dogfish and porpoises, to say nothing of the conger, which has many warm adherents at the present day. Perhaps from this period may be dated the dislike of the Scotch to the eel, which they erroneously declare to be without scales. Some, indeed, aver that porpoise steaks are really good eating, and the dogfish is

a popular article of diet among the Norman peasantry. But then the Normans may be supposed to have inherited the Scandinavian taste for gross and oily fishes—a taste which would seem to be still rampant in Norway, if we may trust to the following extract from the Fisheries Exhibition catalogue, which has a charming “once upon a time” flavour about it, and a vagueness of local description which recalls the wonderful tales of childhood:

“On a certain part of the western coast of Norway, whales pass through the narrow inlet of a fjord, and fail to find their way back again. When swimming around the bay, the whale would be observed at once, and the fishermen try to kill it by means of a single-pointed iron arrow only five or six inches long. The mode of proceeding was to shoot from the bow an arrow with a loose iron point up in the air in such a manner that it would fall down perpendicularly and strike the body of the whale. Iron points made of old ship-bolts, and rather rusty, would be preferred as the best for the purpose. When struck by the iron, the whale would swim about for twenty-four or thirty hours, and then float up to the surface of the water, dead or poisoned, having a wound a foot or more in diameter around the place where the iron had struck. The iron point itself would be found worked down to the backbone or some vital part.

“After having cut out the wounded part with a special knife, men and women from all the farms around the bay, being the whole hunting-time on the look-out, would meet with their whale-knives, and cut out of the whale their special and long pre-determined pieces, and bring them home for food.

“These implements are still in occasional use.”

To judge from this extract, there is still a taste for whale-flesh in Norway, just as among the Eskimo, where the capture of a whale is the occasion of a grand banquet. The omnivorous Chinese make a dainty of the dried sinew of the whale. But, in a general way, we may assume that, as articles of food, the cetacea are quite out of fashion; and no doubt it was the herring that had the most to do with this change of dynasty—the herring that, swarming along the coasts in great shoals, creating a general excitement among all predatory creatures, whether they swim, fly, or crawl; the herring that seems to invite the clumsiest attempt at a boat and net to

circumvent him. The herring, by the way, according to fisher folk-lore, was chosen king over the other denizens of the deep—just as the tit among birds—not out of merit so much as from overweening jealousy of more formidable competitors. The plaice and the halibut made faces at their new king, and have had wry mouths ever since.

A democratic king certainly is the herring, with his inexhaustible bounties to the poor; and no fish is more delicious than a perfectly fresh herring, while of all others he bears with least detriment the processes of curing and salting. The Dutch lay claim to the invention of the art of pickling herrings; but, whatever may have been the improvements they introduced, the art itself was known along the Channel coast from time immemorial—at Dieppe from the eighth century, anyhow. The red herring, however, is of much more recent introduction—not spoken of before the sixteenth century—and is claimed by the Yarmouth fishermen as their peculiar invention. The red herring has suffered some eclipses at the hands—or the fins, rather—of the still more popular bloater, which is hardly more ancient than the eighteenth century.

In the cold and strongly-aerated waters of the Northern Sea swarms, in exhaustless numbers, the cod, and perhaps the constant aeration of the water by melted ice gives the North Sea its wonderfully stimulating properties of fish production. Who can watch the tide foaming in upon our northern coasts, with the sparkle and effervescence of champagne, and the general stir of life it creates among all things that swim in the sea, a wealth of life and fecundity and power, a great store-house that may be drawn upon indefinitely; who can see this without feeling surprise that any in this land should be short of food when such unlimited supplies are within reach? In this matter of the cod, for instance, we are told by competent authorities that it could be sold at twopence a pound in the streets of London, if only the machinery of distribution were properly arranged. And with the cod, the difficulty of bringing the fish fresh to market is reduced to a minimum. The herring, it is said, dies when it strikes the net; this is an exaggeration, but many are dead when the nets are hauled on board, and the rest die almost immediately after being taken from the water. But the cod is a hardy fellow, and will make the journey in tanks quite comfortably from the Faroe Isles or

the banks of Newfoundland, and he can be kept in stock, too—is largely kept in perforated boxes in the fish docks of Harwich and Great Grimsby, till he is wanted.

As early as the reign of Elizabeth, English fishermen were in the habit of resorting to the coast of Iceland for cod-fishing, and there is a letter extant, dated 1595, from the King of Denmark complaining of the trespasses of these English fishermen; but saying that they might fish on the coast of Iceland, except the island of Westmon, which was reserved for the court. Elizabeth took five years to answer this letter, and then "thank you for nothing" she writes in effect, and desires the king not to hinder the English from fishing in the high seas. In the Civil Wars the English fishing-boats, making for the coast of Iceland, were set upon by Royalist privateers, and many of them captured, for which no redress could be had. All this fishing was for cod, for drying and salting, and there is still a good deal done in that way, the French especially making a considerable consumption of the salt fish. They manage to make it palatable too, a feat which our English cooks rarely accomplish, even when they smother it with egg-sauce.

The haddock is another fish that swarms in these northern waters, and, till the practice of smoking them began, more were caught than could be consumed. But now the smoked haddock is found everywhere, and is especially popular in poor neighbourhoods. Very satisfactory, too, he is as a breakfast relish, but ought to be much cheaper. Then we have the turbot, that the trawl-net has made plentiful. No finer fish than this is anywhere to be had, and cheap, too, at times, for people who have time to be continually skirmishing around for bargains, but when wanted on any particular occasion, sure to be ruinously dear. Another fish has lately made its appearance on London fish-stalls, the salmon-shad, as the fishmongers call it. This is known to the more scientific Americans as the anadromous shad, and the French, who love it well, call it the alose; and as this fish runs up the rivers of the Atlantic seaboard in May, when the old-world peasantry are making pilgrimages to holy wells and such like, the alose is a favourite Friday dish for these, on the whole, rather jolly excursions. And an alose, perfectly broiled over a wood fire, with an accompanying of the cream sauce of High Normandy, is a dish that might

make the most confirmed sceptic believe in the virtues of pilgrimages. But then, in the hands of an unskilful cook, the alose is apt to fall into a formless mass, a very unhandsome dish, although the flavour may be all right.

Most people have had experience, once or twice in their lives, of a regular fish dinner, say at Billingsgate, where sundry restaurants and taverns devote themselves to that kind of entertainment. The fish is generally good, but then these dinners are not particularly cheap. Then, in the poorer quarters of the town, the fried-fish shop supplies refreshment wholesome and cheap. A slice of fried fish, fried potatoes, and a slice of bread can be had for threepence, everything perhaps permeated with a fishy flavour, but still appetising enough for a hungry man. And these fried-fish men clear the market at Billingsgate of anything that may be going cheap—plaice and skate—the latter very good, but repugnant to many people, perhaps, on account of its appearance, with a fiendish grin in the middle of its stomach; and to these experiences may be added the cheap fish-dinners at the South Kensington Exhibition. The rush for these would seem to indicate a great undeveloped taste for fish on the part of the great British public. Now, in a general way, an increased demand for a commodity brings about increased prices, and this may very well be the effect at first of the general tendency to fish-eating. But the supply being practically unlimited, the balance will soon be redressed in favour of the fish consumer. It would be a great gain if a general demand for fish in the inland districts gave opportunity for the opening out of independent sources of supply. Too much hangs upon Billingsgate—not only all London, but a vast number of other towns, even seaside places where the fish are actually caught, and sometimes make the double journey by rail before they appear in the local fish-market.

Still, allowing for well-founded complaints as to supply, we may survey the world from China to Peru and find no other nation able to give a better fish-dinner—no, nor one half as good—in a general way. Certainly not the nations whose shores border on the Mediterranean—Italy, for instance, whose commissioners report that the coast-fishing is mainly done in a desultory manner by old men, women, and children—with singular exceptions in the case of fishing communities in the

Adriatic, with their curious and picturesque Bragazzi, "remarkable for the shape of the hull and their strange sails coloured in brown or deep red, and covered with quaint figures and devices." But neither the thunny nor the sword-fish are tempting as edible fishes, and the hake seems to be the best all-round fish in the Italian markets. Indeed, our Yarmouth and Scotch herring are largely imported, and form a considerable item in the diet of the working-classes. Nor is Spain in the van in the way of fishing, and may look back with regret to the palmy days of Philip the Second, when two hundred vessels, manned by some six thousand sailors, left the Cantabrian shore for the cod fisheries of Newfoundland. Now, along its Atlantic coast, there is no deep sea fishing to speak of, while the Mediterranean seaboard is almost a blank. Indeed, the Mediterranean may be said to be almost played out as a fish-pond, its hot sun and tepid waters do not supply the life-giving elements of the northern seas, and the absence of appreciable tides deprives the world of fishes of the zest and change that the rush of waters to and fro gives to the denizens of the great oceans.

Nor has America the advantage of us in the way of fish, at least of sea-fish. Her great lakes and connecting rivers yield a white fish, so called, that is well spoken of, and the black bass, a bold and handsome fish, might perhaps be acclimatised to advantage in some of our rivers. The Americans introduce a good deal of ingenuity into their fisheries. There is the purse seine, for instance, which has quite revolutionised the fishery for mackerel and menhaden; the American fishermen having entirely deserted the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where they formerly resorted, and taken to fishing north of Cape Hatteras. There are smart fisheries, too, on the Columbian shores; for the salmon almost what Chicago is for the pig; and wonderful stories are told of the way in which the salmon is caught and cooked and canned, the whole performed with the regularity and speed of steam. The Americans, too, have invented boneless herrings, an invention which, if it could be applied to fishes generally, would do much to popularise a fish diet, for people don't like a continual struggle with bones in the course of a meal, and those fishes are most popular, as a general rule, in which the bone difficulty is the least felt; the herring, of course, being an exception, being both

nice and cheap. Something in the way of this American process has been foreshadowed in prophecy, for there exists a mystic mediæval rhyme:

Never a herring spoke but one,

And he said, "Roast my back, and not my bone."

As much as to say—there are various interpretations, but this seems the most probable—"Take out my bones before cooking me."

Another novelty the American has introduced—a preparation called chowder, fearfully and wonderfully composed of fish, pork, biscuit, and other light comestibles. There is clam chowder and fish chowder, both of which are canned for export, but they require a certain amount of education in the palate to appreciate.

Passing over to the Pacific we find many varieties of fish unknown to European markets, with some familiar friends, such as the ubiquitous eel and mackerel. But the albicore, the bonito, and the flying-fish have a strange unfamiliar aspect. The coral reefs of the South Sea Islands abound with curious fish, balloon-shaped, with strange attachments, and an expression of puffy amazement; but some of these are poisonous, and none are equal to our northern fishes in the culinary scale. Nor has Japan any striking novelties to show us in the way of fish; and when we come to China, we feel that we are in another and altogether stranger world, in which our experience is of little use to us, and vice-versâ. Funny men and funny fishes seem on mutually good terms with each other, with a strange kind of family likeness between them. And people who eat whale sinew and dried shark's fins, and sea-slugs—as for cuttle-fish, they seem to be eaten all over the world—well, a people who will eat anything and everything, must be looked on with suspicion as gastronomic guides.

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXIV. THE LAST OF FLORENCE MOUNTJOY.

Now at last in this final chapter has to be told the fate of Florence Mountjoy,—as far as it can be told in these pages. It was, at any rate, her peculiarity to attach to herself, by bonds which could not easily be severed, those who had once thought that they might be able to win her love. An attempt has been made to show how firm and determined were the affections of

Harry Annesley, and how absolutely he trusted in her word when once it had been given to him. He had seemed to think that when she had even nodded to him in answer to his assertion that he desired her to be his wife, all his trouble as regarded her heart had been off his mind. There might be infinite trouble as to time,—as to ten years, three years, or even one year; trouble in inducing her to promise that she would become his wife in opposition to her mother; but he had felt sure that she never would be the wife of any one else. How he had at last succeeded in mitigating the opposition of her mother, so as to make the three years, or even the one year, appear to himself an altogether impossible delay, the reader knows. How he at last contrived to have his own way altogether, so that, as Florence told him, she was merely a ball in his hand, the reader will have to know very shortly. But not a shade of doubt had ever clouded Harry's mind as to his eventual success, since she had nodded to him at Mrs. Armitage's ball. Though this girl's love had been so grand a thing to have achieved, he was quite sure from that moment that it would be his for ever.

With Mountjoy Scarborough there had never come such a moment,—and never could, and yet he had been very confident, so that he had lived on the assurance that such a moment would come. And the self-deportment natural to him had been such that he had shown his assurance. He never would have succeeded; but he should not the less love her sincerely. And when the time came for him to think what he should do with himself, those few days after his father's death, he turned to her as his one prospect of salvation. If his cousin Florence would be good to him, all might yet be well. He had come by that time to lose his assurance. He had recognised Harry Annesley as his enemy,—as has been told often enough in these pages. Harry was to him a hateful stumbling-block. And he had not been quite as sure of her fidelity to another as Harry had been sure of it to himself. Tretton might prevail. Trettons do so often prevail. And the girl's mother was all on his side. So he had gone to Cheltenham, true as the needle to the pole, to try his luck yet once again. He had gone to Cheltenham,—and there he found Harry Annesley. All hopes for him were then over and he started at once for Monaco; or, as he himself told himself,—for the deuce.

Among the lovers of Florence some

memory may attach itself to poor Hugh Anderson. He too had been absolutely true to Florence. From the hour in which he had first conceived the idea that she would make him happy as his wife, it had gone on growing upon him with all the weight of love. He did not quite understand why he should have loved her so dearly,—but thus it was. Such a Mrs. Hugh Anderson, with a pair of ponies on the boulevards, was to his imagination the most lovely sight which could be painted. Then Florence took the mode of disabusing him which has been told, and Hugh Anderson gave the required promise. Alas;—in what an unfortunate moment had he done so! Such was his own thought. For though he was sure of his own attachment to her, he could not mount high enough to be as sure of hers to somebody else. It was a "sort of thing a man oughtn't to have been asked to promise," he said to the third secretary. And having so determined he made up his mind to follow her to England and to try his fortune once again.

Florence had just wished Harry good-bye for the day,—or rather for the week. She cared nothing now, in the way of protestations of affection. "Come, Harry; there now;—don't be so unreasonable. Am not I just as impatient as you are? This day fortnight you will be back. And then!"

"Then there will be some peace; won't there? But mind you write every day." And so Harry was whisked away, as triumphant a man as ever left Cheltenham by the London train. On the following morning Hugh Anderson reached Cheltenham and appeared in Montpellier Place.

"My daughter is at home certainly," said Mrs. Mountjoy. There was something in the tone which made the young man at once assure himself that he had better go back to Brussels. He had ever been a favourite with Mrs. Mountjoy. In his days of love-making poor Mountjoy had been absent, declared no longer to have a chance of Tretton, and Harry had been—the very Evil One himself. Mrs. Mountjoy had been assured by the Brussels Mountjoys that with the view of getting well rid of the Evil One, she had better take poor Anderson to her bosom. She had opened her bosom accordingly,—but with very poor results. And now he had come to look after what result there might be, Mrs. Mountjoy felt that he had better go back to Brussels.

"Could I not see her?" asked Anderson.

"Well, yes; you could see her."

"Mrs. Mountjoy, I'll tell you everything,—just as though you were my own mother. I have loved your daughter,—oh, I don't know how it is! If she'd be my wife for two years, I don't think I'd mind dying afterwards."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson!"

"I wouldn't. I never heard of a case where a girl had got such a hold of a man as she has of me."

"You don't mean to say that she has behaved badly."

"Oh no! She couldn't behave badly. It isn't in her. But she can bowl a fellow over in the most—well, most desperate manner. As for me, I'm not worth my salt since I first saw her. When I go to ride with the governor I haven't a word to say to him." But this ended in Mrs. Mountjoy going and promising that she would send Florence down in her place. She knew that it would be in vain; but to a young man who had behaved so well as Mr. Anderson so much could not be refused. "Here I am again," he said, very much like the clown in the pantomime.

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, how do you do?"

A lover who is anxious to prevail with a lady should always hold up his head. Where is the reader of novels, or of human nature, who does not know as much as that. And yet the man who is in love, truly in love, never does hold up his head very high. It is the man who is not in love who does so. Nevertheless it does sometimes happen that the true lover obtains his reward. In this case it was not observed to be so. But now Mr. Anderson was sure of his fate, so that there was no encouragement to him to make any attempt at holding up his head. "I have come once more to see you," he said.

"I am sure it gives mamma so much pleasure."

"Mrs. Mountjoy is very kind. But it hasn't been for her. The truth is I couldn't settle down in this world without having another interview."

"What am I to say, Mr. Anderson?"

"I'll just tell you how it all is. You know what my prospects are." She did not quite remember, but she bowed to him. "You must know because I told you. There is nothing I kept concealed." Again she bowed. "There can be no possible family reason for my going to Kamtschatka."

"Kamtschatka!"

"Yes, indeed. The F. O.—" The F. O. always meant the Foreign Office. "The F. O. wants a young man on whom it can thoroughly depend to go to Kamtschatka. The allowances are handsome enough, but the allowances are nothing to me."

"Why should you go?"

"It is for you to decide. Yes, you can detain me. If I go to that bleak and barren desert it will merely be to court exile from that quarter of the globe in which you and I would have to live together and yet apart. That I cannot stand. In Kamtschatka— Well, there is no knowing what may happen to me there."

"But I'm engaged to be married to Mr. Annesley."

"You told me something of that before."

"But it's all fixed. Mamma will tell you. It's to be this day fortnight. If you'd only stay and come as one of my friends." Surely such a proposition as this is the unkindest that any young lady can make. But we believe that it is made not unfrequently. In the present case it received no reply.

Mr. Anderson took up his hat and rushed to the door. Then he returned for a moment. "God bless you, Miss Mountjoy," he said. "In spite of the cruelty of that suggestion I must bid God bless you." And then he was gone.

About a week afterwards, M. Grascour appeared upon the scene with precisely the same intention. He, too, retained in his memory a most vivid recollection of the young lady and her charms. He had heard that Captain Scarborough had inherited Tretton, and had been informed that it was not probable that Miss Florence Mountjoy would marry her cousin. He was somewhat confused in his ideas, and thought that, were he now to reappear on the scene, there might still be a chance for him. There was no lover more unlike Mr. Anderson than M. Grascour. Not even for Florence Mountjoy, not even to own her, would he go to Kamtschatka; and were he not to see her he would simply go back to Brussels. And yet he loved her as well as he knew how to love anyone, and, would she have become his wife, would have treated her admirably. He had looked at it all round, and could see no reason why he should not marry her. Like a persevering man, he persevered; but as he did so no glimmering of an idea of Kamtschatka disturbed him.

But from this further trouble Mrs. Mountjoy was able to save her daughter. M. Grascour made his way into Mrs. Mountjoy's presence, and there declared his purpose. He had been sent over on some question connected with the liberation of commerce, and had ventured to take the opportunity of coming down to Cheltenham. He hoped the truth of his affection would be evinced by the journey. Mrs. Mountjoy observed, while he was making his little speech, how extremely well brushed was his hat. She had observed, also, that poor Mr. Anderson's hat was in such a condition as almost to make her try to smooth it down for him. "If you make objection to my hat, you should brush it yourself," she had heard Harry say to Florence, and Florence had taken the hat, and had brushed it with fond lingering touches.

"M. Grascour, I can assure you that she is really engaged," Mrs. Mountjoy had said. M. Grascour bowed and sighed. "She is to be married this day week."

"Indeed!"

"To Mr. Harry Annesley."

"Oh—h—h! I remember the gentleman's name. I had thought——"

"Well, yes; there were objections, but they have luckily disappeared." Though Mrs. Mountjoy was only as yet happy in a melancholy manner, rejoicing with but bated joy at her girl's joys, she was too loyal to say a word now against Harry Annesley.

"I should not have troubled you, but——"

"I am sure of that, M. Grascour; and we are both of us grateful to you for your good opinion. I know very well how high is the honour which you are doing Florence; and she will quite understand it. But you see the thing is fixed; it's only a week." Florence was said, at the moment, to be not at home, though she was upstairs, looking at four dozen new pocket-handkerchiefs which had just come from the pocket-handkerchief merchant, with the letters F. A. upon them. She had much more pleasure in looking at them than she would have had in listening to the congratulations of M. Grascour.

"He's a very good man, no doubt, mamma; a deal better, perhaps, than Harry." That, however, was not her true opinion. "But one can't marry all the good men."

There was almost more trouble taken down at Buston about Harry's marriage

than his sister's, though Harry was to be married at Cheltenham, and only his father, and one of his sisters as a bridesmaid, were to go down to assist upon the occasion. His father was to marry them, and his mother had at last consented to postpone the joy of seeing Florence till she was brought home from her travels, a bride three months old. Nevertheless, a great fuss was made, especially at Buston Hall. Mr. Prosper had become comparatively light in heart since the duty of providing a wife for Buston and a future mother for Buston heirs had been taken off his shoulders and thrown upon those of his nephew. The more he looked back upon the days of his own courtship the more did his own deliverance appear to him to be almost the work of Heaven. Where would he have been had Miss Thoroughbung made good her footing in Buston Hall? He used to shut his eyes and gently raise his left hand towards the skies as he told himself that the evil thing had passed by him.

But it had passed by, and it was essential that there should be a bride of some sort at Buston, and as, with all his diligent enquiry, he had heard nothing but good of Florence, she should be received with as hearty a welcome as he could give her. There was one point which troubled him more than all others. He was determined to refurnish the drawing-room and the bedroom in which Florence was destined to sleep. He told his sister in his most solemn manner that he had at last made up his mind thoroughly. The thing should be done. She understood how great a thing it was for him to do. "The two entire rooms!" he said with an almost tragic air. Then he sent for her the next day and told her that, on further consideration, he had determined to add in the dressing-room.

The whole parish felt the effect. It was not so much that the parish was struck by the expenditure proposed, because the squire was known to be a man who had not for years spent all his income, but that he had given way so far on behalf of a nephew whom he had been so anxious to disinherit. Rumour had already reached Buntingford of what the squire had intended to do on the receipt of his own wife,—rumours which had of course since faded away into nothing. It had been positively notified to Buntingford that there should be really a new carpet and new curtains in the drawing-room. Miss Thoroughbung had been known to have

declared at the brewery that the whole thing should be done before she had been there twelve months.

"He shall go the whole hog," she had said. And there had been a little bet between her and her brother, who entertained an idea that Mr. Prosper was an obstinate man. And Joe had brought tidings of the bet to the parsonage;—so that there had been much commotion on the subject. When the bedroom had been included, and then the dressing-room, even Mathew had been alarmed. "It'll come to as much as five hundred pounds!" he had whispered to Mrs. Annesley. Mathew seemed to think that it was quite time there should be somebody to control his master. "Why, ma'am, it's only the other day, because I can remember it myself, when the loo-table came into the house new!" Mathew had been in the place over twenty years. When Mrs. Annesley reminded him that fashions were changed, and that other kinds of tables were required, he only shook his head.

But there was a question more vital than that of expense. How was the new furniture to be chosen? The first idea was that Florence should be invited to spend a week at her future home, and go up and down to London with either Mrs. Annesley or her brother, and select the furniture herself. But there were reasons against this. Mr. Prosper would like to surprise her by the munificence of what he did. And the suggestion of one day was sure to wane before the stronger lights of the next. Mr. Prosper, though he intended to be munificent, was still a little afraid that it should be thrown away as a thing of course,—or that it should appear to have been Harry's work. That would be manifestly unjust. "I think I had better do it myself," he said to his sister.

"Perhaps I could help you, Peter." He shuddered; but it was at the memory of the sound of the word Peter, as it had been blurted out for his express annoyance by Miss Thoroughbung. "I wouldn't mind going up to London with you." He shook his head, demanding still more time for deliberation. Were he to accept his sister's offer he would be bound by his acceptance. "It's the last drawing-room carpet I shall ever buy," he said to himself, with true melancholy, as he walked back home across the park.

Then there had been the other grand question of the journey or not down to

Cheltenham. In a good-natured way Harry had told him that the wedding would be no wedding without his presence. That had moved him considerably. It was very desirable that the wedding should be more than a merely legal wedding. The world ought to be made aware that the heir to Buston had been married in the presence of the Squire of Buston. But the journey was a tremendous difficulty. If he could have gone from Buston direct to Cheltenham it would have been comparatively easy. But he must pass through London, and to do this he must travel the whole way between the Northern and Western railway-stations. And the trains would not fit. He studied his Bradshaw for an entire morning, and found that they would not fit. "Where am I to spend the hour and a quarter?" he asked his sister mournfully. "And there would be four journeys, going and coming;—four separate journeys!" And these would be irrespective of numerous carriages and cabs. It was absolutely impossible that he should be present in the flesh on that happy day at Cheltenham. He was left at home for three months, July, August, and September, in which to buy the furniture,—which, however, was at last procured by Mrs. Annesley.

The marriage, as far as the wedding was concerned, was not nearly as good fun as that of Joe and Molly. There was no Mr. Crabtree there, and no Miss Thoroughbung. And Mrs. Mountjoy, though she meant to do it all as well as it could be done, was still joyous only with bated joy. Some tinge of melancholy still clung to her. She had for so many years thought of her nephew as the husband destined for her girl, that she could not be as yet demonstrative in her appreciation of Harry Annesley. "I have no doubt we shall come to be true friends, Mr. Annesley," she had said to him.

"Don't call me Mr. Annesley."

"No, I won't, when you come back again and I am used to you. But at present there—there is a something."

"A regret, perhaps."

"Well, not quite a regret. I am an old-fashioned person, and I can't change my manners all at once. You know what it was that I used to hope."

"Oh yes. But Florence was very stupid and would have a different opinion."

"Of course I am happy now. Her happiness is all the world to me. And things have undergone a change."

"That's true. Mr. Prosper has made

over the marrying business to me, and I mean to go through it like a man. Only you must call me Harry." This she promised to do, and did in the seclusion of her own room give him a kiss. But still her joy was not loud, and the hilarity of her guests was moderate. Mrs. Armitage did her best, and the bridesmaids' dresses were pretty,—which is all that is required of a bridesmaid. Then, at last, the fatal carriage came, and they were carried away to Gloucester, where they were committed to the undertaker, commonplace, but much more comfortable mercies of the railway-carriage. There we will part with them, and encounter them again but for a few moments as after a long day's ramble they made their way back to a solitary but comfortable hotel among the Bernese Alps. Florence was on a pony, which Harry had insisted on hiring for her, though Florence had declared herself able to walk the whole way. It had been very hot, and she was probably glad of the pony. They had both alpenstocks in their hands, and on the pommel of her saddle hung the light jacket with which he had started, and which had not been so light but that he had been glad to ease himself of the weight. The guide was lagging behind, and they two were close together. "Well, old girl," he said, "and now what do you think of it all?"

"I'm not so very much older than I was when you took me, pet."

"Oh yes, you are. Half of your life has gone; you have settled down into the cares and duties of married life, none of which had been thought of when I took you."

"Not thought of! They have been on my mind ever since that night at Mrs. Armitage's."

"Only in a romantic and therefore untrue sort of manner. Since that time you have always thought of me with a white choker and dress boots."

"Don't flatter yourself; I never looked at your boots."

"You knew that they were the boots and the clothes of a man making love, didn't you? I don't care personally very much about my own boots. I never shall care about another pair. But I should care about them. Anything that might give me the slightest assistance!"

"Nothing was wanted; it had all been done, Harry."

"My pet! But still a pair of highlows heavy with nails would not have been

efficacious then. 'I did think I loved him,' you might have said to yourself, 'but he is such an awkward fellow.'"

"It had gone much beyond that at Mrs. Armitage's."

"But now you have to take my highlows as part of your duty."

"And you?"

"When a man loves a woman he falls in love with everything belonging to her. You don't wear highlows. Everything you possess as specially your own has to administer to my sense of love and beauty."

"I wish, I wish it might be so."

"There is no danger about that at all. But I have to come before you on an occasion such as this as a kind of navy. And you must accept me." She glanced round furtively to see whether their guide was looking, but the guide had fallen back out of sight. So, sitting on her pony, she put her arm around his neck and kissed him. "And then there is ever so much more," he continued. "I don't think I snore."

"Indeed, no! There isn't a sound comes from you. I sometimes look to see if I think you are alive."

"But if I do, you'll have to put up with it. That would be one of your duties as a wife. You never could have thought of that when I had those dress boots on."

"Of course I didn't. How can you talk such rubbish?"

"I don't know whether it is rubbish. Those are the kind of things that must fall upon a woman so heavily. Suppose I were to beat you."

"Beat me."

"Yes,—hit you over the head with this stick!"

"I am sure you will not do that."

"So am I. But suppose I were to. Your mother used to tell of my leaving that poor man bloody and speechless. What if I were to carry out my usual habits as then shown? Take care, my darling, or that brute'll throw you." This he said as the pony stumbled over a stone.

"Almost as unlikely as you are. One has to risk dangers in the world, but one makes the risk as little as possible. I know they won't give me a pony that will tumble down. And I know that I've told you to look to see that they don't. You chose the pony, but I had to choose you. I don't know very much about ponies, but I do know something about a lover; and I know that I have got one that will suit me."

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER V. A STORY OF FAMILY POLICY.

STARTLED, vexed, almost frightened at the possibility of the object of her mission being suspected, not at the fact of being found alone with Mr. Boldero in his orchard, Jenifer gave but a cold response to the hilarious greeting of Mrs. Jervoise and Effie.

"You are seldom out of bed at eleven o'clock in the morning, either of you," she said, releasing Mr. Boldero's hands as she spoke, and getting nearer to the holly-hedge which divided her from the pony-carriage and its occupants. "How could I think that for once you wished for an early morning drive?"

"If you had thought it would you have asked us to come with you?" Mrs. Jervoise asked with her most superior satirical smile.

"No, indeed, I wouldn't," Jenifer said bluntly. "I wanted to speak to Mr. Boldero alone."

"Mr. Boldero—Effie, introduce me, please—is indeed a fortunate man to be sought early in the morning in this way by a young Diana; but how fortunate that we caught a glimpse of you over the hedge, for now I'm sure Mr. Boldero is going to ask us in to inspect his art-treasures, of which I've heard so much from my brother-in-law, Hubert Ray."

Mrs. Jervoise spoke to him in her sweetest tones, and smiled upon him with her sweetest smile. But he was not beguiled by either into forgetting that the time was over which he could give to pleasure this morning.

"You come too late, Mrs. Ray," he said, addressing himself to Effie instead of to her sister, who had spoken to him; "if

you had been as active and early as Miss Ray you would have found me among those art-treasures of which you speak so flatteringly, and I would have shown them to you. As it is, I shall be late for a business appointment, unless I wish you all good-morning and ride into Exeter at once."

He raised his hat to the two ladies on the other side of the hedge, and held his hand out cordially to Jenifer.

"You have disappointed me," she said impulsively.

"I know it, I grieve about it, but I can't help it," he said in a low tone which baffled two pairs of eager ears. Then he went away, not even telling Jenifer that one day she would be bound to forgive him for this seeming lukewarmness about her brother Jack, though he longed with strong longing to do so.

"Well, Jenifer," Mrs. Ray began, when Jenifer presently, mounted on her mare Witchcraft, came out into the road, and fell into position by the side of the pony-carriage; "well, Jenifer, for a bold action that in a London girl would be called unpardonable audacity, commend me to the modest village violet! What private business could you have had with this grave and rather repellent man of law, that could justify such a step as coming by yourself to call upon him?"

"My business quite justified the step, Effie," Jenifer said carelessly. It was a relief to her that her sister-in-law should rather impute lightness of conduct to her than that she should suspect the deep anxiety, the well-grounded fears which had brought her over to consult her father's trusted friend, who had refused to be consulted.

"Jenifer dear, you surely didn't take what I said seriously, did you?" said Mrs.

Ray, smiling beamingly till all her glistening little white teeth displayed themselves. "Why of course there's nothing in your coming over to talk to the family lawyer; the family lawyer has so much in his power, hasn't he, Flora?"

"How should I know, never having heard of him before to-day?" said Mrs. Jervoise, for she felt her sister's insinuations to be indiscreet.

"I thought I heard you say that Hubert had talked to you so much about Mr. Boldero's art-treasures," Jenifer put in with downright direct truthfulness.

"So I did, Miss Conscience, who is so ready to smite me. Hubert has spoken to me of the lawyer's pictures and bronzes; never of the lawyer himself."

"I am surprised at that. Hubert thinks so much more of Mr. Boldero than of what Mr. Boldero possesses," Jenifer said thoughtfully; and then, having by this time had quite enough of Mrs. Ray's conversation, she let Witchcraft go, and drew a long breath of relief when she found that the pony-carriage was far behind her.

"Failed, failed in the quarter where I looked for certain help," the girl said to herself as she went along. "Oh, Jack! poor boy, what can I do for you now? Hubert has drunk in his wife's opinions till they have intoxicated him; mother can't, or rather sha'n't, if I can help it, know what makes me want to get Jack away from Hillingsmoor; and Jack himself is only too ready to stay where he can hunt, and shoot, and fish, and idle, and— Poor Jack!"

The ladies had quite a vivacious little party that night at Moor Royal. For Mr. Ray and Jack were two of the three gentlemen who were dining with Mr. Boldero, and Mr. Jervoise slept so peacefully that he was not counted or considered at all.

Christmas was close upon them now, and Mrs. Ray and her sister were busy devising various schemes for combining philanthropy with pleasure. They had got the vicar's consent to train a chosen few of the village girls to act in a pretty little operetta for the good of the choir-fund. And they had arranged a number of tableaux vivants in which they and Hubert were to take part only. Jenifer had not been asked to aid them. They thought her too pretty for their purpose, and pretended to think that her grief for her father was too new for her to do more than watch their bright doings like any other guest.

Old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer listened with sympathetic interest to all the bright, clever suggestions which the enterprising sisters made to one another. They carried their audience with them invariably, this pair, whether they were acting in public or in private only. And to-night Jenifer found herself helping to run up æsthetic calico dresses for the girls who were to take part in the operetta, with all her heart.

In fact she had entirely dismissed the chagrined feeling of the morning, and under the influence of a new excitement she was allowing some of her doleful forebodings about her brother Jack to recede into the background.

Presently Mrs. Jervoise said:

"Effe, we colourless yellow-haired women can't do everything. I want a Nell Gwynn to pose with Captain Edgecumbe's Charles the Second. Find a bonny brunette for me."

"Devonshire women are lovely, as a rule," old Mrs. Ray put in; "brighter eyes, clearer complexions, more luxuriant hair I have never seen anywhere than in this district."

"Mrs. Ray, you're the very friend we're in need of," Mrs. Jervoise cried, going up very gracefully and graciously to the widow's chair; "find us a brunette beauty such as you describe. I feel sure you can lay your hands upon a dozen."

"The girl I am thinking of is not a lady, but she's a good, sensible girl—a very good girl, I'm sure, and she'll not suffer her head to be turned by flattery," old Mrs. Ray said, drawing herself up; "it's Minnie Thurtle, our gamekeeper's daughter, whom I mean—"

"Oh, mother," Jenifer interrupted hastily, with ill-concealed vexation, "don't suggest taking a girl like Minnie so utterly out of her place."

"Why not? we could put her back in her place easily enough when we had done with her," Mrs. Jervoise said, laughing. Then in defiant disregard of a few words of expostulation and reprobation from Jenifer, the two sisters went on planning how they would set about securing old Thurtle's consent to his daughter's acting with the gentry.

"What is she like, Jenifer?" young Mrs. Ray asked. "I ought to have been shown all the beauties on my husband's estate."

"She has fine dark eyes, a good figure, and a bold expression. Minnie Thurtle is no favourite of mine," Jenifer said impatiently; "if you get her up here to amuse

your guests she will be fancying herself one of them, and may give you trouble, Effie."

"If she forgets how to behave I'll very quickly freshen up her memory; but I'm not a bit afraid. From what you say she has the very face for Nell Gwynn. We'll go and see her to-morrow, Flora. By the way, where does Thurtle live?"

"In a cottage close to the home farm-house."

"Does he? I know it then. Jack pointed out the cottage to me the other day—such a pretty one, Flora; a perfect little bower it must be in summer, all covered with honeysuckle and roses. Jack says he shall turn it into his bailiff's house when he settles at the home-farm."

"Jack will have to be his own bailiff," his mother said seriously. "The home-farm must cease to be a toy to him now, if he wants to make a living out of it."

Jenifer could bear it no longer.

"You're all of you cruelly kind in wishing Jack to be at the home-farm. We shall all bitterly regret his taking it."

"You're not at all anxious to keep your brother near you, Miss Ray," Mrs. Jervoise said, throwing back her head, and striving to make Jenifer understand how insignificant she was, and how little her opinions were regarded.

"Not under such conditions; but what I have to say about it I will say to Hubert and Jack."

"Don't delude yourself with the idea that you can induce Hubert to alter any opinion I have taught him to form," Effie cried with aggravating assurance. "It's the best thing possible for Jack that he should remain down here near us all; he has been brought up in the country, and knows nothing of a London life. If he were cast adrift in London without Hubert to look after him he would probably come to grief."

Jenifer got up when her sister-in-law ceased speaking, and walked over to the piano. She had not been playing at all since the death of her father and the home-coming of the bride, and both Effie and Mrs. Jervoise looked at her with as much astonishment as admiration, when she had played a few bars in a masterly manner.

"Why, Jenifer, you play deliciously," Effie cried frankly; "if I could play like that I'd give lessons and be quite independent of everyone, wouldn't you, Flora?"

"Rather!" Mrs. Jervoise promptly responded. "Why, Miss Ray, if you were

to go to London, where you are so anxious to send your brother Jack, you would soon make a fortune, by playing at concerts and that sort of thing."

Jenifer bit her lips and constrained herself not to speak. It was coming then, the attempt that she had foreseen would be made to oust her out of her old home.

But though she kept silence and the peace, her mother was not able to follow her example.

"It would break my heart to think that my daughter had to go out into the cold world to work for her daily bread," old Mrs. Ray said with unwise, heartfelt, passionate feeling.

"Calling the world cold is a mere phrase, Mrs. Ray," Effie said incisively. "I always think it such nonsense to call the world names such as 'cold' and 'hard' and 'cruel' if one doesn't happen to be as well off as one wishes to be. I never found the world anything but very pleasant; did you, Flora?"

"It's quite good enough for me," Mrs. Jervoise said, walking up to the fire, her hands, sparkling with diamonds, clasped over her golden head.

"You have been two very fortunate young ladies," old Mrs. Ray said with gentle bitterness.

"Oh, I don't know about that," Effie said judicially, "only we always make the best of things, and get as much pleasure as we can out of everything; don't we, Flora? Why, some girls coming down as I did straight away from all the balls and theatricals and hunting that I'd been having at Flora's country place, would have moped themselves to death."

"That they would," Mrs. Jervoise agreed; "but we're neither of us great at making a moan. Miss Ray, why have you stopped playing?"

"Effie and you were speaking so loud that I had to bang in order to hear myself," Jenifer said good-temperedly. Then she added: "Besides, I got interested in listening to your happy philosophy."

At this moment Mr. Jervoise woke himself up with a start. He looked at his wife curiously for a few moments, as she stood in all the glory of her rich lace and jewels full in the blaze of lamp and fire-light. Then he said peevishly:

"You wear too much jewellery, Flora; there's no rest for the eye in looking at you; you're too bright, my dear, too bright; you shine too much, you lack repose."

"I shall think you lack common-sense,

to say nothing of courtesy, if you go on in that strain," Flora said carelessly.

"Don't fidget about in that maddening manner," he said more peevishly still; "you wear too many di'mons—you lack pos—you——"

His words ceased to flow, his head fell on one side, and his mouth remained open. Flora flew to the bell, which she rang liberally but without excited violence.

"Send for the best doctor in Exeter at once," she said collectedly, "and tell the messenger to say that Mr. Jervoise has a stroke of paralysis, and that it has been expected for some time. The doctor will have time to think of treatment as he comes over, if he knows a few facts beforehand."

"How wonderfully you keep your head, Flora," Effie said admiringly. And Mrs. Jervoise lifted her shoulders lightly in acknowledgment of a compliment which she felt to be well-deserved.

Then between them they superintended the removal of the stricken man to his own chamber, over the arrangements of which Mrs. Jervoise presided indefatigably for several days.

She really was unwearied in her attention to her suffering husband, and only allowed herself a little relief from the depressing atmosphere and influence of the sick-room, when her sister could take her place. But at the time she showed no sign of anxiety; nervousness and fatigue appeared to be unknown, and never a cloud dimmed the brightness of her fair face, nor a thrill of alarm for the sufferer rendered the clear metallic voice tremulous.

"Your sister bears up in a wonderful way," old Mrs. Ray said to her daughter-in-law about a fortnight after the paralytic stroke had fallen on Mr. Jervoise.

"Oh, Flora and I never feel tired or give up when there's anything to do," Effie answered gaily; "we look slight and delicate, but in reality we can do twice as much as most big robust-looking women."

"I wish Mrs. Jervoise would let me or Jenifer lighten her labours," old Mrs. Ray said earnestly. Her best sympathies were aroused by the sight of the unflagging zeal with which the pretty young wife devoted herself to her helpless husband.

"Oh, thanks, but Flora isn't a bit tired, and Mr. Jervoise likes to see her about the room; and do you know she has got on with those character-costumes twice as fast as if Mr. Jervoise had kept well, and things had gone on as usual? Flora's cleverer with her needle than I am, and

she has such perfect taste. You'll be surprised when you see the Marie Stuart and Nell Gwynn costumes, and you'll hardly know Minnie Thurtle in hers."

"Do you still mean to have your dramatic entertainment, Effie?" Jenifer asked.

"Yes, Jenifer; the invitations are out, and we mean to make it a great success. Mr. Jervoise will be able to sit up and be moved into his dressing-room by that time, so that there will be nothing in Flora's leaving him for a few hours in the evening. You know he can always amuse himself with sleeping in the evening."

"Have you spoken to Thurtle about his daughter acting yet?" Jenifer asked eagerly.

"Oh yes, and had her here two or three times, and drilled her into doing her part very fairly," Effie cried triumphantly.

It was with difficulty that Jenifer repressed an exclamation of pain and dread.

THE SOLDIER AT HOME.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THOMAS ATKINS is a youth who has given a good deal of trouble to his friends—with all the goodwill on his part to save them any trouble at all—simply because he is of a tough and elastic composition, which refuses to be squeezed into any of the holes, round or square, that happen to be open to him upon the shuffle-board of life. He is not at all an ill-conditioned or sulky young fellow; his faults are all the other way. If life were all beer and skittles, Tom would rise to a distinguished position and become the ruler of men, for at skittles or anything else that can be done by manual skill or dexterity Tom is clever enough. He is by no means idle with his hands, it is his head that he cannot be got to use. All the doings of men of science and so on from Galileo upwards or downwards he regards with polite indifference; but he has a real worship for a "best on record," and regards the champions of the oar and the racing-path with a veneration he accords to no other dignitaries, whether of Church or State. Tom would make an excellent "squire of the parish," but, as such positions are not bestowed on the most worthy, he stands a fair chance of sinking down to something very like the pauper of the parish. So that coming to an old friend during one of his periodic slides in the direction of the latter, the conscientious advice was given

him, "Go for a soldier." "I will," said Tom, and forthwith disappeared.

Remorse was at first the lot of his adviser. For Tom has a sister, with the same handsome face as her brother, but with a force of character that would, had Tom possessed it, have landed him Lord Mayor of London at least. In her case it brought her, combined with the handsome face, a rich husband and a nice house in Bayswater. Now the immediate result of Tom's going and enlisting was, that Mrs. Creaker, his sister, drove at once to the barracks, whence Tom had written a pathetic farewell, and paying down the sum of ten pounds smart money—at which moderate tariff for the first three months after enlistment the recruit is let off his bargain—carried him off triumphantly in her brougham.

"If she had only forked out the ten pounds before I'd joined," said Tom ruefully.

But it is doubtful whether Mr. Creaker would have drawn that cheque, just for Tom's benefit. Perhaps it was not Tom's future career he was concerned about, so much as the family position. To think of Tom coming to see his relations in a scarlet shell with a cane and a small cap set jauntily on the side of his head, for all the world like one of Mary the housemaid's admirers—oh, it would be too much to bear!

Tom himself may have had something to bear, and likely enough found the comfortable house in Bayswater anything but a bower of roses. Anyhow, one morning came an agitated note from Mrs. Creaker.

"T. has disappeared, I fear to enlist again. C. will never pay another penny for him. But try and save him."

A pleasant, lively scene this fine spring morning, the neighbourhood of Trafalgar Square, where the great world has just opened its eyes and begun to stir, a sunny haze over Whitehall, and the omnibuses and cabs quite transfigured in the brightness of it; the padded old generals ambling to their clubs; ministers and M.Ps. hurrying to their offices or their committees; artists making for their easels, and millionaires for the money-market; a pleasant scene with the dignified buildings, and columns, and porticoes; but a little out of keeping with a forlorn band of young fellows gathered near the steps of the National Gallery. Peaked and hungry-looking are these young fellows, and rather shabby as to garments; with red comforters making

the most of themselves as chest-protectors; with coats buttoned as tightly as a scarcity of buttons permits; with dilapidated pantaloons, and woeful boots.

Every now and then a scarlet jacket appears upon the scene, and a stout and rosy sergeant looks critically over the little squad, and even enters condescendingly into conversation; while the young fellows, pale and nervous-looking in prospect of the ordeal before them—they are not recruits yet, but only aspirants for the position—brisk up and assume as best they can an air of ease and nonchalance.

Among this band we might expect to see the familiar form of Tom; but he is not here. He must have chosen some other avenue for entrance to the British Army. Perhaps he has gone to some district post-office, and posted himself to a distant battalion, or joined at some local centre.

These local centres, by the way—the brigade depôts of the new system of linked battalions—hardly do what was expected of them in the way of furnishing local recruits—the sturdy country youth who are wanted hang back a good deal. If these enlist at all, they often have reasons of their own for leaving the neighbourhood where they are known; and then old soldiers say there is something very discouraging about the entourage of a depôt, with its crusty sergeants, no military display to stir the imagination, and nothing but everlasting recruit-drill going on. The large towns and their recruiting agencies still furnish the bulk of new enlistments; and this especial one of West London sends perhaps the largest contingent of all. For this is no exceptional muster we are told, the same number of recruits come up day after day in an unceasing if not very powerful stream.

By this the little group has marched off between the iron rails where placards hang, calling the attention of young men to the advantages of the army in general, and of the Royal Bombardiers in particular, or whatever may be the corps in want of recruits, and under the archway into the barrack-yard.

At the entrance to the barrack-yard a little crowd has gathered, seemingly friends and acquaintances of the recruits, who gradually edge forward in their eagerness to get a view of them till the sentry on duty pushes them back. And there in front of the dun-coloured barrack buildings, A, B, and C, are drawn up in line the squad of recruits, while more stout, well-fed sergeants

come up and look them over. A soldier's wife overhead tranquilly arranges a pot of mignonette, and hangs out a bird-cage in the sunshine—the sunshine that streams across the barrack-yard, in the full blaze of which a party of Guardsmen, in white fatigue-jackets, are going through a bit of punishment-drill, marching here and there, now threatening to go right through the barrack wall, or again to transfix themselves upon the iron railing, but pulled up always at the right moment by the word of command, as if the sergeant had a string to them and pulled them hither and thither, like an Italian boy with his white mice.

The crowd at the gate, however, have no eye except for their friends, the recruits. There is a general cry: "That's him; that's the bloke as 'll nail 'em!" as a military surgeon in plain clothes marches in at the barrack-door. Then the sergeant straightens up the little band, and dresses the line, while some of the lads—the most eccentric in the way of apparel—cut capers and indulge in grimaces expressive of intense enjoyment of such a happy farce. A few more have joined the line, one with a decent great-coat and muffler about his neck, who might be a City clerk, very pale and anxious looking; and another, a fine strapping young fellow, whose set and resolute face would become the leader of a forlorn hope—and that! yes; surely that is Tom himself.

And so Tom marches in with the rest of the awkward squad, marches before the surgeon provided only with the free kit that Nature gave him on his entrance into the world. He is measured by the standard that resembles an enlarged copy of the machine that shoemakers use to take the length of their customers' feet. Tom is five feet ten inches and a half, and will do for the foot-guards or heavy cavalry—if he chooses to go for them—while the little fellow who follows him barely passes the five feet four inches which is the minimum standard for anything. Then Tom is told to count ten while the tape is run round his chest. He counts slowly enough, and with an accent of contempt in his voice, as if there could be any possible doubt of that well-developed chest of his being under the mark. But some of the slips of fellows manage to count ten and yet keep their chests full of wind; after the manner of Boreas outside, who seems to go on blowing for ever without exhausting the supply; and so just save their thirty-four inches. Some of the

younger ones fail to pass at all, and are sent back to complete their growth. All, without exception, give the age of nineteen years or a little over, though many of them are perhaps a year or two younger. But no proof is required as to age, only the physical equivalent of nineteen years is required in a recruit, and many a stout, forward young fellow of seventeen would pass for nineteen, where a weedy youth, who had really attained that age, might be sent back.

Then there is the test of weight; the recruit must scale at least one hundred and twenty pounds. Tom has at least a couple of stone to spare. There is no question about his being a likely recruit. The only doubtful point now is as to Tom's sister. Will she come down upon him again and insist on buying him out? The matter is discussed quite dispassionately by the recruiting-sergeants. As far as they are concerned, so much the better for them if Tom is bought out every other day and enlists in the intervals. Already has Tom's especial sergeant made two pounds by the transaction, as he is paid a pound for each recruit who passes the medical examination. Out of this he has generally to pay ten shillings to the bringer-in, or unofficial tout who secures the recruit, but in this case Tom has brought himself, and gets nothing—no, not even the Queen's shilling that formerly everyone got who listed for the army, whether accepted or rejected; and all that dramatic business of slipping the shilling into the hand of the half-reluctant and half-inebriated recruit has come to an end. Recruiting is now conducted on temperance principles; each man has a little pamphlet put into his hand, almost like a tract. Tom has been studying this pamphlet attentively while sitting in the bare barrack-room waiting for further orders.

It is well that Tom is prepared, for presently he is sent for, and there in the corridor is his sister with her husband, the latter looking very chilly and uncomfortable.

Mrs. Creaker falls upon her brother's neck and weeps.

"Dear Tom," she sobs, "Edward will give you another chance. I have got the ten pounds, and you must give me your word of honour that you'll never, never do it any more."

But Tom holds firm.

"Look here, Lucy," he says in a husky voice; "you mean it well, perhaps, but you shouldn't try to drag me from a thing I'm cut out for."

"We are not going to drag you, Tom," interposed Mr. Creaker authoritatively; "only we expect you to listen to reason. Now, tell us, in the first place, what are the terms of this absurd enlistment?"

"For seven years," said Tom readily, "or eight if the time of service expires when abroad."

"Exactly," replied Creaker. "The best years of your life; the years when you ought to be making a position for yourself in the world and laying the foundation of future competency. And at the end of this precious seven or eight years—there you are, cast aside like an old shoe."

"Not a bit of it," said Tom. "The soldier, when he leaves the colours, has five years, or four, as the case may be, in the reserve, for which time he gets sixpence a day for doing nothing."

"With a liability," adds Creaker, "to be called out at any time when he's wanted—when, if he should have had the luck to find a decent situation, he is sure to lose it. And at the end of your twelve years, Tom, where will you be? A candidate for the workhouse."

"Not a bit," answered Tom calmly. "I don't mean to leave the army for that. What I've been telling you about is the look-out of an illiterate man who doesn't care for anything better. And it isn't so bad for him. He draws his twenty or perhaps thirty pounds of reserved pay when he leaves his regiment, and so, with his sixpence a day, he can set himself up in a little business if he likes. But as I can read and write and cypher, I shall be a sergeant, I'm told, before many years are over, and then I can stay on for my twenty-one years and a pension."

"A sergeant!" cried Creaker, turning to his wife. "Just fancy—a relative of mine with those horrid stripes on his arm!"

"I promise you this," cried Tom bitterly: "I'll never come to your house to make you ashamed of me, anyhow."

"Oh, Tom, we shall never be ashamed of you!" said his sister, beginning to sob again.

But Creaker shook his head solemnly. As Tom was so obdurate, he must be left to his fate. For his own part, he should consider him as civilly dead.

Tom looked a little awestruck at this phrase, not knowing exactly what it meant; but anyhow he was not to be shaken in his purpose, and so his friends took their departure, leaving him a little sore at heart, but quite determined to make the best of his way as a soldier laddie.

Of course Tom's sudden disappearance from the society of which he had been an ornament caused a good deal of speculation. People wanted to know where that nice young fellow had gone, and the young women—those Dashwood girls especially—with whom he had waltzed and played tennis, and generally made himself useful, were full of curiosity as to his fate. And at first the Creakers enveloped the matter in gloom and mystery.

Tom kept up a correspondence with an old friend, who continued to keep Mrs. Creaker informed of his doings. On the whole he had no reason to complain of his treatment. He had soon passed his drills and joined the ranks, and now he had plenty of time to himself, and smoked and read the newspaper like any swell with six thousand a year. At first he had found the atmosphere of the barrack-room rather sulphurous. The army that swore horribly in Flanders has gone on swearing rather more than less ever since. And in this respect the army reorganised is about on a par with the old establishment, except perhaps that there is rather a wearisome sameness and reiteration of profanity about the young soldiers. After all, Tom had come to the conclusion that all this was but an echo of the tone of the workshop and public-houses in civil life, and sprang more from a paucity of ideas and a yearning for forcible expression with a limited vocabulary than from any particular inherent depravity. And taking them individually, the soldiers were not at all bad fellows, and would talk sensibly enough; each man with his own history to himself, and some kind of plan for the future, generally blown to the winds at the first chance of a big drink. And as for that, after a dusty march out with a pack on your back and a heavy rifle in your fist, a can of beer at the canteen, very good and cheap, was something of a luxury. They had all plenty of money to spend, perhaps rather too much—four shillings a week on an average, clear of everything, which could be made ducks and drakes of at the canteen, or worse still, in the grogshops of the town.

But as for social disadvantages, that the private soldier may have to put up with, Tom averred that he had not felt them as yet. Of course if he went into the town it was rather annoying to find that the red coat shut him out of most places of resort of the better class—to find that the soldier was welcomed only in low public-houses

and entertainments of the penny gaff style. But then he found sufficient amusement without going out of bounds. There was the gymnasium, where any odd time could be profitably employed; and the reading-room, with a chance of being quiet and undisturbed; and then what with drills and fatigue duty and the rest, the young soldiers are always ready for a comfortable snooze. For they were turned out early in the morning and were kept at it pretty well till tea-time, about four. After that their time was their own in a general way, unless on guard that night.

Of course all this had to go to Mrs. Creaker, who still had a kindly feeling for Tom, although she could not persuade her husband to share it. There were others, however, who did not require any persuading to share in this regard. The young women before alluded to had been his friends in his hours of idleness. Somehow the secret had leaked out, and it had become generally known that Tom had gone for a soldier, and the result was an amount of sympathy and kindly feeling on his behalf that was really touching. The amount of latent military feeling that showed itself in female bosoms, if known to the authorities, would have justified them in proposing to raise a regiment of Amazons. It must be cavalry, by the way. The women to a man—if the phrase may be allowed—will go for horsemanship. The general outcry was: "Oh, why did Tom go into a stupid infantry regiment; he would have been so lovely as a dragoon!"

As it happened Tom had taken advice upon this matter—the advice of a hard-headed Scotch sergeant, who had decidedly pronounced for the infantry of the line—that is, for a decent well-educated young man who meant to make the army his profession and hoped to rise in it. For one thing there are many more well-educated young fellows in the ranks of the cavalry than in the infantry, and consequently the chance of rapidly rising to the non-commissioned rank so much the less. And then the duties are much more engrossing and afford less opportunity for self-improvement. But the main thing, perhaps, that influenced Tom, was a half-acknowledged hope that one day or other he might win his commission. Not one of those commissions granted exclusively to deserving soldiers; for respectable as is the position of the regimental quartermaster or riding-master, it is not one that would tempt a young

fellow of spirit and courage. No, let me be a combatant officer, or leave me in the ranks, he would say. And this was just Tom's feeling, that if he had great good luck, and kept himself coached up so as to be qualified for the examination, he might some day, before he was too old, gain his commission as lieutenant. The Scotch sergeant shook his head over this, and when Tom triumphantly pointed out this passage in the little tract before alluded to, "A limited number of non-commissioned officers who are recommended by their commanding officers, and who are able to pass the qualifying examination, are annually selected for commissions as lieutenants," "A verra leemited number, indeed ye'll find it," rejoined the sergeant, and opined that this regulation was for the benefit of young men who were unable to pass for Sandhurst, but who had influence enough to get pushed through the ranks in this way. But then, said Tom hopefully, perhaps there'll be an improvement before long; perhaps the example of the French will be followed, who give something like a third of their commissions to men from the ranks. And Tom is sure that, if some such prospect as this were offered, there would be a regular rush to the ranks of decent well-educated young fellows, well-fed, well-grown, well-born many of them, if that is a consideration, ready to take their chance in the rough and tumble of a soldier's career, with the hope of this prize, which is valued at far more than its intrinsic worth.

And in this way would be tapped a fresh source of supply. The fitful stream of needy lads, who take to the army as a last resource, would be supplemented by a more regular flow, the élite, in many respects, of English youth. There is no want of martial ardour among them. The difficulty rather is to find anybody who in his youth has not been fired with the military aspiration. And now that for good or ill the whole constitution of the army is changed, why should you not offer the aspiring British youth the one thing that will tempt him to join the ranks?

However, we are forgetting Tom and his female friends, who are pining with anxiety to see him. There is quite a conspiracy among them to induce Mrs. Creaker to have Tom home for his furlough. Creaker is to be got rid of for a time, and Tom to have the run of the house in his absence. Mrs. Creaker has half consented to join the plot, but then what is she to

do with Tom when she gets him? She can't take him about shopping with her in his scarlet tunic, and has he any private clothes, and will he come with his things in a kind of bolster, as she has seen soldiers sometimes at railway-stations? And this private clothes difficulty turns out a serious one. For we are told that it is a rank offence against the Mutiny Acts and the Articles of War, for a private soldier to appear in public out of uniform. He is liable to be treated as a deserter, and hauled off by the nearest policeman, and there would be a disgrace for the house! And somebody who is well informed on the subject, informs us that any police-constable, or officer of the peace, can stop poor Tom and demand his furlough, and that this furlough is a most uncompromising document, with a place in it for date of last offence, as if it were a ticket-of-leave for a convict. The young women are quite ready to face the difficulty; they pooh-pooh the Mutiny Act, and talk lightly of the Articles of War. Mr. Creaker must be got to sign a cheque before he leaves, that will provide Tom with a good outfit and pocket-money for his furlough.

All these difficulties are, however, solved in a quite unforeseen way. Just as Tom is expecting his first furlough, and wondering where he shall spend the time, the difficulty with Egypt comes to a crisis, and his battalion is ordered off to the East, and Tom sails away with the rest. Almost before we have time to be uneasy about him, we hear that victory has crowned our arms, and that the soldiers are all coming back. Tom writes home a flaming account of Tel-el-Kebir, and Creaker, in spite of himself, is so elated, that he actually takes the letter into the City to read to some of his cronies. And when the troops are marched past the Queen, he spends a fabulous sum in hiring windows to see the procession. Tom is on the look-out for us, and waves his helmet, regardless of discipline. He flushes through the bright bronze of his sunburnt face, as he sees the young women who have come to welcome him home. None but the brave deserve the fair!

After this Tom gets a week's leave and spends it at Bayswater by special invitation from Creaker. Tom in his white helmet and serge-suit is quite a lion in the neighbourhood. The small boys assemble and cheer him, and everybody calls to congratulate the hero of Tel-el-Kebir. He is a corporal now, has fairly started on the upward path, and is vastly pleased with his

first promotion. It means eightpence a day more pay too, and that gives him nearly nine shillings a week for pocket-money, with no trouble in making both ends meet.

One day, after dinner, Creaker passes the wine—Tom has not yet been affiliated to the blue ribbon, but threatens it, just to set an example to the privates, he says—however, Creaker looks over his wine-glass at Tom in a meaning way, and thus addresses him:

"Tom, these few months have made a man of you; I fancied they would, and therefore I didn't much oppose your joining. Only I think you've had enough of it. Come, I'll write you a cheque for ten pounds, and you shall buy yourself out, my boy, and take a seat in my office."

"Ten pounds won't buy me now," said Tom. "I'm no longer a recruit; it will take thirty or forty pounds now. And I doubt whether the colonel would part with me; and I assure you I don't feel inclined to part with him. I'm getting a position now in the regiment. No, no; you keep your money in your pocket, old fellow."

"Oh, the money doesn't matter," said Creaker vaingloriously; "if it were a hundred I'd buy you out, Tom, now I've taken a fancy to do it."

Tom would give no immediate answer, although his sister urged him strongly to accept her husband's offer.

"You don't know what he might not do for you, Tom," she urged.

But Tom's notion was, now that he had begun it, to go through with it, and try to do something for himself. For what will he be in Creaker's office?—a hireling who can be replaced at any moment—with a whole row of hungry fellows waiting to snatch the morsel out of his mouth. Now, as a soldier, he is a person sure to be in demand sooner or later; and the possibility of war and its perils gives an element of dignity to existence, and invests the coarse tunic of the soldier with a kind of classic grace. And so with many thanks to his brother-in-law, Tom declines his offer.

"Ah," said Creaker maliciously, "it's all very well now, but before long you'll be wanting to marry somebody. And how then? Would you like to take your wife into barracks?"

"Well," said Tom, "I don't think a soldier has any business to get married—not as a private, anyhow—and with short service there is no reason in it; time

enough for that when a man is passed into the reserve. But, mind you, a married sergeant is not so badly off. If he marries with permission—and as seventy-five per cent. of the sergeants are allowed to marry, there's practically no difficulty—the sergeant gets a room to himself, and his ration of bread and meat is pretty nearly enough for two. Then with his ration of fuel and light, and his half-a-crown a day or so, he isn't rich, indeed, but he needn't starve."

"All very fine," cried Mrs. Creaker; "but I should like to know what one of those Dashwood girls, that you were so sweet upon, Tom, would say to such a prospect."

"Well," said Tom, flushing and laughing uneasily, "I can't afford to buy hot-house grapes at ten shillings a pound," helping himself liberally to some very fine ones as he spoke; "but I won't say they are sour for all that. Look here, we'll have a big row before long, and then I'll come home a captain, and marry Bella Dashwood."

Just then came a letter for Tom, from the sergeant-major of his battalion, saying that they were ordered to Aldershot, and that Tom was to join there on the expiration of his leave.

"Look at that," said Tom, "there's always something stirring in a soldier's life."

"Aldershot—eh," said Creaker, who was somewhat mellowed and softened with an after-dinner feeling of general benevolence. "We'll come over and see you, Tom, as soon as you're settled, and I'll have a talk to your commanding officer."

"Oh yes, that will be famous," cried Mrs. Creaker; "we'll come and see the soldier at home."

BY THE YEW HEDGE.

Up and down the terrace pacing, where the winter
sunlight glowed,
And the sound of falling waters timed my footsteps
as I trode,
Pacing where the tall yew hedges kept the bitter
blast away,
And the noontide smiled like summer on the
January day.

Up and down the terrace pacing, for a musing hour
alone,
While the river's music mingled with the baffled
east wind's moan;
And a presence seemed beside me, very close and
very dear,
A strong hand my hand was clasping, a low voice
was in my ear.

Words of counsel, words of comfort, words of dear
companionship,
And the blue eyes spoke as softly as the mobile
eager lip;
Hope grew brighter, grief grew sweeter, doubt,
ashamed, shrank quite away,
As we two paced on together in the January
day.

Swift and sweet the moments passed me, as the sun-
shine paled o'erhead,
And to common life returning, fell the slow reluc-
tant tread;
Yet my hushed heart from its commune, patience
strength and courage drew;
And north skies with southern splendour gilded all
the darkling yew.

DOCTOR AND PATIENT.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"WELL, doctor, what's the verdict? Am I condemned to death, or are you going to reprieve me?"

"I think I can reprieve you. But I can't promise to do more."

"I never expected it. I know my state quite as well as you—I haven't a year's life in me. Now don't begin to talk the usual rubbish; you ought to know me well enough by this time. Can you give me six months?"

"Not in England."

"Where?"

"Somewhere in the south—say Nice or Cannes. Nice by preference."

"All right, Nice by all means. When can I travel?"

"Early next week, if you rest the remainder of this."

Mr. Fletcher gave a dissatisfied grunt as he turned himself in his bed.

"Look here, Maitland," he said when he had settled himself into a new position; "if you think that at my time of life I'm going to gad about foreign countries by myself, you're mistaken. You'll have to come with me."

The doctor smiled; he was pleasantly surprised to hear his patient make the suggestion, but he did not wish him to see how gratified he was.

"What is to become of my practice meanwhile?" he asked.

"Oh, your practice must take care of itself; look upon this journey as a holiday taken rather earlier than usual. See me safely to Nice, put me into the hands of a good doctor there, and then you can leave me to end my days in peace. I think you will do that for three hundred and expenses?"

"I would do it for less," was Maitland's reply.

"I don't want you to. I'm rich enough, as you well know, to pay well for what people do for me. What do you suppose I want to keep my money for? I can't take it with me, can I—eh?"

"Not beyond Nice," replied the young

doctor, using the freedom which his eccentric patron liked.

"Good, and I sha'n't want much there; I can't make much of a hole in my property in six months, however hard I try; though I believe that young scamp of a nephew of mine will grudge me my daily drive."

Maitland was silent; it was not his place to foster the breach between uncle and nephew, whatever his private opinion of Fred Dexter's character might be.

"You have a father, haven't you?" asked the old gentleman after a pause.

"Yes; he is still living."

"Then treat him better than my son treated me; it will make him happier, if it doesn't make you."

"I wish you would let me speak to you about your son," said Maitland.

"Thank you; I'd sooner hear you on any other subject."

"I don't often trouble you with this one."

"No; or I should change my doctor."

"You have done him injustice, at all events," said Maitland rather warmly, "and I think you will live to repent it."

"In that case you must make me live longer than you profess to be able to do," retorted the invalid. "Don't renew the subject, please, till I ask you. Come in to-morrow, and we will make final arrangements about the journey."

Maitland knew Mr. Fletcher intimately enough to know that the interview was over. He left the room, and proceeded on his round of afternoon visits, reaching his small house about an hour before dinner.

A letter was waiting for him; it was directed in a lady's hand, and bore the postmark of Nice. He read it through twice, apparently enjoying the perusal, then he lay back in his chair and thought.

"It's a stroke of good fortune, most decidedly," he soliloquised. "Amy is at Nice, and now I shall be able to go and see her. That will be a pleasant surprise for her, I hope. I'm afraid she doesn't get too many of them. Luckily Mr. Fletcher will never guess the reason of my recommending Nice; after all, it is just as good for him as any other place, and I may be doing him a greater service than he dreams of in taking him there, if things fall out as they should."

In the midst of his reverie the servant entered, bringing him another letter.

"Please, sir, this came this morning, but you don't seem to have seen it."

Maitland opened it, not with the alacrity

he had shown with the first. It ran thus:

"DEAR MAITLAND,—How is the old boy? This question will savour of nepotic affection or interested selfishness; you may take your own meaning. I ask, because I am amongst the sharks again, and until I can pacify them with a feed on my uncle's accumulations, they are insatiable. I want to know, as a matter of business, how long he is likely to linger on this earth if he has made a will in my favour, as he knows very well I shall not be sorry to get it proved. Why should I hesitate to own as truth that which he taunts me with every time we meet? Could you lend me fifty till the time comes? Charge fifty per cent. if you like. Tell me truth about my uncle; I can bear it even if you give him five years longer. I shall bear it still better if you confine him to five months.—Yours,
"F. DEXTER."

"Heartless brute!" thought Maitland on finishing, "though certainly he never makes a pretence of being anything else. It's fortunate for him that his uncle knows so little about him or his chances of succession would be considerably smaller."

He scribbled a note in reply to the letter simply informing Dexter of his uncle's intended journey and of his state of health. He omitted to give any opinion as to the probable length of his tenure of life.

Dr. Maitland was still a young man in his profession, though he was thirty-four years of age. He had entered it late; his prospects were fairly good, but hitherto his practice had been restricted—in a country town it takes time for a new man to make a position, as every family of standing already possesses a medical man and is unwilling to change. However, he did not despair of getting on. He had every reason for wishing to do so, for he was desirous of getting married. He was not yet even engaged; he had secret reasons for not proposing at present to the girl he loved. Whether he would ever be in a position to do so was more than he could as yet foresee.

Mr. Fletcher had been his patient during the last five years—in fact ever since he began practice. This was partly because he had quarrelled with all the other medical men of the town, but chiefly for a reason that he would never own. This was that Maitland had been a great friend many years before of his only son Charlie.

Charles Fletcher was of a very different stamp from his father. The latter was as a rule selfish and arrogant—diligent in business and economical in habits. He had bred his son up in his own footsteps, but had found that he could not mould his character as he wished. Charlie was inclined to extravagance, held the opinion that money was of no use unless spent, thought that life should be valued for its opportunities of pleasure rather than of gain, and in countless ways ran counter to his father's life-long maxims. Quarrel followed quarrel; the fact that he loved his son so well only made the father more bitterly resent the want of affection and respect with which he was treated, till one day the crisis arrived.

Mr. Fletcher had determined that his son should marry early, hoping by this means to make him settle down. He informed him of his wishes accordingly, pointing out that he intended to make his future prospects depend on the propriety of his selection. Charlie postponed the matter as long as possible, until at last a confession became inevitable. He was married already.

This put a stop to all hope of reconciliation; there was a violent scene, during which the father refused to recognise the marriage, and told his son he must shift for himself. This Charlie said he was quite ready to do, and that his father need not fear any applications for assistance from him. If money made men behave like his father, the less he had of it the better.

A year afterwards Charles Fletcher died in Paris. His father refused even to make enquiry as to his wife, but was informed shortly afterwards of her death also by a paper sent to him from some unknown quarter. He said nothing to any of his friends, but his health gradually broke down, and from being a robust, active man he became in the course of years an invalid. A second attack of paralysis was the immediate cause of Mr. Maitland's last visit, and no one knew better than the patient that his days were numbered.

"Ah well!" he used sometimes to say, "I don't want to live and several people want me to die—the majority ought to have their wish."

CHAPTER II.

HOWEVER, when Mr. Fletcher found himself at Nice, with its charming surroundings and delightful climate, he almost began to have regrets that he must so soon bid farewell to existence.

"I wish, Maitland, I had come here sooner," he said one day. "Why didn't you order me here long ago?"

"It wouldn't have done you any good, and I thought you preferred England."

"So I do to live in, but this is the sort of place to die in."

Maitland made no attempt to turn his thoughts; his patient always resented it if he did.

"I hope you are having a pleasant time here as well," continued Mr. Fletcher. "I don't want to monopolise you, you know."

"Thanks, I think I've shown you I can leave you alone occasionally."

"I didn't know you had friends here. Who are those people I saw you talking to this morning in the gardens?"

"The Kestertons; I only know them slightly."

"H—m!" coughed Mr. Fletcher. "I should have thought you knew one of them rather well. She's a pleasant-looking girl."

Maitland tried his best to look unconscious, and flattered himself he succeeded.

"Oh, I know the one you mean," he said, "but she isn't one of the Kestertons, she's a Miss Fletcher."

"Same name as mine? Well, Fletchers are common enough."

"Yes, but not such Fletchers as she," remarked Maitland.

The old gentleman did not reply; his thoughts had evidently wandered back to old times. Maitland was careful not to disturb him; he had noticed lately that his reveries had become more frequent, and that they seemed to soften the acerbity of his nature.

They were seated on the terrace, where they often came to watch the passers-by; it seemed to please the invalid to see the gay life of which he could no longer be a partaker.

The young doctor was still sitting silently when he was interrupted with: "Bring her here; I want to speak to her."

He looked up and saw the young lady of whom they had been speaking approaching them. By her side ran a little girl of seven or eight years old.

"Do you wish to know her?" asked Maitland.

"Yes; why should you be afraid of me? I'm not likely to be a rival."

Maitland felt this was a home-thrust; the old man's eyes were keen enough yet. He went forward to meet Miss Fletcher, closely watched by his patient.

"Amy," he said, "I want to introduce you to a patient of mine. Oddly enough,

he has the same name as yours. You will do him and me a kindness if you will talk to him a few minutes."

"With pleasure," replied Amy, adding in a half-whisper: "So it is a kindness to you for me to talk to someone else, is it?"

"Sit down here, my dear," said the invalid, after a few minutes' general talk. "Maitland, you take little missy to see that wonderful cactus at the end of the terrace; I want to talk to Miss Fletcher a little."

Maitland obeyed, glad to find that he had interested his patient in a new direction. He took little Cissy's hand and marched her off towards the cactus, though she seemed scarcely to like leaving Miss Fletcher.

She soon began talking about her, and found that her companion was an appreciative listener. Not only that, but he asked questions about her; a most unjustifiable proceeding, of course; but he salved his conscience by arguing that nothing Cissy could say would alter his opinion of her governess, and it was very pleasant to hear her praises sounded by a disinterested observer.

At the end of a quarter of an hour they returned to the seat. Amy rose as they approached.

"Maitland," said Mr. Fletcher, "I am going to stay out here for another hour or so; you had better accompany this young lady home. You will find me here when you return."

Maitland did not make any very lengthened protest.

"How do you like my old friend?" he asked when they were out of hearing.

"I think he is delightful," was Amy's reply.

"What did you talk about?"

"All sorts of things. He asked me a lot of questions: how old I was—that was very rude, wasn't it?—and about my father and mother, and how it was I lived with the Kestertons."

"And what did you say?"

"I told him that you could tell him more about me than I could myself. He seemed rather surprised. I should not wonder if you came in for a cross-examination this evening."

"Did he ask you to come and talk to him again?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I suppose because he liked your society," replied Maitland, wilfully misinterpreting her question. "Be sure you come to the terrace at the same time to-morrow."

"Yes, I will make a point of it, so you can consider yourself relieved."

"I may be relieved, but I don't intend to be dismissed again," replied Maitland with a laugh. "I suppose I have no excuse good enough for coming in?" he added as they reached the door of the villa hired by the Kestertons.

"I must leave you to settle that question."

"I have no excuse at all, but I'm coming in all the same if you will let me."

"It isn't my house," replied Amy.

"That is a very ungracious invitation," said Maitland as he accompanied her into the hall.

When Maitland, half an hour later, returned to his patient, he found him talking with a man who was sitting next him. "He is making acquaintances to-day," thought the young doctor. As he approached, however, he saw that the supposed stranger was Mr. Fletcher's nephew, Fred Dexter.

"Ah, Maitland!" was his greeting, "here I am, you see."

"Yes," put in the old gentleman, on whose nature his nephew always acted as an irritant; "'where the carcass is' you know, Maitland."

"Oh, come, uncle, you're not a carcass yet," protested Dexter. "You might have blamed me with more reason if I'd waited till you were one before I came to see you."

"He seems to be under the impression that I shall be able to blame him after I'm dead," remarked Mr. Fletcher sarcastically to Maitland.

"Oh, come, uncle, I don't see why you should always put the worst interpretation on all I say."

"It won't bear any other," pettishly replied the old man. "Who told you I was here?"

"Maitland. I wrote and asked him about you."

"Do you mind letting me see that letter?"

Maitland here interposed, and said he believed he had not kept it.

"That's a pity," said Dexter; "I should like to have shown it you that you might see what my letters about you are like."

"Let us go in," said Mr. Fletcher; "I'm getting tired. You will dine with us to-night?"

"Many thanks, uncle, but I've promised to see some people to-night."

"Who?"

"They are called Kesterton."

"Do you know them?" enquired Maitland rather anxiously.

"Oh yes, very well. Do you?"

"Slightly."

"There's a very nice girl in the house, a sort of companion, or governess. She's called Fletcher, same name as uncle's. Odd coincidence, isn't it?"

"Come!" said Mr. Fletcher peremptorily.

After dinner, instead of trying to get his usual nap, Mr. Fletcher sat in his easy-chair, evidently in a very excited frame of mind. He seemed undecided what to do; he fidgeted about with one book and another till at last he threw them down, and called out "Maitland!"

"Yes."

"Let me see the letter that precious nephew of mine wrote you. You haven't destroyed it. I could see well enough that you were only trying to screen him. He said I could have read it if it had not been torn up."

"I have it, it's true," replied Maitland; "but I can't show it you without his permission."

"He gave it."

"But I told him I thought I had destroyed it."

"Very well, if you don't show it me I shall conclude the worst; it's clear you would let me see it in a moment if it was fit to be seen. Fred had better take care; he knows that he is my heir, but he doesn't know how near he is to having his expectations disappointed. I'm afraid he is a scamp, and it will be a bad job for him if he can't conceal the fact a few months longer."

Maitland did not attempt to defend Dexter, both his conscience and inclination were against such a course. He knew that he was, in spite of his advantages, a loose, untrustworthy, and selfish fellow, and he had strong reasons for hoping that his succession to Mr. Fletcher's money might never become a fact.

The old man seemed inclined to talk this evening. He turned himself round to face Maitland, and said: "Who is Amy Fletcher?"

"She is governess at the Kestertons'."

"Why? Who got her the place?"

"I did," replied Maitland, looking rather guilty.

"H—m! you seem to take a considerable interest in this young lady. Has she any money?"

"None whatever."

"Then who paid for her schooling?"

"Her father left enough to cover most of the expense."

"And you supplied the rest?"

Maitland's look was sufficient to condemn him.

"It's a nice romantic story," continued the old man; "when do you propose to marry her?"

"I don't know," replied the young doctor; "perhaps not at all."

"You mean she doesn't care for you?"

"No, I don't mean that; but I am in a very peculiar position in regard to her."

"What is the peculiarity?"

"Do you ask me to tell you?"

"Yes; why not?"

"I didn't like to do so without your asking me directly. I have reason to believe that she may be an heiress."

"I don't see why that should stop you."

"No, perhaps not; though people would doubt my sincerity in proposing to a girl so rich as she may become."

"It's very odd that an heiress should be a governess."

"She doesn't know who she is," explained Maitland. "I am the only one in the world who does know. Suppose that I ask her hand—she may accept me; afterwards she discovers that she is very rich; what will she think of me then? She will judge me to be the most despicable man in the world."

"Why not tell her she is an heiress, and then propose? If she loves you, the fact that she is rich will only add to her willingness to accept you."

"I cannot tell her, because she may never be so."

Mr. Fletcher looked puzzled. "There is more in this than you tell me, Maitland," he said. "You've treated me very well; I've taken a liking for you, and for the girl too, for that matter. I should like to help you if I can, and feel I have done one kindness before it is out of my power to do any. How did you come to have this girl on your hands?"

"I knew her father and mother very well. They died abroad within a few months of each other. I was only a very young man then, as you may imagine; but they left me in charge of their only daughter, then scarcely more than an infant. My mother brought her up; when she was old enough she was sent to school as I told you."

This simple recital interested the old man more than he cared to show. He

could not prevent his voice from trembling as he asked :

"Is her grandfather alive?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Why does he not support her?"

"He does not know of her existence. He quarrelled with his son, who went abroad and died there, telling me never to let his father know that he left a child. I have kept the secret till now."

"You may as well finish the story now you have gone so far," said the invalid, falling back in his chair. "What was her father's name?"

"Charles Fletcher."

"My son?"

"Yes, your son."

"Then Amy is my grandchild?"

Maitland assented.

"She does not know it?"

"No; she is not aware of the existence of any relative. Your son made me promise she should be kept in ignorance of her relationship to you. I shall never tell her."

"That will do for to-night. I am tired and excited, my head aches abominably. I will go to bed."

Maitland came downstairs so soon as he had seen his patient attended to. He too felt excited and feverish. He determined to take a stroll in the cool evening air. His object had been accomplished; he had made known to his patient the existence of his granddaughter. Would the result answer his expectations? If so, what would it be his duty to do?

He was still revolving the matter in his mind, trying to look at it dispassionately as an outsider and failing miserably, when he heard himself accosted.

"Hullo, Maitland, I thought I recognised you. Gorgeous night, isn't it? Are you in a hurry?"

"I must get back soon," was the reply.

"I'll walk with you if you don't mind. The truth is I've something very important to tell you. I've made a terrific discovery."

"Well?" queried Maitland.

"You know that Miss Fletcher who is companion or something at the Kestertons? I got talking to her to-night pretty confidentially, and somehow happened to ask her the name of her father. You might have knocked me down with a feather, as they say, when she told me it was Charles Fletcher. You know who he was, I suppose?"

"Mr. Fletcher's son?"

"Just so. Sweet news for me, isn't it? I've always supposed myself the only relation the old boy has, and he has told me times

enough that I'm his heir. Now if he hasn't made his will I shall be in a hole, for everything will go to this girl."

"She does not know about it, does she?"

"No, thank goodness! No one knows it but ourselves."

"Why have you confided in me?" asked Maitland.

"There you are, you see," exclaimed Dexter. "I hadn't decided whether to tell you or not, when suddenly you appeared before me, and that settled it. It seemed providential."

"That's scarcely a sufficient reason for your action, I'm afraid."

"No, by Jove! you're right. To tell the truth for once, I wanted to find out if the old boy has made a will, and I thought you were the one most likely to know. Then it struck me it was quite possible you might discover the secret without my help, as I know you are a friend of the Kestertons and acquainted with this girl."

"I've known it a long time."

"Have you though? My instinct was right. Did my uncle know that Charlie left a child?"

"No; he wished it to be kept secret."

"Well," said Dexter, after a few moments' deliberation, "I'm not so safe as I should like to be. It seems to me I've only one course open to me, which will ensure everything turning out right."

"What is that?"

"I must marry Amy."

Maitland gave a start. "Marry Amy!" he repeated.

"Yes. Why not? I must get engaged as soon as possible. When my uncle dies, if he has left me his property, I can break off the engagement if I want to without much difficulty; and if she gets it all for want of a will, I must press forward our marriage. You see I'm showing my confidence in you in telling you my plans beforehand, as I take it for granted you mean to let Amy know who she is after my uncle's death, unless he leaves everything to me by will."

"You are quite right," replied Maitland stiffly. He had recovered his calmness now, and had need of it all to restrain himself. "It certainly was my intention to let her know. I do not promise you I shall not tell her at once, in order that she may have an opportunity of urging her claim."

"Oh, confound it all, Maitland, what good will that do? Let it stand as it is for a time at any rate. Give a fellow a chance. You see, as it is, I can

make love to her as a man with good expectations, and she's only a poor governess; but reverse our positions, and where's my chance? No, you must let matters stand for a week or two."

"I won't promise anything now," replied Maitland. "I shall see you to-morrow, and will tell you my decision then."

He turned away without even saying good-night. Dexter was such a mixture of apparent good-nature and selfishness; he had such a way of taking him into his confidence and making him a sort of partner in his disgraceful plans; that Maitland was disgusted beyond measure. And this was the man who was his rival for Amy! And his own hands were tied!

He rose early, after an almost sleepless night. He found that his patient was out of sorts, evidently the result of want of rest. He made no allusion to the events of the previous day; both of them seemed unwilling to start the subject. However, in the afternoon, Fletcher abruptly said:

"Maitland, I wish you would send to my nephew's hotel. You know it, I suppose?"

"Yes. Are you going to the terrace this afternoon?"

"Yes; the same time as yesterday. I want to see Amy."

Half an hour afterwards, Dexter made his appearance. Mr. Fletcher asked Maitland to leave them and rejoin them on the terrace in an hour. As he went out, Dexter managed to whisper:

"You won't tell her?"

"No," replied Maitland firmly.

The interview between uncle and nephew was rather long. Mr. Fletcher told Dexter that he was not so ignorant of his doings as he supposed, and that he had for some time doubted whether he ought to let such a scapegrace be his heir.

"I was once harsh to my son," said the old man, "and I lost him. I determined to make every allowance for you. I don't ask you if you deserve it, but I should like to know what your plans are. Do you intend to marry?"

This sudden question took Dexter off his guard. Making up his mind on the spur of the moment, he answered:

"Yes, sir."

"Whom?"

"Well, it isn't quite settled yet between us. I have not declared myself yet, but, if I obtain your consent, I will do so at the earliest opportunity."

"Who is she?"

"She is the governess at the Keestons'," replied his nephew boldly. "You've never seen her, I suppose, but she is a very charming girl."

"No fortune, I presume?"

"I believe not."

"Then you can't marry unless with my money?"

Dexter rather uneasily answered:

"No, sir."

"Very well," said his uncle. "I have no objection to your making a love-match. I tell you what I will do. It would be unsatisfactory for both of you if you, a rich man, were to marry her, a pauper. If you win her consent I will give mine, and make her heiress of half of what I have. You will then be on equal terms, as man and wife should be."

Dexter was growing more and more uncomfortable. This was far from the state of things he wished for.

"You are very thoughtful, uncle," he murmured.

"I should like to see this young lady," continued Mr. Fletcher. "I presume that by birth and education she is fitted to be your wife? You have made enquiries, I presume?"

"Well, uncle, I thought that would be rather wanting in delicacy. She is evidently a lady."

"Your sentiments do you honour, Fred. It was quite right of you not to make impertinent enquiries, especially considering her position."

Dexter felt he had done it now. It was impossible for him to confess that he knew Amy's identity. After a little further conversation they started for the terrace, where Maitland was shortly to meet them.

Meanwhile, the young doctor had been spending an unhappy hour. He was sure that Dexter would take the opportunity of telling his uncle his intention to marry Amy; the probability was greatly in favour of the old man's approval of his nephew's suit rather than of his—Maitland's. One thing he was sure of: that he must keep silent till Dexter had either won or lost, and that, if he won, he must keep silent for ever. His only hope was that Amy loved him. Yet why should she? He had always been careful to treat her as a young sister, and if occasionally he had been conscious of saying something which was not quite appropriate for a brother, she had never given him reason for believing that she had ever contemplated the possibility of a closer relationship between them than had

always existed. Yet, if he lost her, and to such a heartless scoundrel! No! he would never let her marry that other. Yet what could he do if she accepted him?

His mind was still full of the matter when he found himself on the terrace, near the usual seat of the invalid. Mr. Fletcher and his nephew were already there, and close by them stood Amy. She had evidently only that moment arrived. Dexter rose, and with considerable eagerness offered her his seat, and began to introduce her to his uncle.

"There is no necessity," interrupted Mr. Fletcher, "this young lady and I have met before."

Dexter looked surprised and annoyed. He had made good use of his time during the morning, which he had spent in the company of Amy, doing all he could to compress a courtship into a couple of hours. He had told her he wanted to introduce her to his uncle, but had not mentioned his name, and Amy never imagined that the uncle was the same old gentleman whose acquaintance she had already made.

At this moment Maitland came up. He took off his hat to Amy, and remained standing near.

For some time the conversation was to the last degree commonplace; not one of the men seemed inclined to be the first to broach the subject that each was thinking of. At last Mr. Fletcher, after a painful cough, said:

"My dear, I want to speak to you seriously for a minute or two. You will excuse an old man, who has not many months to live, if he says things a little bluntly. Try and suppose that he is afraid he has not time to do otherwise."

Amy looked surprised, but said nothing.

"My nephew," continued Mr. Fletcher, "has told me that he wishes you to be his wife. He has not, I believe, confessed as much to you, knowing that the possibility of his marrying depends on me. I have told him that, if he gains your consent, he will not marry a penniless girl, for I shall give you the same as I shall give him. So you see, you may rely entirely on your feelings in giving your answer; it will not be a case of marrying for money, but only for love. What do you say?"

Amy said nothing. She turned her eyes on Maitland, who persistently kept his averted.

"This is too sudden, uncle," pleaded Dexter.

"Perhaps it is," assented the old man. "I

do not ask for a decisive answer now. Plead your own cause, my lad, during the next week, and then Amy shall give her reply."

Amy turned her head.

"There is no necessity to wait for a week," she said; "my mind is quite made up. I can never marry Mr. Dexter."

"My dear girl," persisted Mr. Fletcher, "do not make up your mind so swiftly. No doubt my blunt way of putting the matter has pained you. I can see you are agitated. Let me plead for my nephew. His love for you is disinterested, he knows you but as a charming young lady who is at present occupying a position unworthy of her. He knows nothing of you whatever beyond that; judge then whether you are treating him quite fairly in refusing to listen to him. It is not so easy to find young men, nowadays, who are capable of displaying such disinterested earnestness and devotion in seeking for a wife. He tells me he is even ignorant of the name of your parents—does not that show he values you for yourself?"

Dexter had tried once or twice to interrupt his uncle, but in vain. However, he now managed to interpose with:

"Really, uncle, you appear to imagine that——"

But he was interrupted in his turn by Amy.

"Did Mr. Dexter tell you he did not know who my father was?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Mr. Fletcher, "and I applauded the delicacy of feeling he showed."

"I must tell you then that he did ask me, and seemed very surprised to hear his name. There seems to be some mystery about it, for its mention seems to have sufficed to turn Mr. Dexter from a casual acquaintance into an ardent admirer."

Dexter stood abashed; he did not attempt to defend himself.

"So, sir," said his uncle severely, "it seems that you do know who this young lady is. I had my suspicions, and that is why I have said what I have, thinking I should catch you in your own trap."

"I thought you would be pleased if I married her," pleaded Dexter.

"Don't say another word, sir. Leave us now; come to my rooms this evening, I shall have something to say to you then."

Dexter walked away as carelessly as he could.

"Come a little closer to me, my dear child," said Mr. Fletcher in a tender tone, as soon as his nephew was out of sight.

"I have some news for you. You must think me a very strange old man—so I am, perhaps. You think I have been very rude and unkind, but it was for your sake. No one is near us now; put your arms round my neck and kiss me and call me grandpapa."

Amy looked at him in astonishment for a moment, and then glanced at Maitland. His look reassured her; she flung her arms round the old man's neck and kissed him.

"Grandpapa!" she exclaimed. "Is it true?"

"Yes, my darling. Ah, if I had only known it before! It's your fault, Maitland."

"Are you quite sure?" he asked.

"Well, no; I suppose it's chiefly mine. Do you think, Amy, you will be able to love me for the few months I have to live?"

"Oh, don't talk of dying, grandpapa; you mustn't."

"Ask Maitland."

"What must I ask him?"

"If he can spare me a part of your affection for a time? Ah, I know all about it, you see; my eyes are not so dim yet, but that I have seen more than either of you imagine. Take her, Maitland."

Maitland did not hesitate long, for Amy's glad look revealed to him that her grandfather had judged her truly.

CARLIN.

THE time-honoured saying, "We know what we are, but we know not what we may be," has seldom been more strikingly exemplified than in the case of two youths, aged respectively fifteen and sixteen, who were seated together one summer morning in the early part of the last century on a stone bench by the side of a small chapel dedicated to the patron saint of a village near Rimini. Their names were Lorenzo Ganganelli and Carlo Bertinazzi; the former destined in after years to exchange his baptismal appellation for that of Clement the Fourteenth, and the latter to become the idol of the Parisians as the popular harlequin of the *Comédie Italienne*. These metamorphoses, however, lay still hidden in the remote future, and their objects on the morning in question were profoundly occupied in solving a difficult puzzle, namely, how to obtain possession of the plentiful store of

copper coins which had been deposited by the passing peasants as an offering to the saint, and were protected from sacrilegious hands by strong iron bars, within which they reposed until removed on the next visit of the authorised alms-collector.

While the pair of scapegraces are concocting all sorts of ingenious plans for the successful appropriation of the treasure, a few words respecting the origin and social position of each may not be out of place.

Lorenzo's parents were of the humbler class of cultivators so numerous in that part of Italy, and owners of half-a-dozen acres of land, which they tilled themselves; Carlo's father, on the contrary, who had enlisted early in life, and had been some years a widower, having nothing but his pay to depend upon, had gladly profited by the chance offered him of placing his only son in a seminary where the children of the poor intended for the clerical profession received a gratuitous education, among his fellow-pupils being the young Ganganelli. There the boys grew up together and became fast friends, the studious Lorenzo devoting his leisure moments to the task of correcting Carlo's ill-spelt themes and exercises, while the latter, who in modern parlance would have been termed the "cock of the school," requited this service by constituting himself on all occasions the champion and protector of his more delicately organised companion. Their holidays were passed at the Ganganelli farm, where they fared but sparingly, and, as may be imagined, they had not a farthing of pocket-money between them. It was with a view of supplying this last deficiency that we find them gazing with longing eyes at the tantalising heap of bajocchi almost within their reach.

"I wonder how many there are," mused Carlo, while the other was mentally engaged in counting them.

"More than a hundred," replied Lorenzo.

"More than a hundred!" repeated his friend, who had never heard of such a sum; "how much cheese would that buy?"

"Enough for all the holidays, and to spare."

"Would it be wrong to take them, do you think?" asked Carlo, after a moment's hesitation.

"Well, if we were not very hungry, I am afraid it would; but as it is——"

"But we are very hungry—at any rate I am."

"So am I," gravely remarked Lorenzo.

"In that case the end justifies the means, so we must see what can be done."

Thereupon, looking about for the longest stick he could find, he introduced it between the bars, and succeeded in slightly displacing one or two of the coins, but that was all; Carlo meanwhile watching the proceedings with a disconsolate air.

"It's no use," sighed the latter. "We had better be off before some one catches us here."

"Wait a moment," objected his more inventive ally, "there must be some means of fishing them out. I have it!" he added triumphantly; "while I go to work, all you have to do is to stand on that rising ground yonder, and if you see any one coming, make the usual signal" (we had forgotten to mention that among other accomplishments Carlo imitated to perfection the braying of a donkey, while his companion was equally renowned for crowing like a cock), "and I will answer with mine. If nobody disturbs me, the bajocchi are ours."

What his friend purposed doing was not very clear to Master Bertinazzi, who nevertheless established himself obediently as sentinel on the prescribed eminence, which overlooked the adjoining fields; while Lorenzo, taking a handful of moist earth from a ditch by the roadside, fixed it firmly to the end of his stick, and recommenced his piscatorial operations so successfully that in a very few minutes the last remaining coin had found its way into his pocket. At that critical instant a warning bray resounded from the post of vantage; having responded to which by an exulting "cock-a-doodle-do," the young marauder hastily rejoined his confederate, and both started on their homeward way, wisely deferring until a more favourable opportunity the equitable division of the spoil. In his old age, when surrounded by a circle of intimates at Chaillot, Carlin frequently related the foregoing anecdote with great gusto, interlarding his imperfect French with Italian "patois," and emphasising his words with the drollest and most expressive pantomimic gestures imaginable. On one occasion, when, inspired by the presence of Goldoni, he had described this juvenile freak with more than usual vivacity, the dramatist quietly enquired if he never felt remorse for having robbed the poor. "Ah, caro mio," replied Carlin, "Lorenzo has no doubt long ago atoned for that trifling peccadillo. Consider the many

opportunities he has since had of making restitution!"

A year or two after this reprehensible exploit the two friends separated; Ganganelli to continue his ecclesiastical studies at Urbino, and Carlo, whose father had in the meantime paid the debt of nature, leaving his son alone in the world, to gain his own livelihood as he best might. Abandoning all idea of a clerical career, for which in truth he had no real vocation, he decided on utilising his natural talent for mimicry by joining one of the strolling companies of actors to be met with at that period in every province of Italy, wandering from place to place as in Scarron's Roman Comique, and earning a precarious subsistence, often barely sufficing to keep body and soul together. Inured as he was to privations, our hero cared little for the hardships he had voluntarily elected to encounter; the adventurous, ever-changing life pleased him, and he was soon perfectly reconciled to the habitual lot of Thespians, namely, to dine one day, and starve the next. The manager of this roving troop found in him a willing and precious recruit, ready to undertake a part at a moment's notice, and invariably delighting his audience by some improvised bit of drollery calculated to put them in good humour, and dispose them to be liberal. His favourite character was harlequin, in the personation of which he became so popular that the mere announcement of Carlin was sufficient to attract the inhabitants of villages from many leagues round, thereby ensuring an abundant harvest of copper coins and—for nothing was refused—provisions of all kinds, including bread, meat, and even flour, as the case might be.

Little by little, the reputation of the new "Arlecchino" spread from town to town; offers of engagement continually reached him from the proprietors of permanently established theatres, and at length, tempted by the flattering prospects held out to him, he bade adieu not without regret to his less fortunate associates, and set out to give the public of Brescia a taste of his quality. The success of his first appearance was so decisive, that on the following day a contract for a term of years was proposed to him by the manager, which, however, Carlin, whose migratory habits had become a second nature to him, refused to sign; and, at the expiration of the six months' stay previously agreed upon, quitted Brescia for the purpose of fulfilling a similar engagement at Parma.

These peregrinations continued with little intermission for the next ten or twelve years, during which he visited almost every town of note in Italy; reaping fresh laurels wherever he went, and universally acknowledged to be the best representative of the motley personage that had ever trod the boards.

Whether in the course of his wanderings he chanced to meet his former school-fellow is not recorded, but it is certain that for some time after their separation they frequently corresponded with each other; and, to the end of his life, Carlin was wont to affirm that, although to the rest of the world the friend of his youth might be known as the illustrious Clement the Fourteenth, he could never regard him in any other light than that of his old and dearly-loved playmate, Lorenzo.

The retirement from the stage in 1741 of Thomassin, successor of the famous Dominique, having left the Comédie Italienne and consequently Paris without a harlequin, Bertinazzi, then in his twenty-eighth year, was induced to repair thither, and was at once engaged to occupy the vacant post. His début was not encouraging; the Parisians, creatures of habit, and accustomed to the broad humour and peculiar mannerisms of his predecessor, failed at first to appreciate the refined grace and vivacity of the new comer, whose conception of the character was strictly in accordance with the traditions of the Italian school. By degrees, however, the versatility of his talent and the expressive originality of his pantomime overcame the prejudices of the public, and before many weeks had elapsed, his quondam depreciators had become his warmest admirers. During forty years, until his final retirement in 1781, his popularity remained unshaken, and his supremacy unquestioned. Notwithstanding his advanced age and increasing corpulence, he still attracted crowds to the theatre by the magic of his name, and retained to the very last his marvellous activity and suppleness of limb. Madame Vigée Le Brun, who saw him towards the close of his career, records her impressions of his acting in her entertaining *Recollections*, as follows: "He played harlequin in mere outlines of pieces, the filling up of which required extreme cleverness and ingenuity on the part of the performer; his inexhaustible spirits and witty sallies, together with a never-failing fund of natural drollery, combined to distinguish him from the

ordinary actor. Although excessively stout, he was singularly agile in every movement, and I have been told that he owed many of his most graceful gestures to his habit of watching kittens at play. When he left the stage, the reign of the Comédie Italienne was virtually at an end."

Carlin was never more in his element than when he had established a sort of freemasonry with his audience, addressing himself familiarly to those nearest to him, and indulging in every variety of quip and crank more or less appropriate to the part he was playing. The actor Fleur relates that on one occasion, perceiving a party of children in a box near the stage, he entered into conversation with them, and so delighted the spectators present with his impromptu whimsicalities that they imagined the scene in question to have been arranged beforehand, and, returning to the theatre on the following evening, with one accord demanded its repetition.

From the same authority we learn that once during the dog-days the audience assembled to witness the performance only consisting of two individuals, one of whom, overcome by the intense heat, made his exit at the end of the first piece, Carlin came forward, and addressing the remaining occupant of the pit, besought him as a particular favour, in the event of his meeting anyone he knew as he went out, to inform him that Arlequin Ermite, having been received that evening with unbounded applause by a discerning public, would be repeated every night until further notice.

It happened, however, that on another occasion, and from the same cause, one solitary spectator, a stout jovial personage fresh from the country, placidly awaited the rising of the curtain. What was to be done?

"We had better give him back his money," grumbled the régisseur Camerani.

"Let me speak first," said Carlin; and, advancing to the front of the stage, made a grotesque bow to the astonished provincial, and addressed him as follows: "Mr. All-alone, my comrades and I, as you may imagine, have no particular wish to exert ourselves in this sultry weather for one person's amusement; but if you insist upon it, of course we must."

"Why, M. Carlin," replied the stout man, highly amused by this preamble, "I came here on purpose to see you act."

"Very good," responded Harlequin with one of his most graceful pirouettes, "we

will do our best to please you," and the piece began.

Before it was over a heavy shower of rain came on, and in a few minutes every place in the theatre was occupied; the actors, enchanted at this unexpected good fortune, played with even more spirit than usual, and the second piece finished amid roars of laughter. Presently Carlin appeared before the curtain, and, looking round as if in search of someone, enquired if Mr. All-alone were still there?

"Certainly, M. Carlin," answered that individual, grinning from ear to ear; "and many thanks to you for a pleasant evening."

"It is I who ought to thank you, Mr. All-alone," replied Carlin, to the intense delight of the rest of the audience, "for without you we should have missed the nine hundred livres which our treasurer has just counted up. So good-night, Mr. All-alone, and au revoir!"

For a long time after, this remained a standing joke with the company; and whenever, either on account of the heat or any other cause, opinions were divided as to the advisability of announcing the evening's performance, Carlin invariably decided the question in the affirmative, by suggesting that perhaps Mr. All-alone would come again.

From the date of his retirement in 1781 to his death in 1783, the celebrated comedian continued to inhabit his suburban villa at Chaillot—unpleasantly situated, according to Fleury, between a smith's forge and a copper foundry—where he was wont to receive his intimates, and regale them with his favourite maraschino. On the wall of his usual sitting-room in this modest retreat hung the original painting by De Lorme of the best engraved portrait of the incomparable harlequin; and beneath it, in the autograph of the poet Guichard, were inscribed the following lines:

*Dans ses gestes, ses tons, c'est la Nature même ;
Sous le masque, on l'admire ; à découvert, on
l'aime !*

TIME BARGAINS.

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VII.

"WHAT—what! telling fortunes—eh?" said Mr. Jellicop with a broad smile, as he came forward. "Many's the pretty girl whose fortune I told when I was a young blade. And half of 'em took all I said for gospel truth."

Miss Ramsay had crossed to the window.

"He called me Lilian!" she whispered to herself. "Would he have done that unless—?"

"Miss Ramsay and I were going as far as the hayfield," said Marmaduke with a fine assumption of indifference.

"You'll get your jackets wet if you do." There's a black cloud rolling up the valley that means to pepper us before long. You had better come with me, the pair of you, as far as the greenhouse and see how my cucumbers are getting on."

"Fine vegetable—cucumber," said Marmaduke sententially.

"As I came through the drawing-room just now," continued Mr. Jellicop, "who should I see there but those two young idiots."

"Two young idiots, sir?"

"My niece Linda and young Dane, I mean. He was gaping out of the window at one end of the room, she out of the window at the other end; neither of them looking at each other, neither of them speaking to each other, and yet seeming as if they couldn't bear to be out of each other's sight. Ugh! it's my opinion that they are fonder of each other this minute than ever they were in their lives before."

"Oh, uncle, do you really think so?" asked Lilian earnestly. She had come back from the window by this time, and was clasping one of his arms with both her hands.

"Hang me if I don't! What a joke it would be if we could bring them together again—eh?"

"How I wish we could!"

"Too late in the day, sir, to think of that," said Marmaduke.

"I'm not so sure on that point. There's nothing to hinder them from remarrying at the end of six months if they like to do so. Ha, ha! Wouldn't Vere Naylor be wild? But come along; let us have a peep at the cucumbers before the shower breaks."

For a little while the Blue Parlour remained empty. By-and-by Cecil Dane lounged in, whistling in a minor key, his glass in his eye, his hands deep in his pockets, and looking anything rather than a happy man.

"I wonder whether she will follow me," he muttered. "She wouldn't have done so a month ago, but nowadays nothing surprises me. What a bundle of contradictions a woman is! There's someone coming. By Jove! I durst wager anything it's Linda."

He took a magazine off the table, and

sat down with his back to the door, but there was a large mirror opposite to him, and he had only to lift his eyes in order to see everything that was going on.

Mrs. Dane entered the room, and began at once to turn over the articles on the centre table as if in search of something.

"There he sits," she murmured under her breath. "He is not going out as I was afraid he was. Although we are no longer husband and wife, that is no reason why he should not speak to me. But he won't, and I can keep silent no longer." Then she said aloud: "Mr. Dane, do you happen to have seen the last number of Blackwood?"

"No, madam, I have not seen the last number of Blackwood."

"Pardon me, but is not that it in your hand?"

The glass dropped from Cecil's eye; for once he changed colour.

"Ah yes, by Jove! so it is. Beg pardon. Didn't know."

He rose, crossed to where Linda was standing, bowed ceremoniously, and offered her the book.

"Not unless you have quite done with it, Mr. Dane," said Linda in her most dulcet tones.

"Thank you, but I have quite done with it, Mrs. Dane-Danson."

Linda smiled her sweetest, and took the book. Then they bowed to each other; then Linda sat down and pretended to become immersed in her magazine; then Cecil went back to his former seat, stretched his long legs out, put his glass in his eye, clasped his hands behind his head, and began to contemplate the ceiling.

"What a darling he looks!" murmured Linda. "Can it be true that I have really lost him?" Her heart gave a great sigh as she asked herself the question.

"It seems impossible to realise the fact that she's no longer my wife," mused Cecil. "I can't keep away from her. I haven't smoked for two days. Bad sign, very."

To Linda this silence was intolerable.

"Mr. Dane, can you oblige me by telling me the time? My watch has stopped."

Cecil rose from his half-recumbent position, and produced his watch.

"The time, madam, is ten minutes and eighteen seconds past four."

"Ten minutes and eighteen seconds—thank you very much, Mr. Dane."

"You are quite welcome, madam."

Then after a pause Linda repeated, this time with a little more emphasis:

"I said 'Thank you very much, Mr. Dane.'"

"And I said 'You are quite welcome, madam.'"

"Oh dear! why won't he talk!" murmured Linda. "What stupid creatures men are!"

She turned over one or two leaves noisily. Cecil was contemplating the ceiling again.

How long our two young and foolish separatists would have kept on sitting without speaking to each other, and apparently ignoring each other's existence, there is no knowing, had they been allowed to do as they liked in the matter. Presently, however, Captain Marmaduke and Lillian, on their way back from visiting the cucumbers, entered the conservatory, which opened by means of an archway into the parlour. Lillian was the first to perceive Cecil and Linda.

"There they are!" she whispered to her companion. "If we could but bring them together again!"

"You know what we have agreed upon," he replied, also in a whisper. "Why not make a beginning at once?"

"But I don't know how to begin."

"Trust to your woman's wit to show you the way."

"No, no; pray don't leave me."

"Remember your promise to your guardian."

"You don't know how nervous I am."

"Mr. Dane is not at all ferocious; the first plunge is everything. Come."

With these words Marmaduke went forward from the conservatory into the parlour, and making his way to Linda, seated himself on the couch by her side. She was grateful for the interruption. Cecil should see that other people cared for her society, if he no longer did. She greeted Marmaduke with a smile, and shut the magazine she was making a pretence of reading.

"It is not often that ladies find much to interest them in Blackwood," said Marmaduke.

"Don't you know that Blackwood has often some very nice love-stories?"

"And you are fond of love-stories?"

"Show me the woman who is not."

"You have studied the philosophy of the subject?" asked Marmaduke with a smile.

"I may have skimmed the surface; nothing more."

"The traitor!" muttered Lillian when she found herself left alone in the conser-

vatory. She took off her hat, and stood for a few moments with a finger pressed to her lips, thinking. Then she went forward into the room to where an easel with a drawing-board on it stood in one corner.

"Allow me, Miss Ramsay," said Cecil, coming to her assistance. "Where shall I fix it for you?"

"Just here, please. I want to finish this group of ferns which I began the other day. I hope, Mr. Dane, that you are not a very severe critic."

"How is it possible to criticise what one doesn't understand?"

"A great many people contrive to do so."

"I am not so presumptuous as a great many people."

On a side table stood a basket of coloured wools belonging to Linda. Marmaduke took it up.

"What a charming assortment of colours you have here," he said.

"But how tiresome that they all want winding before I can make use of them."

"It takes two people to wind wools, does it not?"

"I believe so."

"Why should not you and I wind some together?"

"Why not, indeed?" She took the basket, and began to arrange some of the wools for winding, saying to herself: "I hope Cecil won't go away." Then she said aloud: "When I was married——" Then came a pause. Her heart fluttered for a moment or two; then she went on more firmly: "When I was married I never could get my husband to help me to wind my wools. He was rude enough to say that it was an occupation fit only for milksops and old women."

"Not every one thinks so. I have been told that it was while kneeling on one knee, and holding a skein of wool, as I am holding yours, that my grandfather first told my grandmother that he loved her. And he was no milksop. He died in battle, charging at the head of his regiment."

"But he probably never helped your grandmother to wind wools again. They got married, you know, and that makes all the difference." Then to herself she said: "I do hope Cecil is looking!"

Cecil was looking. "Little flirt!" he muttered. Then to Lilian he said: "How the sketch grows under your fingers. It seems almost like magic to me, who cannot draw."

"And yet it is so very simple. There goes the point of my pencil."

"Let me make you another point."

"Thanks, but the pencil is too soft, and I have no harder one by me."

There was a portfolio of drawings on a chair close by. Cecil took it up and opened it. "You have some more drawings here. May I be permitted to examine them?" Lilian smiled assent. Cecil drew his chair a little nearer to her, and began to turn over the drawings. "You must tell me what each of them is as we go along," he said.

Linda had eyes for Cecil as well as for her wools. "What can they be talking about?" she asked herself. "Who would have believed that innocent-looking young monkey was such an arrant flirt?" Then she said aloud, with a touch of impatience: "There—now this tiresome skein is all in a tangle!"

"Let me help you to unravel it."

"Life itself seems nothing but knots and tangles."

"A little patience will often work wonders."

Linda's eyes had wandered across the room again. "Their heads are nearly touching each other," she said to herself.

"By Jove! how their fingers seem to have got mixed up!" was Cecil's muttered ejaculation. Then he said aloud: "And of whom may this be the portrait?"

"It is merely a fancy sketch. I call it 'Elaine,' was Lilian's reply.

"'Elaine?' I never heard of her." Mr. Dane was probably on more familiar terms with the Racing Calendar than with the writings of a certain great poet.

"Tennyson's Elaine, you know. 'Elaine, the fair; Elaine, the loveable Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat.'"

"It ought to have been your own portrait, Miss Ramsay." Then to himself: "Confound that fellow! Can it be possible that he has fallen in love with her?"

"I can bear this no longer!" was what Linda said to herself. Then aloud to Marmaduke: "My patience is exhausted. There must be thunder in the air." With a little pout she crammed the wools into her basket.

"These sultry afternoons are trying to one's nerves," remarked Marmaduke. There was a fan on the table; he took it up and opened it. "May I?" he asked.

Linda smiled a languid assent. He began to fan her, slowly and gently.

"Now he's fanning her. Deuced cool!" was Cecil's unspoken comment.

No one would have thought, seeing Marmaduke's impassive face, how thoroughly he was enjoying the scene. "I hope you feel a little refreshed," he said presently in his grave courteous tones.

"Very much so indeed. Thanks."

"You would find it cooler on the terrace."

"Ye—es, as you say, it would be cooler there." Then to herself: "Can I—dare I leave them together? I will, let what may come of it."

She rose and moved slowly towards the open French window, Marmaduke by her side. At the window she turned and shot one backward glance.

"To be triumphed over by a minx like that!" was the bitter thought at her heart.

"And this is where they bring Elaine's body to the king's palace after she has died of a broken heart," resumed Lilian.

"She died of a broken heart, did she?"

"So it is said."

"But that happened long ago. Perhaps they believed in such things in those days."

"Perhaps in those old times we have been speaking of the men were rather better worth dying for than they are now."

"By Jove! I think that's very likely. I know that if you take us in the bunch we are not good for much nowadays." Then he added to himself: "Gone! But why—and where?"

Linda and Marmaduke reappeared at the window. The former came quickly into the room.

"My dear Lilian, do make haste out on to the terrace," she said; "there's the most lovely rainbow. I know you would not like to miss seeing it."

Lilian rose from the low chair on which she had been sitting.

"You will excuse me, will you not?" she said to Cecil.

Cecil rose and bowed.

"I hope we shall be able to go on with our studies another time," he said as he closed and put away the portfolio.

"I hope so, too," answered Lilian, with one of her sunniest smiles.

"Do you?" muttered Linda vindictively between her teeth. Passions and feelings

were at work in her heart this afternoon such as she had never more than dimly imagined before.

"Our scheme is progressing admirably," whispered Marmaduke to Lilian at the window.

"I was never so frightened in my life," was her low reply.

Linda had lingered behind for a moment.

"I am sorry, Mr. Dane, to have been the means of depriving you of Miss Ramsay's charming society," she remarked with ironical politeness.

"For a little while—only for a little while, madam. I have not examined the whole of Miss Ramsay's drawings yet."

Linda turned on him with flashing eyes.

"Wretch!" she cried, with a passionate stamp of her foot.

Mr. Dane snapped his fingers lightly.

"Flirt!" was all that he condescended to reply.

Linda flung him a glance of withering scorn, and turning haughtily, walked slowly out of the room.

"Pleasant—very, this sort of thing," muttered Cecil, when he found himself alone. "What a fool I was to stay here after I had got my papers! And now the deuce of it is I can't bear the thought of going away. The Asylum for Imbeciles would be my proper home. I'll go and have a quiet smoke in the shrubbery and try to clear my brain. Perhaps I shall see Linda on the terrace. Confound that fellow, Marmaduke, and his insinuating ways!" Stepping out on the terrace, he looked first to the right and then to the left. "What can have become of them? Shall I go in search of them? No. That would indeed be a confession of weakness. Let them go to Jericho!"

He took out his tobacco-pouch, filled his pipe, struck a match, drew a few whiffs, then pulling his hat further over his brows, and burying his hands deeply in his pockets, he plunged moodily into the shrubbery.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER VI. JENIFER IS MADE GRATEFUL.

"JACK," said Jenifer, coming into what was still known as "the boys' room" at Moor Royal, "can you give me five minutes before you go out?"

It was the day previous to that on which the little theatrical entertainment was to come off at Moor Royal. Mr. Jervoise had made a marvellous recovery, and though he looked miserably ill, and his face was covered with leaden-hued wrinkles, still as he could speak and walk, and politely assured everyone that there was not anything in his state to hinder the carrying out of the programme of pleasure.

Jack was buttoning on his gaiters and whistling loudly when his sister spoke to him. Either these exertions or something else brought a deep tinge of colour to his face, as he looked up and said:

"What is it, Jenny? I'm rather late as it is."

"Late for what, dear? You're only going shooting, are you?" she said, patting his pointer's head.

"Only going shooting! That's rather a cool way of looking upon what is serious business. The fair ladies, Effie and Flora, have laid their commands upon me to bring in I don't know how many brace to-day in order that to-morrow's supper may be fairly set forth."

"Is Hubert going with you?"

"He is not. He was called off, or rather Effie has called him off at the last; she wants him to superintend the final stage-arrangements."

"How I hate the whole thing!" Jenifer said passionately, "How can Hubert

let our father's memory be so lightly regarded."

"You see Hubert has to think of Effie and Mrs. Jervoise," Jack said apologetically; "they're awfully nice, both of them, and we can't expect that they should feel about our father as we do. We're bound to be reasonable, you know, Jenny."

"Dear Jack," she said very softly, "promise me, for mother's sake, that you won't be induced to take part in any of the acting."

"In any of the acting! No, I won't," he said stoutly.

"She has so much to bear, so much more than I realised or understood at first," Jenifer went on; "her home-rule is a thing of the past, and she is not even a highly considered guest in the house she ruled so absolutely a few weeks ago; then she has to contend with a change in her sons, and with poverty."

"No, no; there's no change in her sons," Jack said with embarrassment.

"There is, Jack. You spend evening after evening away from your home, not with your equals, but with servants——"

"Not with servants," he interrupted, starting slightly.

"What is Thurtle but a servant, Jack? A respectable, trustworthy, honest man, but illiterate and utterly uncompanionable to you who have been bred and educated a gentleman among gentlemen. Dear Jack, don't try to deceive yourself and me; you know you are doing wrong in going to Thurtle's house so constantly; you know that you are ashamed that I, your sister, should know of your frequent visits."

"Look here, Jenny," the lad—he was only "a lad," though he was of age—said, blushing furiously, "you're rather severe on me without a cause. I've been used to be about with the keepers and grooms

all my life, and now just because my father is dead, and I'm no longer the young master here, you expect me to alter all my habits."

"Dear, dear boy, I am the only one who will speak to you, warn you, speak harshly to you, perhaps. I want to be proud of you, Jack—let me be. Go and take this clerkship in London that has been offered you; remember that you are a man now, not a boy any longer. Shooting, and hunting, and eternal intercourse with keepers and grooms won't fit you to be the help and stay and protection you ought to be to our poor mother."

He leant forward suddenly and kissed her, and she saw the gleam of tears in his eyes. Then he seized his gun, whistled his dog, and walked away rapidly; and Jenifer was left in doubt as to whether she had done well or not in letting him know the full extent of her fears.

As for Jack, he went straight away to Thurtle's house, and the keeper not being there, and the keeper's daughter not "knowing for certain where father might be," Mr. Jack Ray waited there for an hour.

"What a bear your Mr. Boldero is after all," Effie said that night at dinner. "Just think, Jenifer, he has actually refused my invitation for to-morrow, without having the courtesy to assign any reason for doing so. If I were you, Hubert, I should take my affairs out of his hands immediately."

"That's more easily said than done," Mr. Ray said indifferently; "the business management of a big property is not so easily transferred as you think, Effie."

"To hear Hubert talk, one would think that Moor Royal was the only property I ever came in contact with or even heard of," Effie said to her sister.

"I don't think you lose much by the lawyer absenting himself," Mrs. Jervoise said contemptuously. "I detest nothing much more than having social relations with people with whom I have business ones; in fact you'll have to draw the line sharply here, Effie; if you ask county professional people to your house, you'll soon find the county will hold aloof."

"You both talk a lot of bosh," Hubert said, speaking a little haughtily but good-humouredly withal; "county people don't hold aloof from county people because of the presence of gentlemen and ladies in each other's houses who don't happen to own landed property."

"All the same, I shall always consider that Mr. Boldero has behaved very rudely to me, and shall treat him with great coolness for the future," Effie said, flinging up her head. Then the conversation drifted as usual into the theatrical channel, and from divers remarks Jenifer learnt to her horror that Captain Edgecumb had declined the part of Charles the Second in the tableau, and that Jack had been persuaded to fill it.

"Jack, you promised me you wouldn't act," his sister cried.

"It isn't acting, you goose," Mrs. Ray said hilariously; "he'll have to do the reverse of act; he will have to remain motionless and inactive, and merely look adoration of Nell Gwynn's charms."

"I hope poor Minnie's head won't be turned," old Mrs. Ray said, and they all laughed with the exception of Jenifer and Jack.

A little stage had been adroitly contrived and furnished at the end of the long library, and on this the performers had a full-dress rehearsal this night after dinner.

Captain Edgecumb came in rather late, but as he was not wanted till the farce which brought the entertainment to a close, this was a matter of minor moment. Meantime he stayed in the drawing-room with old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer, and tried to draw the latter out on the subject of her sister-in-law.

"Mrs. Hubert Ray has a wonderful amount of energy and go about her, hasn't she?" he asked, and Jenifer replied:

"She has; I can fancy no more delightful addition to a happy, merry country-house party than she would be."

"You take no part in the entertainment to-morrow night, I understand, Miss Ray?"

She shook her head.

"Did you expect that I should tell you I did?"

"Indeed, no; I knew that it was due to the genius of those two restless spirits that this affair was coming off at Moor Royal, and if I could have got out of having any hand in it I should have been glad; but Mrs. Jervoise and her sister are old acquaintances of mine, and a man finds it difficult sometimes to resist any claim made upon him by such fair old acquaintances as they are."

This was a speech that did not seem to Jenifer to demand any reply. Accordingly she made none, but went on with some

pretty work she had in hand, as if he were not present.

"I am sure neither my daughter nor I will question your kindly courtesy to my daughter-in-law and her sister," old Mrs. Ray said cheerfully. "I am glad, even in the midst of my sorrow, that my son's wife should have plenty of amusement and variety; she is very young and bright. I have no wish to overcloud her, and I am sure Jenifer shares my feeling."

The mother spoke anxiously, with an evident desire to keep the peace. But Jenifer's mettle was up, and she could not trim her tongue to the utterance of soothing nothings just now.

"I don't wish to interfere with anyone's arrangements or amusements, but I wish you had kept your promise, and taken the part in the tableau which they have now persuaded Jack to fill," Jenifer said, allowing anger to make itself manifest to her audience. "Captain Edgcomb, you've always professed willingness—desire to please me. Will you do it now?"

She had spoken much more vehemently than was usual with well-balanced self-possessed Jenifer, and now she rose and retreated to a place behind the piano which was out of earshot of her mother.

For a moment Captain Edgcomb could not believe his senses; they were surely leading him a will-o'-the-wisp dance, and would beguile him into a quagmire of discomfiture if he presumed on this apparent desire of Jenifer's to establish a private understanding with him.

"Dear Miss Ray, the hope that is dearest to me in the world is to please you," the handsome young officer said earnestly. And really he more than half meant what he said.

"Oh, don't talk nonsense!" Jenifer said entreatingly. "Don't think of me as a girl, please; just treat me as you'd treat Jack. The favour I want you to do me is this—that you'll claim your original part in the Nell Gwynn tableau, and make Jack resign it."

"I will," he said gallantly, without asking a question or offering a remark.

"Thank you," she said simply, holding out her hand to him as she passed out of her secluded nook back to her place at a work-table.

"You're not trying to persuade Captain Edgcomb to throw cold water on Effie's theatricals, are you, Jenny?" her mother asked anxiously. "Because I wouldn't have that done on any account. However

painful it may be for me to seem to countenance mirth and gladness at Moor Royal now, I would rather do it and be misunderstood than I would throw the lightest shadow on Effie's path. She is young; she came among us not comprehending our sorrow, in ignorance as to the very cause of it till she was encircled by it. I love to think that she can be happy here, even in this house of mourning."

"Mother darling, I've only been persuading Captain Edgcomb to help Effie to the utmost," Jenifer said chokingly, and just then Effie's clear voice rang out in a call for "Captain Edgcomb to take his part in the farce."

His young hostess stood in the hall when, in obedience to her summons, he was crossing it.

"Well!" she said. And though she said nothing more, he felt himself challenged.

"Mrs. Ray, I feel as much honoured as a man can feel in being invited by you to your house. Be still more gracious to me; let me play the passive part you asked me to fill first—let me be Charles the Second. I shall do your taste and discrimination more credit than Jack Ray will."

"As if I didn't know that this dramatic ardour has been put into you by my guileless sister-in-law," she answered mockingly. "Jenifer hates Minnie Thurtle, and is awfully afraid of Minnie's getting anything like local recognition. Now I have no small feeling of that kind. If I owned serfs or slaves, I should like my serfs or slaves to distinguish themselves, because they'd redound to my credit. But Jenifer has no broad feeling of that sort. She hates Minnie Thurtle because Minnie is pretty and is the keeper's daughter."

Effie spoke very effectively; but the days were dead in which her effective rendering of wrong ideas could impress him.

"If you really believe Miss Ray to be actuated by anything like petty jealousy, show yourself so much the nobler by not trying to thwart her," he said politely.

She flung her head up and looked at him in doubt.

"You are laughing at me, but your satire doesn't cut deeply enough to influence. Please understand, if I let you have your own way in this, it is not because I want to please you, but because I want you to please Jenifer."

"You are too good to me."

"I don't pretend for a moment that my desire is an amiable one; but as I manage to get my own way in everything at Moor Royal, I don't think you will be sorry to hear that I should really be very glad if Jenifer and you fell in love with each other."

"I have no right to listen to the suggestion of there being even a possibility of Miss Ray's ever honouring me so far," he said coldly.

And then Effie laughed at him and told him he had "grown strangely humble."

"Will you make one tiny admission to me?" she asked as they walked along to the library, which had been transformed into a theatre; "it won't involve any loss of your dignity—in fact if any one will be humbled by it I shall be that person. Weren't you very much relieved when you heard I had married Hubert Ray?"

"I was delighted to know that you had such a fair prospect of happiness."

"That's an evasion. Were you not relieved? Didn't you feel I had saved you a great deal of trouble?"

"I thought you had acted very sensibly. Your husband is one of the best fellows I have ever known. Jack," he continued, as they went behind the scenes, "Mrs. Ray has kindly permitted me to take my original part of Charles the Second. You won't object? you thought it a bore, you know?"

"All right," Jack said, but he said it very grimly, and Captain Edgcomb saw lightning glances interchanged between Jack and a handsome dark-eyed girl who stood a little apart from the ladies and gentlemen assembled on the stage.

"Jenifer doesn't mind putting me into a situation which she feels to be fraught with danger to her brother," he thought discontentedly; but the next instant the better thought, "She knows too well what I feel about her to dread a low rival," moved him to a brighter frame of mind.

"The change is Miss Jenifer's work," Minnie Thurtle took an opportunity of whispering to Jack, when stage business drove him into her vicinity. As much as he could he avoided speaking to her before people. Not that he was "ashamed of his admiration for her," he told himself, but because he feared being forced into a premature declaration of love and war.

"I don't think my sister has anything to do with it," he muttered in reply.

"Oh, don't tell me," she said with a saucy toss of her handsome head.

He had found similar toings highly piquant and attractive when he had witnessed them oftentimes in a half light in the keeper's cottage.

But this one seemed glaring and out of place in the atmosphere of a room that he associated with the delicate and refined presence of the women who had habitually sat in it with him.

"Oh, don't tell me! Mrs. Hubert Ray is too much the lady to go and do an ill-natured thing; but Miss Jenifer hates me, and will injure me if she can."

This was very sad to hear, and hard to bear. But Jack knew that, by reason of certain foolish promises which he had made, he had brought it all upon himself. And somehow or other the knowledge did not bring him any comfort.

Captain Edgcomb played his part with zeal and discretion, and Minnie Thurtle was speedily reconciled to the change. "The captain," as she loved to call him for many a long day after these ill-timed theatricals at Moor Royal, in his loyalty to the lightest wish of his heart's queen, for such he knew Jenifer to be to him, did his utmost to dazzle the vain rustic beauty away from Jack Ray. But though she loved the flattery which the handsome, distinguished soldier lavished upon her freely, she was too shrewd and calculating a girl to let it become a net to her feet. He acted as a rod, however, with which to whip up Jack's jealousy into a show of more open allegiance to her.

The majority of those who had received invitations to these festivities at Moor Royal came, though they had declared themselves to be shocked and disgusted when they first heard of them. Young Mrs. Ray and her sister were born managers on a munificent scale, and no more perfect display of hospitality, well within the borders of good taste, had been witnessed in that neighbourhood.

But when they came to count the cost of it all, which was not for some months after, they found the bills so heavy, that Effie broadly advised that no effort should be made to meet them.

"It will curtail our income quite too shockingly, if these wretched people are paid now," she said. And then she added that Hubert really should consider what exhaustive calls were made upon her housekeeping purse. "I have to provide for two families, you must remember, Hubert. It would be very different if your mother and sister were not here."

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LANCASHIRE. PART IV.

THERE are few more uninteresting tracts of country than that through which runs the father of railways, the Manchester and Liverpool; the line over which Stephenson drove his first locomotive, the Rocket; the line whose opening, a national fête as it was very justly considered, was marked by the death of Huskisson, as if the fates had demanded some illustrious victim as a sacrifice at the commencement of the new age—the age of steam and iron. It is a tract of mosses and wastes, with mills and factories cropping up in all the habitable places. Cotton is no longer king, but instead there is a democracy of miscellaneous manufactures—from engine-boilers to Epsom salts.

But although the railway system has immensely developed the industry of these regions, yet Manchester and Liverpool were, even before the railway age; they had succeeded in life, and had made their mark in the world, each giving a helping hand to the other across the intervening moors and wilds; and that they were able to do all this was very much the work of one man—not a beneficent person at all, but a sturdy, pig-headed landowner, thinking mostly of improving his own estate—Francis Egerton, third Duke of Bridgewater.

If our young duke had been fortunate in his love-affairs probably nothing would ever have been heard of the Bridgewater Canal. But the beautiful Elizabeth Gunning—not long before wedded at dead of night, and with the ring of a bed-curtain, to the young Duke of Hamilton; but now a bewitching widow, turning the heads of all the world—this beautiful Elizabeth then, after turning the head of this second young duke, a solid substantial head incapable of many such revolutions, quarrelled with him on some point of behaviour, and then went and married another duke—a double duchess she had resolved to be—a duke of even greater pretensions; and he of Bridgewater retired to his secluded seat at Worsley Old Hall near Manchester, to digest his pain and mortification. There was only one Elizabeth he must have felt, none other so fair as she; and he never sought other consolation for his disappointment, except in the cares of business and the pursuit of a fixed idea. That fixed idea was canals.

Close by Worsley Hall, beneath an

abrupt cliff of sandstone, ran a vein of coal, already worked to some profit, and Manchester near at hand to consume it all; but between Manchester and the coal were miry roads and hilly, hardly worthy of the name. An ordinary mind might have thought of improving the roads—might have hit upon the tramway, and even antedated the railway system. But the duke's was not an ordinary mind. Something cranky and original might be expected of him, and at this time he had the luck to meet with a congenial spirit—an almost illiterate millwright with a capacity for construction amounting even to genius. He could write a little, this James Brindley, could make out an account or specification somehow, but his spelling was atrocious even in an age of doubtful spelling. Between the hard heads of the duke and the millwright was struck out the luminous notion of a canal—a canal from mid earth to Manchester; the coals to float from the parent vein to the wheelbarrow of the Manchester weaver without breaking bulk. There was money in it, the duke saw; but he had plenty of that already, and had no great use for it, being parsimonious enough in his habits, and living on four hundred a year while his great works were going on. Perhaps in the beginning he had some secret thought of showing beautiful Elizabeth what she had lost, for he might have had a shrewd idea of what she had set most store by in her adorers.

Well, an Act of Parliament was got; the duke undertaking to sell his coal at fourpence the hundredweight—the big hundredweight, one hundred and forty pounds or thereabouts—on his wharf at Manchester; and the canal was made, Brindley, the guiding soul, fighting difficulties at every step, and meeting each perplexity with some new device. At night there were consultations in the old hall, tobacco council—a council of three, the duke, his factor, and Brindley, with their long pipes and mugs of ale, or perhaps it would be at some tavern in the neighbourhood, each man paying his score. When this first canal was finished—a fine work still, even in this age of great works, with miles of underground tunnelling, crossing the Irwell by an aqueduct (then considered a marvellous work by connoisseurs), and ending at Knot Mill in Manchester—when the coal canal was finished ideas grew into the shape of a new canal uniting Manchester and Liverpool. But here there were

rivals to do with, the original Mersey and Irwell Navigation Company, who had to a certain extent canalised the two streams, a navigation often interrupted by neap tides and times of drought, but which had already done much for the commerce of the two rising towns. A great parliamentary battle followed—Stanley against Egerton, the old navigation against the new—and the engineer Brindley, looking on in awe, chronicles the encounter in terms that recall the terse inscriptions on the Bayeux tapestry: "The Toores mad had agane ye duk." But, if the Tories made head against the duke on this occasion, the duke was too many for them in the end. This Bill was passed, and the canal made, not following the direct line by which the railway now passes, for Chat-moss was in the way, but through the Cheshire flats, and joining the estuary of the Mersey at Runcorn. This great work, undertaken at the sole charge of the duke, was almost too much for his resources. The duke's Saturday night was frequently not so peaceful as the cottar's, for money to pay wages was often wanting. The duke at one time could not get a five hundred pound bill cashed either in Manchester or Liverpool; and if Childs, the bankers of Temple Bar, had not come to his aid, probably the works would have been stopped for want of money. But, once finished, the canal proved a great financial success, and is still a magnificent property, while it inaugurated a golden age of canals, which soon were planned and carried out in every direction. The influence of the duke's enterprise in developing the prosperity of Manchester and Liverpool may be judged from the fact that, before the days of the canal, the small quantity of goods exported from Manchester to foreign markets was carried on horseback to Bewdley and Bridgenorth, and then floated down the Severn to Bristol.

Although Brindley and his patron were not exactly the originators of the canal in England—for cuts and navigations had frequently been made to improve the course of rivers, and in their immediate neighbourhood the Sankey Brook had been canalised—yet the canal, as an independent water-way, disregarding the courses of rivers, and carried by artificial works over hill and dale, is due to their initiation. And without canals it is doubtful whether we should have had railways. The canal system trained up a race of engineers and others accustomed to great works. The

gangs of men who had cut the navigations, and had got the name of navigators, took service under the new empire of railways, and retained their names and their rough and ready manners and organisation.

Altogether a conspicuous figure this great duke, and his name and fame are still freshly remembered about the scene of his great works. Still he seems to rule the great enterprise he inaugurated; virtually he still rules by the trustees, who act under his original appointment. People talk still of the duke and the duke's intentions on this matter and the other, and "What does the duke say to that?" is frequently heard when any question is raised affecting the interests of the Bridgewater Trust; and may be heard now in the crowded committee-room of the House of Commons, where the Manchester Ship Canal is being discussed—a canal which steps into the shoes of the "old navigation," and by which it is proposed to bring tall barques and ocean steamers into the very heart of Lancashire.

A tribute to the figure made by the duke is the popular tradition concerning him. Some very old men still living might perhaps have seen him in the flesh; a figure of the period of the third of the Georges, with a profile like that of his Majesty on the half-crowns, a heavy, bulky figure—he had been slim enough when he courted fair Elizabeth Gunning—a homely, substantial, yeoman-like figure in a brown suit, with drab breeches all besprinkled with snuff. And such a figure, it is said by old people about Worsley, may be seen, on one night in every year, sitting in a lumbering coach, which, drawn by six powerful black horses, thunders over the road towards Manchester. Or is it upon the black and gloomy waters of his own canal, where there is a stench as if from the pit of Acheron? The flying packet is passing, the horses are galloping along the track-way, the swell of black water washes up the banks, the postillion in his scarlet jacket cracks his whip and shouts to clear the way. But the laziest bargeman need not bestir himself, the whole will pass swiftly and harmlessly like a vapour; only in a corner to himself the duke sits talking earnestly with his two friends, and the smoke of their ghostly pipes curls harmlessly away.

It is cheering to meet with a touch of superstitious romance in the very heart of the manufacturing district. Perhaps an ancient domain like that of Worsley, with its

ancient trees and grassy glades, keeps up a certain freshness of feeling as well as of vegetation in its immediate circuit. Anyhow, there is Wardley Hall close by, where there is preserved a veritable fetish, dating from nobody knows when, and preserved nobody knows why, except that some unheard-of misfortune would follow its removal. A fine old Elizabethan hall is Wardley, with its timber-work, and overhanging gables, and fine clustered chimney shafts—a hall that has come to the Egertons; for the name of Egerton still survives at Worsley, although the male line has long since run out; but these hold by the distaff, as the old genealogists say, and were originally Gowers of the ducal house of Sutherland. Well, at one time this lordly hall was the home of an ancient family named Downes, and the last of the race, the inevitable spendthrift who dissipates what it has cost generations of careful policy to amass and keep together, was, according to tradition, one Roger Downes, who forsook this fine old place for a lodging in Whitehall, and is said to have been one of the wildest rufflers at the court of Charles the Second. In a brawl he killed a tailor, and in his turn had his head chopped off (so the story goes) by a watchman with his bill. The headless trunk was thrown into the Thames, the head packed up in a box and sent to Wardley, where it still remains. Another account says the fray was at Epsom Wells, but agrees about the armipotent watchman. And then, rather to the confusion of the legend, some charnally-minded antiquary of the last century explored the tombs of the Downes family in an adjoining church, and found the coffin of Roger, and, within, the skeleton with head and everything complete; and this inclines us to another tradition, or conjecture, which attributes the skull to a Roman Catholic priest martyred in Queen Elizabeth's days, and declares that it was here preserved as a relic. Anyhow, there is the head still carefully preserved in a cupboard in the wall made purposely for its reception, and nobody ventures to disturb it for fear that worse might happen.

Leaving behind this nook of primitive freshness of verdure and faith, preserved by the territorial influence of the Bridgewater estates, we may make for Warrington, described by Leland more than three centuries ago as "a paved town of pretty bigness," a description that still holds good.

It is certainly not of any big prettiness. But Warrington may be remembered as the seat of an ancient academy of Presbyterian origin; with Dr. Enfield, the compiler of the once familiar "Speaker," as one of its chiefs. Presbyterianism was once very strong in Lancashire, and Warrington was a sort of literary centre (as was Norwich, later on) of that particular cult, modified and brightened by French influence through the medium of the Huguenot immigration of the seventeenth century.

Warrington Bridge, too, may deserve notice, once held to be the key of Lancashire. Built, or perhaps restored, by the first Earl of Derby, when his potent son-in-law, King Henry the Seventh, made his royal progress to Knowsley. This same earl left a good round sum in his will to free the bridge from toll, so that everyone might cross freely to and fro without hindrance. The road from Warrington Bridge to Knowsley runs in a bold direct way; the London road for the Liverpool people; turning sharply their way at Prescot, where is quite a little Switzerland, not in scenery, but in the devotion of the people to watchmaking. Here we are at the gates of the ancient seat of the Stanleys, with its noble park, jealously guarded from public gaze by a high wall enclosing its whole circuit. Perhaps the high wall, however, was designed not so much to keep out prying eyes as to keep in prowling wild beasts, for Knowsley, in the lifetime of the grandfather of the present earl, was a private "Zoo," where all kinds of wild animals were kept for the owner's delight.

The Stanleys began to rise from the ruck of fighting knights and captains, as the Percys—Hotspur and grey old Northumberland—came to their downfall. Probably even then the Stanleys had some connection with Liverpool and the mariners who used that haven, and so had means of reaching the Isle of Man, and taking it from the Percys, who had held it for some few years. Anyhow, Stanley got the island and kept it, with the title of Lord of Man and of the Isles; perhaps he called himself king on the island, but would not venture to do so within hearing of the jealous court of his master. The Stanleys were zealous adherents of York during the Wars of the Roses, and gained considerably in fortune by the success of Edward the Fourth; but their grand coup, as everybody knows, was at Bosworth Field, when, by a judicious abstention from the

fight, Thomas Stanley virtually won the crown for Henry of Richmond. There was nothing particularly treacherous in Stanley's defection, whose son George was in the hands of Richard as a hostage for his father's behaviour; and to be suspected by such a vigorous ruler as Richard was pretty well equivalent to a sentence of death. But a long-headed and careful man was this first Earl of Derby—not Earl of Derbyshire or of the town best known as Derby, but of the manor and hundred of West Derby in Lancashire—not taking it amiss when jealous King Henry the Seventh cut off his brother's head for a mere incautious saying about Perkin Warbeck. He had himself a kind of surety in his wife, the king's mother, the cold and stately Margaret, who lies buried in her son's chapel in Westminster Abbey. George Stanley, the hostage of Bosworth, did not live to be Earl of Derby, and it was his younger brother, Sir Edward, who led the Lancashire men to Flodden Field,

A stock of striplings strong of heart
Brought up from babes with beef and bread,

and to whom Lord Marmion's last words, "On, Stanley, on!" were presumably addressed. It was these Lancashire striplings whose keen showers of arrows drove the Scots from the hill on which they were entrenched; and as Stanley had thus won the mount, and bore an eagle on his coat, the fanciful heraldry of the day decreed that he should be created Lord Monteagle.

Perhaps the most interesting of these lords of Knowlesley was the third earl, Edward, the grandest and most stately of peers, but also a successful bone-setter—in a country where bone-setting is an hereditary and secret craft—and a cunning leech, delighting in doctoring and dosing the poor. In his time Lathom was the chief residence, and the neighbouring town of Ormskirk the burial-place of the family, and in Ormskirk church are still many memorials of the Stanleys. "He has got Lathom and Knowlesley," is still a common saying in Lancashire when anybody has two houses, showing a strange tenacity and vitality in a popular saying, for Lathom went away from the Stanleys in 1735, when the tenth earl died without issue, and the line ran back to the descendant of the third son of George, the hostage of Bosworth. But in the meantime Lathom had made its mark in the history of the Stanleys. We are now in the times of the Civil Wars between king and Parlia-

ment, and James, the seventh earl, a zealous king's man, and yet coldly and jealously regarded by the king, perhaps from being suspected of a certain Puritanism in the matter of religion, his wife, Charlotte de Tremouilles, being of a distinguished Huguenot family, her mother the daughter of William the First, Prince of Orange, and Charlotte Bourbon.

The heroic defence of Lathom House by Countess Charlotte was once a favourite subject with our artists, and well known upon the walls of the Royal Academy. The countess is at dinner with her daughters; a bomb alights in the fireplace and explodes, setting the dogs barking and the maids shrieking; the gallant serving-man half draws his sword; but the buxom countess goes on with her dinner quite unmoved, and her two girls are rather excited than alarmed. The huge bombard which thus annoyed the garrison with its shells, was soon after captured in a sortie, and brought into the castle. And presently Prince Rupert came along with the main body of the king's army and raised the siege; and all ended happily for the time, the countess retiring in safety to the Isle of Man, where her husband soon after joined her, for, for some reason or other, Rupert would have no more of him than the king; they took his men and his money greedily enough, but seemed to have an invincible dislike to his person.

But before the earl reached the island he had shared in a deed of arms which cost him dear later on.

The Roundheads, breaking up their leaguer before Lathom, had divided into two bands—one retreating to Bolton, at that time chiefly inhabited by Presbyterians, while the other made for Liverpool. Rupert and the earl pursued the enemy to Bolton, which they carried by storm. The sack and slaughter that followed rankled deeply in the hearts of the rest of the Parliamentary army. Officers and men were, it is said, killed in cold blood after surrender, and the earl, if not actually concerned in the killing, made no effort to prevent it. It is difficult to believe all this of a brave and amiable man, and the earl denied it with his dying breath. But the feeling in the army was strong against him, and the earl might be considered a doomed man if he fell into the power of his enemies. But in his little island kingdom he seemed safe enough, even when the royal cause was altogether lost and the king had gone to the scaffold. But the earl was drawn from

his retreat to share the fortunes of the second Charles, and the "crowning mercy" of Worcester fight left him a fugitive and a wanderer. Even then he seems to have taken more thought for the safety of his Prince than for his own, little as the Stuarts had ever loved him or his; and leaving Charles in the safe retreat of Boscobel he made for his own island home where his wife still held out for the royal cause. In the attempt he was recognised and taken prisoner, and sentenced to be beheaded in the market-place of Bolton. In a manly and affecting letter he takes leave of his wife, with the last postscript, "Blessing to you, my dear Mall, and Ned, and Billy." These last were the youngest of the flock, youngest and most loved perhaps, for he had a son Charles old enough to ride to London, and beg for his father's life. But Cromwell, not personally vindictive, probably felt that the feeling of the army demanded a sacrifice; and so the earl met his doom—surrounded by stern Puritan soldiers grimly approving the deed, the little crowd of townsfolk silent and doubtful—upon the spot where now a statue is erected to his memory.

As for poor little Ned and Billy, it is disappointing to learn that they both died in childhood. One might have hoped that a father's last blessing had better sped. But it is curious to note that in the general winding up and distribution that followed the extinction of the eldest branch of the house, when Lathom was lost to the Stanleys, the kingdom of Man fell to the Duke of Athole, a descendant of a daughter of the unfortunate James Stanley and Charlotte de Tremouilles, one of the girls who shared in the dangers of the siege of Lathom House, and the dukedom of Athole was enriched with nearly half a million of money, which the English Government paid for the lordship of Man.

From this period the annals of the Stanleys record no very striking incidents, except in the way of Parliamentary warfare, which is hardly within our limits. But seated in the midst of such a thriving and wealthy district, the fortunes of the Stanleys have kept pace with the growth of the great seaport so long connected with the family.

We are now close to Liverpool, which throws out its arms in all directions, covering the county with mansions and villas, and with a cloud of outposts in the way of small houses and squalid suburbs. But to see Liverpool to advan-

tage it should be approached from the sea, with its long lines of buildings glittering through the sea haze, and half veiled by a cloud of clustering masts and spars.

Few cities are more thoroughly modern than Liverpool. The very pool, the creek or haven in the Mersey to which it owes its name and first beginning, has been filled up, and drays and waggons rumble over the spot where once the galleys and fisher-boats of the old world lay anchored. The original Liverpool began its career upon the peninsula formed by this creek, on the nees or nose of which was the town quay—now represented by the open space in front of the heavy and gloomy-looking Custom House. On a knoll above the quay stood the ancient castle of King John, of which not a vestige is left, its site being now occupied by St. George's Church; but its memory is preserved in Castle Street. Leaving the visionary castle gate represented by the north front of the classic church, Castle Street conducts us to a carrefour, where the Town Hall now stands, anciently known as the High Cross. Here abutted the main road from Prescott and London—from Knowsley, too, and Lathom; and down this road, now Dale Street, often enough the Earl of Derby passed along with his train to his fortified mansion, where are now big warehouses overlooking St. George's Dock.

And here we have the nucleus of the old town: the castle, the High Cross, Lord Derby's Tower, and over against that the Chapel of Our Lady near the waterside—for Liverpool did not rise to the dignity of a church, being only part of the parish of Walton-on-the-Hill, that was a village when Liverpool was but a marshy creek, and is only a village still, now that her ancient dependency is one of the chief cities of the world. All the rest of the town was just one long straggling street, with the white cross in the middle of it, and close by the cross was the old hall of the Moores. All this might be considered suburb even as late as the seventeenth century; when the Parliamentarians held castle and town in force, and Prince Rupert laid siege to it. The creek gave a certain strength to the position, and the old Norman castle, with its towers, and moats, and barbicans, was imposing in appearance, but commanded by a semicircle of loftier hills. Prince Rupert pronounced it a crow's-nest that schoolboys might capture; but the crow's-nest cost him fifteen hundred men, sadly wanted at Marston Moor soon afterwards;

and the capture of Liverpool was the last solid success of the royal army. With the recapture of the town by the Parliamentary army the history of Liverpool militant comes to an end, except for some trifle in the way of privateering in the French war. All the rest is an uninterrupted record of prosperity and development.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, taking the Liverpool Guide of 1797 as an authority, we find the port described as a "vortex that has nearly swallowed up the foreign trade of Bristol, Lancaster and Whitehaven." This swallowing up was no doubt due very much to the enterprising makers of canals; of which a perfect network converged about Liverpool. The cotton trade, too, was developing, and Irish yarns were largely imported, and most of the passenger traffic to and from the sister island passed through Liverpool.

"Packets sail almost daily for Dublin, weather permitting." The ferry-houses on either side of the river are crowded with passengers, but the fares are uncertain, and daily impositions are practised upon strangers. In connection with the ferry there is daily communication by canal with Chester, by means of an "elegant packet." The passengers of both sexes are carried in and out by the boatmen with great ease and safety when the tide does not serve for the piers. Society is gay and pleasant, with a touch of the tone of Bath and Cheltenham—coaches and chairs in waiting to convey the fashionables to their varied sphere of amusements. The fares are one and sixpence a mile; but a coach and pair may be hired for the whole day for twelve-and-six. Money comes in easily and pleasantly to these Liverpool traders, especially to those who deal in "ebony," for that is the best trade now going. Slaves of the value of a million and upwards are yearly transported from the African coast to the West Indies, and one fourth of the ships that hail from Liverpool are engaged in that trade.

In the immense extensions and reconstructions that have taken place since then, it seems a pity that the old pool should have disappeared, for a tidal basin leading into the heart of the city, mingling the masts of ships with spires and roofs, is the one thing wanting to the grace and picturesqueness of the city. Nature has so far been improved out of existence, and is revenged by the dampness of the site of the old pool, while the dwellings built upon

it are more or less unhealthy. But wonderful is the long river front with its bewildering network of docks; wonderful the great landing-stage where all the nations of the earth seem to meet for one brief moment and pass on their way—tenders taking off people for the steamers for America, or India, or the Antipodes, while others are landing them bronzed and baked from the tropics, or white and frosted from Greenland or Archangel—and wonderful the rush of everyday people for the ferries, where for a few pence you can enjoy all the excitement and charm of the departure for a voyage of indefinite duration. With a fresh breeze and a full tide, and the argosies floating proudly home, cables clanking, anchors rattling, seamen cheering, and expectant groups peering out from poop and fore-castle, at the new world that has risen for them over the seas, there is variety and pleasure enough in merely crossing the ferry. And then we land as it were on a strange coast. Lancashire is left behind, and we are within easy reach of the ancient city of the Legion, world-renowned Chester, a strong and living link with the faraway past.

THE SOLDIER AT HOME.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

WHO wouldn't live among these Surrey hills this pleasant spring morning—all rugged and broken, with the heather showing green on their brown sides, that sometimes in the wreathing mists of morning assume quite the air of rugged primeval rocks, while you can fancy that grand Alpine summits lie hidden behind the clouds? A military feeling, too, is in the landscape—an artillery fourgon just disappearing behind the brow of a hill, and on some nearer point figures red and black, one of whom is waving energetically a white flag, signalling an approach, no doubt, to headquarters. Stray bugle-calls are heard intermittently between the puffs of the engine. And here is the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the quiet resting-place of the dead, with the white tombs shining among the blossoms of the gorse.

And then the station for the camp, with a quiet kind of animation about it—a sprinkling of uniforms and of officers in mufti just back from leave, and driving off with sheaves of fishing-rods sticking out of the cab-windows. Oh yes, plenty of cabs—hansoms, too! But better to walk through Aldershot—the brisk little town that has

sprung up from nothing, with nothing strikingly military in its general appearance, unless it be in the tailors' shops that bristle with uniforms, and the saddlers', with a leaning to military accoutrements. Just outside are the permanent barracks—buildings that are even impressive in their blank dead walls, with an overpowering sense of bricks and mortar—cavalry-barracks these, big enough for an army, with a squadron or two of dragoons almost lost in their recesses, and in contrast a quite pretty set of infantry-barracks, like model lodging-houses, with balconies outside, where soldiers are lolling in every degree of dress and undress, and a glass roof between the two blocks, making a covered parade-ground below. And then up the long straight road to the camp, meeting a sprinkle of military traffic—an artillery-wagon or two, an orderly jogging down the hill with much rattle and jingle of accoutrements, a small dog-cart with two or three smart young subs upon it, rejoicing in a day's emancipation—and then we cross the general parade-ground that looks down the whole length of dusty white road, running straight as a carpenter's rule right through the South Camp and over the canal and through the North Camp, and so away into the wilderness. The camp itself one might overlook altogether, so low and insignificant-looking are the red-brown huts, all symmetrically arranged in blocks like some toy village, each block being known as a line—Line A, Line B, and so on; and between each row of blocks a strip of parade-ground. Here and there is some more elaborate residence, the result of accretions at various times, after a pleasant "booth-at-a-fair" fashion, with a green lawn, perhaps, and something in the way of a garden about it.

Perhaps what strikes us most is the quietude of the place, in spite of some little military stir, a regimental band playing somewhere near, and bugles sounding, and the hoarse words of command. But, notwithstanding all this, such tranquility!

"Is it possible," cries Mrs. Creaker, "that there are five or six thousand soldiers all about us, and everything so quiet?"

"You forget, my dear," replied Creaker grimly, "they are all men. With a female regiment or two you'd find a difference."

"Or if we'd a militia regiment or two just come in," suggests a sergeant who has volunteered to show us the lines of

the Cumbrian Fusiliers, "you wouldn't complain of the quiet then, mem."

"I don't complain of it," rejoined Mrs. Creaker in an injured tone. "I think it quite delightful."

But in truth, the men are all furbishing up for parade, and presently bugles ring out and the lines are all alive with men hastening to the general muster.

We shall have to wait now before we can talk to Master Tom, for our friend is with his regiment, undistinguishable among the mass of Glengarrys and gleaming rifles. And then the ranks fall in, the officers gather in groups, and the grey-headed colonel comes on the ground on his quiet old dappled steed, and the band strikes up with a crash, and bayonets glisten and swords are drawn, and markers run wildly hither and thither.

There is a kind of fascination in watching military drill that would keep us gazing as long as it lasted; but presently Creaker spies a regiment of cavalry exercising in a big field between the two camps, and carries us off to look at them.

We skirt the camp by a belt of silver birch—the birks of Aldershot are quite as pleasant in their way as those of Aberfeldy—the trees just bursting into leaf of the tenderest, most hopeful green. The sun is warm; a kind of restful languor is in the air, pleasantly enlivened with distant martial music; and even the incessant bugling of aspirant buglers—the somewhat discordant accompaniment of all military camps—comes with a softened, distant cadence, like some warlike Ranz des Vaches. There is somebody on the top of a hill, of course, waving a flag with determined energy; others are lying down a long way off against a sunny bank, and one of these replies lazily, just a flick of his flag at the end of each vigorous flourish from the hill. And this last is the work that would suit us best on this lazy day of spring, to lift that flag and let it drop every now and then, in placid assent to what the vigorous young fellow on the hill might be waving, a great deal too polite to disagree with any of his remarks, or to be led into controversy on any possible subject. Then goes by a wagon with a team of mules—a team of indefinite length, a dozen, more or less—driven by a jolly young corporal, with an eighteen-foot sapling as a whip, that he waves as a giant might wave his club. But with all this power of whip anything like a trot is only effected by all the soldiers in the

waggon, as many men as mules, jumping off and punching each a mule. Then there is something like a gallop, and the men jump in again helter-skelter; the mules have a feeling that this is being done, and shut up with a snap like a new three-and-sixpenny clasp-knife; and then the jumping out and punching begins again, everybody very jolly and pleasant over it, and even the mules seeming to see the joke. "And they get extra pay for that, do they?" asks Creaker in a sarcastic tone. "Yes, sir," replies the friendly sergeant; "working pay at rates varying from fourpence to one-and-fourpence a day." But it must be said that the work about the camp, clearing-up, digging, and so on, is done in a careful, thorough way.

And then we come to the cavalry drill—a thorough grind in its way, giving the impression of a vast gathering of mounted lunatics amusing themselves with their favourite crazes. There, in one corner, a solitary horseman is riding round and round in circles, while another is popping over an imitation hedge, backwards and forwards; there a line of men, their horses immovable as so many statues, while the men are whirling their arms about like mill-sails. Another lot are jumping into their saddles, and then jumping back to terra firma without apparent motive; and again a different set are walking their horses sideways, while others seem to be playing at follow-my-leader. Altogether one realises the terrible labour and cost of raising and mounting that splendid but sadly-damaged machine, a crack cavalry corps, with its associations rather of a lead and gone chivalry than of the stern work of modern war. Tom was quite right not to join the cavalry; it is like learning a dead language for a man who has got his work cut out in the living world.

But the horsemen file away, and the place is left solitary; the tradesmen's carts, whose occupants have stopped to gaze, now drive on. A pony-carriage comes chingling along with the colonel's wife and her pretty little girls; an officer's wife in a tall hat canters past with a great following of dogs. Just hereabouts runs the Basingtoke Canal, a quiet and restful piece of water, that from long experience of country life has got rid of all business-like primness, and with brambles along its banks and a quiet foot-path by the side—it is called the slow-path, but nobody ever saw anything owed from it—seems to have been promoted by Nature on its retirement from

active service to the honorary rank of a river. By the bridge over the canal is a boat-letting establishment, and a young fellow in mufti, with his wife, embarks in a small skiff, and paddles away, down or up, it is all the same; there is no fear of brutal barges with their crushing vessels of wrath, but at most a friendly boat-load of turnips, or a small consignment of oil-cake, dragged by the farmer's boy, to vary the quiet retirement of the scene.

But by this time Tom will be released from his duties perhaps, and we stroll back through the camp. The smell of dinner is now distinctly in the air. At the doors of the huts sergeants' wives are looking out for their husbands, while the domestic cat rubs herself in expectant welcome at the door-post; but the regiment is still under arms, each captain with his company working it about independently, while the grey-headed colonel watches the whole calmly from his saddle. In one corner of the parade-ground a squad of recruits are being drilled by a smart young sergeant who whisks his rifle about as if it were a bamboo-cane. The sergeant-major watches the proceedings with an observant eye, and the colonel rides up now and then to see how they are getting on. Altogether there seems to be a great deal more pains taken with young soldiers than used to be the case, and they are less subject to the petty tyranny of their immediate superiors.

But soon the last bugle-call is blown, and the serried lines of scarlet and steel resolve themselves into their elements; buglers, bandmen, privates, officers, all disappear, and the parade-ground resumes its dusty and deserted aspect, relieved only by the tripods and dummy targets which are used in teaching the young ideas how to shoot.

By this time Tom, hospitably intent to do the full honours of Aldershot, has found us out. The male section of the party must come and join the mess—the sergeants' mess—for Tom announces with pride that he has already gained the third stripe and is now a sergeant. For his sister, there is a staff-sergeant, a great friend of his, who occupies a hut to himself with his wife and daughter, and will Mrs. Creaker join them at their meal? The pure air of the Surrey hills has made everybody hungry, and the prospect of something to eat is hailed with joy.

"I was going to propose," said Creaker, "that you should come and lunch with us at the hotel."

Tom shook his head.

"My soldier's coat," he said, "isn't good enough for an hotel-bar. The publican looks down upon me, the barmaid reserves her smiles for the commissioned officer. I shouldn't be allowed in the coffee-room."

Creaker admits that this is a great shame. Not so long ago he himself would have been equally intolerant; but the process of conversion has been rapid. We sit down with the sergeants in their mess-hut, where everything is as well served as in a private house of the better class. The meat—an excellent joint, for the united rations of the mess are taken in this form—the meat and bread cost them nothing. The vegetables and groceries are extras; but a small weekly subscription defrays all charges. The dinner is got over with military promptitude, and then Creaker produces cigars which are generally approved of, and a game of billiards is proposed, Tom having got his liberty for the afternoon. The sergeant-major joins in the game, a fine stalwart man who is still in the prime of life. Indeed, he has been only nine years in the service, and his record is an example of what a steady zealous man may get out of the service.

"In four months," says the sergeant-major, "I was made lance-corporal, in about twelve months full corporal; then it was two years before I was made a sergeant; our friend here," pointing to Tom, "has beat me at that. In another year I was made colour-sergeant, and then two years after that sergeant-major."

Now our sergeant-major looks forward some day to be made quartermaster, with pay ranging from nine to fifteen shillings a day, and, after hanging on to this as long as he can, he will retire on a pension with the honorary rank of captain, and with a good chance of an appointment in civil life. He would prefer a civil appointment to one under Government, because in the latter case they have a pernicious habit of docking the amount of pension from the salary pertaining to the appointment. Being asked if he would take a commission as lieutenant if it were offered him, the sergeant-major shakes his head. He would feel it as a come-down to be a subaltern, and dodging about from one wing to another of his company; he who now feels himself of as much real authority as his colonel. But he thinks Tom has a good chance of a commission.

As we are playing billiards in this comfortable, well-furnished room, a few

sergeants drop in to glance at the newspapers—the table is well covered with newspapers and periodicals of all kinds—and Creaker, with his enquiring disposition and well-filled cigar-case, which seems, like Fortunatus's purse, to have always a certain quantity left in it—Creaker manages to elicit the opinion of these gallant fellows on the status of the service; and the general agreement is to the effect that sergeants are very fairly off, but that there is a want of security about the position. They are reduced for trifling offences in many cases, and then farewell to their prospects for the future. In times past there might have been considerable tyranny of sergeants over privates, but now perhaps the tyranny is the other way, for the private is virtually irresponsible, and if he is unruly and insubordinate the sergeant is obliged to smooth it over, as complaints, however decided, are sure to tell against the man who makes them. In fact, the sergeant is the elastic buffer who gets all the bumps from both sides. Creaker, however, who knows so much about business life, afterwards, when alone with Tom, makes light of this complaint. "It's the same everywhere," he said. "Overseers, foremen, head-clerks, all make the same complaint. It's just the test of their fitness for higher things that they should be able to manage both inferiors and superiors." But having been cordially received and hospitably entertained by the gallant sergeants of the Cumbrian Fusiliers, it would not become us to make light of their grievances.

Tom had been a little uneasy all the time we had been playing billiards, wanting to see how his sister was getting on. "Oh, she'll do very well," said Creaker, who was showing off his cannons upon the billiard-table, speaking with the calm indifference of a husband. But Tom said if we didn't mind he'd run on and see, and as he failed to come back again, we went after him to the staff-sergeant's hut. It was a pretty little place, with a little porch, and creepers about it, and inside quite a cosy little cottage, with engravings and flowers to brighten the room, and a pleasant house-mother to bid us welcome. Besides the sergeant's wife there was a daughter, a nice refined-looking girl, who was washing the plates in a little lean-to attached to the hut, while Tom, leaning against the doorpost, watched her movements with considerable interest, and every now and then threw in

a word. The sergeant evidently took great pride in his daughter; he showed us her drawings, her certificates. She was quite a learned young lady—as well educated as if she had been the colonel's daughter. "I should like her to be a governess in some good family, and not to marry a soldier," says her mother confidentially to Mrs. Creaker; but Tom overhears it, and gives a start as if this disposal of the young woman's future affected him somewhat.

And now we take a turn among the huts, looking in upon one here and there. The men are lodged comfortably enough, their beds ranged on each side, nine of a side, the mattresses and bedding neatly rolled up as if ready for a start, whether to the Nile or Ganges matters not.

The Queen commands, and we obey,
Over the hills and far away.

Dinner is over, and the mess-tins are packed up and arranged on a shelf over the door at either end—in some cases bright and gleaming like the vessels at Belshazzar's feast, in others dull and leaden like mere earthly pannikins. Two rough tables accommodate the two messes, each with two rougher forms to sit upon. The soldiers' kits and accoutrements hide the bareness of the wooden walls. It is the niche where the soldier sleeps and eats—that is all. His leisure moments are spent elsewhere, and the place where the soldier finds himself most at home, truth compels us to say, is the canteen.

A cheerful-looking place, too, is the regimental canteen with its verandah, and in fine weather tables outside and seats, where the soldiers sit and drink their beer and smoke, and indulge in soldier's talk to their hearts' content. A good sprinkling of men are about this afternoon, but the majority are on duty of some kind—musketry, fatigue parties, and so on. After tea, which the soldier gets about four o'clock, as a rule, the soldier is free for the rest of the day. Only on grand field-days is the soldier often kept under arms till long past teatime. There is a pretty good hubbub now about the canteen; about the bar where beer is served; about the long, low room which is the festal hall of the establishment. At one end of the hall stands the piano, and above it are a gaily painted proscenium and a miniature stage, where performers of the music-hall variety appear in costume, and sing the songs and dance the break-downs of the day. Every night this amusement is provided by the profits of the canteen,

the performance costing, perhaps, thirty shillings or so a week, and the performers appearing on seven or eight different stages in the course of the evening, just as in the metropolis. The room is well-provided with seats, but these are never used unless to stand upon. At night the room is thronged in a general shoulder to shoulder movement. Shouting, cheering, loud laughter, clinking of cans accompany the tinkling of the old piano and the strident notes of the vocalist, while a thick pall of tobacco-smoke from hundreds of pipes almost obscures the light of the paraffin lamps.

In a general way the canteen is encouraged by the authorities, and, indeed, it is much better for the soldier to spend his evenings here—where, if he muddles himself at times it is with good honest beer which does him no harm—rather than that he should seek the allurements of the town, the poisoned spirits of the grog-shops, with other enticements of a destructive and degrading kind. But as far as drunkenness is concerned the army is neither much better nor much worse under the new system. Still, a total of twenty-three thousand men annually fined for drunkenness, shows the besetting sin of drunkenness to be a real and terrible evil for the army. Perhaps, however, it is not worse in the army than among the classes from which the army is recruited. Labourers, colliers, miners, puddlers, costermongers—drunkenness we know flourishes among such men, and it is not to be hoped that army service, with its many temptations, should have very much reclaiming influence, especially as it must be remembered that it is certainly not the cream of such classes that the army secures. The one chance of raising the general condition of the army is to attract a better class of recruits.

But there are other places of resort for the private. In each cluster of huts there is a reading-room, and here the private will find the day's papers, and the illustrated weeklies, with a good supply of general literature. Attached to the reading-room is a recreation-room, and at one of these we find a couple of drummer-boys zealously engaged at a game of bagatelle, their rosy faces hardly on a level with the board, while a corporal and private, with long clay pipes in their mouths, are having a keen encounter of wits over the cribbage-board. And then the clank of scythes and the reverberation of a big iron roller, call our

attention to a capital cricket-field. All athletic sports indeed are encouraged, as tending to make men of the striplings who swell the ranks, and to keep up the condition of the older men.

One of the most pleasant and attractive places about the camp is the hospital—the Cambridge Hospital—a handsome building which stands on a ridge overlooking the camp. It has a long corridor, with a clear run of air right through, and wards leading out, very comfortable and cosy-looking, a pleasant landscape seen through the windows. The patients, in their blue serge and night-caps, look thoroughly comfortable and well-cared for, resting in easy-chairs reading or talking, and some taking the air upon the balconies above. Altogether such comfort and attendance as a rich man hardly gets in his own house, or a poor man in the district hospital.

Then we are taken to see the butcheries and the bakeries; everything clean and neat; with the carcasses of many oxen hanging up to be cut up into rations on the morrow; good wholesome food for everybody, with no butchers' bill and bakers' bill at the end of the week.

After this Tom takes us back to his hut which he shares with three other sergeants. They have made themselves quite comfortable, supplementing the furniture drawn from the camp stores by little etceteras of their own, and sundry ornaments in the way of Egyptian relics and curiosities. In his regiment Tom declares with pride the non-coms are mostly decent fellows, and know how to keep up their position. It is not so with all, and Tom recounts how he spied from the window of his hut a sergeant of the Rough and Ready Rangers playing pitch-and-toss—not an absolutely immoral amusement in itself, perhaps—with a private; yes, actually with a private, recounts Tom in virtuous indignation, to the utter destruction of discipline and the proper observance of rank and position. In the end they quarrelled, they fought, the sergeant was knocked down. Was the man hauled away to the main-guard, brought before a court-martial, sentenced—shot? Not at all; the sergeant picked himself up, shook hands, and went away as if nothing had happened.

"Why, that was a noble sergeant," cried Mrs. Creaker. "You would have done the same, Tom, I know."

"Not to play pitch-and-toss with a private," rejoined Tom, shaking his head

gravely. "And I think I should have licked him too."

Perhaps Tom is so far right, that, as the army is at present composed, such general comradeship is impracticable, as one would like to see existing among all ranks, and as an infusion of better educated, steadier young fellows would render possible by giving a better tone to the rank and file. There are plenty of such waiting outside—the best possible material for soldiers, well-grown, well-nurtured, ready to take the ups and downs of life with a cheerful heart. Plenty of such there are who drift into clerkships, perhaps into shops and warehouses, and overcrowded callings, where they will never do any good; all the time that they would give their ears to be soldiers.

Now, for the youth of this kind, fairly educated and intelligent, the army seems to afford at this present moment unprecedented advantages. All is in a state of change, and that is precisely the state in which the aspirant has the best chance. Let the novice disregard the growl general which goes up from all ranks of the army. The army is changed from its very foundations, whether for good or ill who can say? The next big war will decide that question. But the change is indubitably and very wonderfully for good, as far as concerns the advantages offered to the man who enters the ranks. Against this are to be set the prejudices of the more solid and respectable classes against army service. Still, these prejudices are fast dissolving, a fact due very much to the influence of volunteering. The volunteer's attitude towards the regular is one of respect and emulation, and where there is a volunteer in the family, the army may be said to have made a friendship with a whole household.

Still, it is a matter of regret that the respectable and honourable position of a soldier is not recognised as it should be. In theatres and places of public amusement, in steamboats, and so on, he is often not permitted to take the place for which he can pay. At the same time as long as these prejudices exist, and they chiefly affect non-commissioned officers—a disagreeable, awkward title that "non-commissioned," with something derogatory, about as much as to say, "Please take notice that I am an inferior being," while sub-officer would be much more appropriate—as long as these prejudices exist, the authorities may obviate their effects by granting "plain-clothes leave" to all well-conducted soldiers who may desire it.

That is Tom's great desire at this present moment. He has saved enough money to provide himself with plain clothes, without troubling Creaker's banking-account, and he wishes to be present at a dance that Mrs. Creaker gives shortly.

To lead but one measure, drink but one cup of wine,

and then to bid adieu to Bella Dashwood.

For Tom has come to the conclusion that it is rather long to wait till he is a captain, and that somebody else—I should not wonder if it were the staff-sergeant's daughter—has more of the stuff about her for a soldier's wife. And she won't mind marrying a sergeant, Tom opines; though, for that matter, she is worthy to be the colonel's wife. "And perhaps will be if I have luck," says Tom bravely.

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION.

IN the parliament of man and federation of the world dreamed of by Tennyson, what part will be played by our Australasian Colonies? Who shall dip into the future and see "the vision of the world and all the wonder that will be!" We can only endeavour to form some faint idea of possibilities.

And first let us look at the past and present. It is just one hundred and thirteen years since the first annexation on the Australian continent was made by Captain Cook, and just ninety-five years since the first settlement was effected at Botany Bay, with a company of seven hundred and fifty-seven convicts, some two hundred marines in charge of them, and a few women. From this germ of about a thousand souls have developed the busy and flourishing communities of to-day. Between 1788 and 1801 the settlement in New South Wales had increased to some five thousand five hundred persons. After the latter year convicts were sent out in large numbers, until in 1849 the colonists refused to allow any more to be landed. By 1851 the population of the colony exceeded one hundred and eighty-seven thousand, and, in that year, a large territory in the western portion was separated to found the colony of Victoria. In this year, also, gold was discovered, and progress became rapid. Meanwhile, in 1825, what is now the colony of Queensland was settled; it was separated from New South Wales in 1859. Western Australia—at first called the Swan River Settlement—was formed in 1829;

Tasmania, at first a sub-settlement of New South Wales, was formed into a separate colony in 1851; South Australia was colonized by emigrants in 1836; New Zealand was separated from New South Wales, and formed into a colony, in 1840. From 1851 may be said to date the prosperity of those colonies, and from 1859 their existence as entirely separate self-supporting members of the family. To this group Fiji was added in 1874. Between 1825 and 1881 the number of souls added to the population of the whole group by emigration was one million, three hundred and twenty-five thousand, six hundred and twenty-two. In 1788 the entire population barely exceeded one thousand Europeans; in 1881 the aggregate population of Australia and New Zealand was two millions, seven hundred and ninety-seven thousand, six hundred and twenty-nine. In 1882 the entire population, including Fiji, was close upon three million souls.

Now this total seems nothing in comparison with our own dense mass of thirty-five millions; it is less than the population of London, less than the population of Scotland. But consider that it has grown practically within a generation, and consider further what it has done and is doing, and will do. It has brought under cultivation six million, eight hundred and sixty-two thousand, seven hundred and fifty acres of land previously profitless, and it has occupied, or sold for occupation for agricultural, pastoral, and mining purposes, more than eighty million, two hundred and sixty-eight thousand, one hundred and sixty-one acres. This at least was the total in 1880, and it has been augmented since. It has still before it one billion, eight hundred million acres to occupy and put to use. It has built over six thousand miles of railway, over two thousand eight hundred miles of telegraphs, and owns some two thousand five hundred vessels. Its pastoral wealth in 1880 consisted of one million, two hundred and six thousand, one hundred horses; one million, twenty-six thousand, eight hundred and ninety-eight pigs; eight million, one hundred and four thousand, nine hundred and eighteen cattle; and seventy-two million, two hundred and thirty-nine thousand, three hundred and fifty-nine sheep. It has established twenty-two banking corporations, whose assets amounted last year to ninety-six million, six hundred and eighty-eight thousand, eight hundred and eighty-eight

pounds, and it owes collectively to British capitalists about ninety-six million pounds sterling. Its total trading with the outer world in 1881, amounted to over one hundred million pounds sterling. Since gold was discovered, it has yielded over two hundred and seventy-seven million pounds' worth of the metal to enrich the world.

This small collection of three millions of people is distributed thinly over an area more than twenty-six times that of the United Kingdom, and nearly six times that of India. It has barely one person for every square mile. And these three millions of people do not consist of such a mixture of races as is to be found in America. With the exception of a few Chinese (principally in Queensland), and a few Germans (principally in South Australia and Queensland), the population is composed of the bone of our bone and the flesh of our flesh. It is an English-speaking, English-thinking, and England-loving population, with all the traditions of an old world and all the energy and breadth of a new one. It is placed in lands almost more bountifully endowed by Nature than can be found elsewhere on the globe. It has acquired wealth, it is making fame, it possesses an unoccupied area more than twenty times larger than it has had time to occupy yet, and it presents a future whose boundaries seem practically illimitable.

Politically speaking, we may say these colonies are self-governing. With the exception of Western Australia and Fiji, which are still under Crown management, they elect their own parliamentary representatives, frame and alter their own laws, just as the Home Parliament does, and with the same right of veto reserved to the Sovereign. At the same time they have a lower franchise than we have. They are linked together by electric wires, and soon will be by iron roads. Already the capitals of New South Wales and Victoria have direct railway communication; very little extension is needed to bring Adelaide and Brisbane into the circuit; and a line is already in course of construction which will unite the northern with the southern coasts of the vast territory of South Australia.

But the progress of this wonderful group has been the progress of each individual member of it. There has been no unity of action, and on the contrary, a good deal of jealousy and competition. Until quite recent years there was never any thought of union, and in consequence each colony

has prosecuted its own schemes without reference to its neighbours. Hence we see railways built on different gauges as if purposely to prevent connexion with the bordering state, and customs' tariffs each on a plan of its own. The difference in the railway gauges has long been an obstacle to interchange of traffic and society; it is being overcome. The difference in fiscal policy is the main obstacle to a political union; and it will, in time but not easily, be overcome also.

As the years pass over, the necessity for such a union becomes more and more pressing. The larger these colonies grow the weaker will become the political hold of the mother-country, yet their separate existence in independence of each other would be fraught with danger and disadvantage to the whole. Seeing the rapidity of development in one generation, it is no exaggeration of prescience to say that in another generation they must be too big to hold in leading-strings. While separately they will be weak, confederated they will at once take rank among the first ten or twelve powers of the world.

In this respect the original separation of these Australasian settlements has been a mistake, because now when the necessity arises it is all the more difficult to bring them together again. Their maintenance as separate states has involved a large annual outlay which might have been devoted to lucrative works or explorations. The residence of a governor and suite in each is a heavy charge which, under a confederation such as the Dominion of Canada, would be saved in the future. The administrative expenses of each of the provinces could also be thereby largely reduced, and at present it must be admitted they are a great deal too onerous. These new communities pay their public servants more liberally than do the United States of America and many of the older nations of Europe, while their expenditure on public buildings and other works is on a correspondingly magnificent scale. Extravagance in these matters accounts for a considerable proportion of the heavy indebtedness of the colonies, and even if a political confederation did not include a common purse, it would at least have a wholesome effect in checking the extravagance of the sections, for the element of rivalry would be removed.

But of larger benefits than economy in this direction would be the adoption of

one common fiscal policy, and the abolition of the restrictions which at present rest on the commerce of each. The majority of the colonies adhere to the sentiments of Free-trade. Victoria, one might say, is the sole exception, were it not that New Zealand has of late years shown decided signs of hankering after Protection. Between Victoria and New South Wales exists a jealousy of long standing. Victoria aspires to be regarded as the metropolitan, which New South Wales claims in right of seniority. New South Wales has nailed its colours to Free-trade and Victoria to Protection. The protective policy of Victoria is at present the greatest hindrance in the way of a federal union. A federal union of the other colonies, leaving out Victoria, is quite practicable, and a confederation with differential tariffs is also quite practicable. Neither, however, is desirable, and on the whole we should prefer to see the colonies retain their present independence to any show of union which did not tend to make them one people—one in commerce, in social arrangements, in religion, in aim and destiny. To a certain extent, then, it may be said that the beginning of the organisation rests with Victoria. A year ago there existed no sign of any such beginning being probable, but now political affairs in Victoria wear a more hopeful aspect, and the desire for federation is rapidly becoming articulate there as in New South Wales. Where these two lead it may be assumed the others will follow, although New Zealand has a pride and a way of her own and may not come over at the first beck.

The advantages to commerce of a common tariff are as obvious as the advantages to the social system of common lands, and of a common prosecution of all public works, such as railways, telegraphs, postal service, irrigation, harbours, and national defences. While each state would legislate for its own local affairs, a common parliament would legislate for the whole with regard to external policy, and also with regard to the relations of each with each. The question of the national capital would be a knotty one to solve in the face of existing jealousies, but it might find its solution in the creation of a neutral territory, and the erection of a capital, as was done in the United States.

We have spoken, so far, as if all our Australasian colonies were on the same political level, which, in point of fact, they are not. The differences which exist,

however, have little bearing on the general principle involved. No scheme of confederation would be complete, for instance, which did not embrace the Crown colony of Fiji, and for two reasons. Fiji, from its situation and the character of its resources, will never attract large settlements of Europeans. It will exist as a garden to be cultivated by English or Australian capital, the produce of which will be transported to Australia for consumption. As a field for Australian enterprise, and as a feeder for Australian markets, it must be retained in the projected union. Geographically, also, it claims a right to such a position, although in saying so we do not by any means adopt the views of Sir Julius Vogel and others, who hold that all Polynesia should be included in Australasia, and that the South Pacific generally is the reserved ground of the British flag, even as the whole American continent is claimed by the Monrosists for the Stars and Stripes.

But the largest and most serious aspect of the question of federation exists with regard to external policy. Hitherto, or until quite recently, Australia has progressed in happy isolation from the turmoils of the rest of the civilized world. The boom of Antipodean warfare could not reach her, and even had the mother country been engaged in warlike contests, her own distance from the antagonists was her security. But in her size and her rapid growth now rests her weakness. Her enormous lines of defenceless coasts offer tempting points of attack, and attractive booty to a naval antagonist. Should anything so horrible ever happen as a war between England and the United States, the privateers of America could devastate our colonies before we could stretch a hand to help. From European nations there was for a long time little cause to fear anything, but now France has a depôt at New Caledonia, and Germany a footing at Tonga, which, without being actually threatening, have enough potential evil about them to emphasise the need of considering and settling the question of Australasian defences. That question promises to be brought into prominence by the movement to annex New Guinea. This island, as we have recently shown,* offers attractions in itself, but its principal attrac-

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 51, p. 594, "New Guinea."

tion for colonising is of a negative character, viz. to prevent any other nation acquiring it. With New Guinea under British care, whether in the form of a settlement or a protectorate, there would be comparative safety, but the occupation and management of New Guinea are matters which can only be satisfactorily managed under combined action of the communities chiefly interested. In other words, only to Federal Australasia, and not to Queensland or to any single colony, could this service be adequately entrusted.

Broadly, then, the things which "make for" Australasian federation are: Domestic convenience in the assimilation of laws and of jurisdiction, and in facilitation of inter-communication; commercial advantage in economy of administration and uniformity of customs-tariffs on an enlightened basis; and national security in the presentation of a solid front to the outer world. Necessarily, within the limits of an article of this kind, we can only present the general outline. There are many questions of detail which cannot be discussed here, and which unquestionably involve many difficulties. There are none, however, which are insurmountable, and the signs of the times are thus figuratively described in a recent Australian paper: "There has of late been a shaking of the dry bones of federation among the Australian colonies. The bones have not yet come together, nor the flesh come up upon them. There is as yet no breath in them, but the breath of public opinion is upon them, and federation promises ere long to become a living thing. On the advantages of federation there is a general consensus of opinion. All would be glad to see these colonies a grand confederated British possession."

The Premier of Victoria has publicly pronounced in favour of federation, and as a leading Melbourne paper puts it, "to declare in favour of federation is to declare in favour of uniformity of tariffs." We are inclined to think that the New Guinea affair will precipitate this question, and produce that breath which the writer above-quoted says is yet wanting to make the dry bones live.

Could we peer down the vistas of time we might see beyond the period when these colonies become "a grand confederated British possession." We might see continent and islands teeming with a dense industrious people, flying their own flag, and working out the destinies of the race in the lower world, as a new and greater

Britain of larger growth, and pursuing a career and making a history even greater than those of its progenitor. When we see the grandeur of the development of the United States of America, who shall circumscribe the future of that other section of the Anglo-Saxon race in the United States of Australasia?

THE ITALIAN OPERA IN ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THERE are few things more curious in literary history than the almost universal opposition the Italian opera met with from men of letters on its introduction into this country. "The taste for Italian music," says Mr. Elwin, whose knowledge of the literature of the eighteenth century is surpassed by no living writer, "was a standing theme for ridicule among the authors of the time, who ignorantly judged the musical by the rules of the literary drama." One of the earliest opponents of the opera was Steele. We read in the *Tatler* of April 18th, 1709, that three days earlier the opera of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* had been performed with great success, a piece of news which Steele, as a lover of the theatre, deploras with energy. The stage, he observes, is "an entertainment of the reason, and all our faculties;" while at the opera, everything is sacrificed "to the shallow satisfaction of the eyes and ears only;" and he adds, by way of proving that the understanding could have no share in the pleasure, that a great part of the performance was done in Italian. About the same time Swift proposed setting up a party among the wits to run down the entertainment. "The town," he wrote to Philips, "is going mad after a new opera. Poetry and good sense are dwindling like echo with repetition and voice. A good old lady, five miles out of town, asked me t'other day what these uproars were that her daughter was always going to?"

It was natural that Colley Cibber should view this foreign raid upon his territory with disgust. The understanding that appreciated the *Nonjuror* and the *Careless Husband* was, he thought, likely to be depraved "by these poetical drams, these gin-shops of the stage that intoxicate its auditors." A man of a very different order, and a shrewd critic also, held a similar opinion. After saying that operas are too absurd and extravagant to be worthy of mention, Lord

Chesterfield adds: "I look upon them as a magic scene contrived to please the eyes and the ears at the expense of the understanding. Whenever I go to the opera I leave my sense and reason at the door with my half-guinea, and deliver myself up to my eyes and ears." The Spectator, it is almost needless to say, takes up the subject in a similar spirit, observing that an opera "may be allowed to be extravagantly lavish in its decorations, as its only design is to gratify the senses and keep up an indolent attention in the audience."

In another paper on the subject the writer professes to give a history of the Italian opera from its introduction into England, and an amusing history it is. The poetasters of the town, he says, began by laying down the principle "that nothing is capable of being well set to music that is not nonsense," and so well was this maxim received that Italian operas were immediately translated, and as there was no danger of hurting the sense of these pieces, the translators often made words of their own in order to fit them to the tune, with a total disregard of meaning. After this, Italian actors were brought on the stage, who sang their parts in their own language, while the English singers replied in English. This plan soon tired the audience, and it was then resolved to produce the whole opera in an unknown tongue, which, says the essayist, will make future historians suppose that Italian was well understood in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. "One scarce knows," he adds, "how to be serious in the confutation of an absurdity that shows itself at the first sight. It does not want any great measure of sense to see the ridicule of this monstrous practice; but what makes it the more astonishing, it is not the taste of the rabble, but of persons of the greatest politeness, which has established it."

When Gay wrote his Beggar's Opera, in which his object was to laugh at the importation from Italy, he tells Swift that Lord Cobham said he "should have printed it in Italian over against the English that the ladies might have understood what they read;" a sarcasm directed, of course, against the prepossession in favour of a foreign tongue. No one probably ever did the musical drama more harm than Gay, who called it the outlandish opera, and is said to have destroyed its success for a season, to the great detriment of Handel. Indeed, despite the marvellous genius of that com-

poser, who, in Mr. Sutherland Edwards's judgment, raised the opera to a pitch of excellence unequalled elsewhere, that entertainment was then in the lowest condition possible—a proof, according to Dr. Arbuthnot, of the fickle temper of the English people. Mrs. Delany was aware of this decline, for while expressing her delight at "Mr. Handel's new opera called Richard the First," which was performed in the same year as Gay's burlesque, she observes: "I doubt operas will not survive longer than this winter, they are now at their last gasp; the subscription has expired, and nobody will renew it." In another letter she writes: "The Beggar's Opera entirely triumphs over the Italian one; I have not yet seen it, but everybody that has seen it says it is very comical and full of humour."

In 1745, that is to say, eighteen years after Mrs. Delany's jeremiad, Miss Talbot, writing to Mrs. Carter, makes a similar statement. We glean from it that whatever success the opera had previously obtained was due to ballet dancing. "I am sure," she says, "one lives to no one purpose of a rational being all those hours that are spent at the modern assemblies; yet to these all conversation is sacrificed; friendly visits and private parties are things gone out of the world; and Handel, once so crowded, plays to empty walls in that opera-house where there used to be a constant audience as long as there were any dancers to be seen." These remarks on the opera in England agree with Dr. Burney's judgment in Paris, where, he says, the sole attractions of the amusement were the dancing and decorations.

In 1759, thirty-two years after Gay's success, Goldsmith terms the opera, as conducted in London, "a very humdrum amusement," and observes that the performers sing to empty benches. "I know not," he writes, "whether operas can be kept up in England; they seem to be entirely exotic;" but he will not take upon himself to determine "whether a discontinuance of such entertainments would be more to the loss or the advantage of the nation." His blame, it will be seen, unlike that of most of his predecessors, is confined to the management of the opera in his day, and is not directed against the art itself; but Fielding adopts the view of Chesterfield, and in describing a woman incapable of rational conversation, calls her "a little female thing with a mind as empty of ideas as an opera."

As time wore on the opera seems to have gained ground, and in Fanny Burney's Cecilia, that heroine is represented as amazed and charmed by the voice, always either sweet or impassioned, of Signor Pacchierotti, an opera-singer who was a friend of Dr. Burney, and took lessons in English from his daughter. "I like him of all things," she writes in her Diary; "he is perfectly modest, humble, well-bred, and unassuming . . . his countenance is extremely benevolent, and his manners infinitely interesting." Her flattering estimate of the singer in the novel was not above his worth, if we may judge from a letter written in 1780 by the Rev. Thomas Twining, whose correspondence has been recently published. Twining had not expected to be pleased, having received an unfavourable impression from the friend to whom the letter was written. "I began to hear," he says, "as Descartes would have one begin to reason. In his (not Descartes') first line of recitative his voice and manner got immediate hold of me. I shuffled forward on my seat, and said to myself, 'This is superior singing.' I heard him six times, one of which was at Dr. Burney's, in a snug way. I liked him better and better, and do think that for taste, spontaneous variation, delicacy, and expression he is far beyond any singer I have heard." This is but a brief extract from the Country Clergyman's eulogium on Pacchierotti, with whom he was also much pleased "as a man and a conversable creature." He loves English, Twining writes, and has read Pope. Better still, he was, in Dr. Burney's judgment, as superior in courage as in talent, and showed no want of nerve at the time of the Lord Gordon Riots, when the rest of the performers danced "with the utmost fear and trembling." Nine years later, when the Opera House was entirely destroyed by fire, we see a revival of the old prejudice in Horace Walpole, who says, in writing to Miss Berry: "Have you shed a tear over the Opera House, or do you agree with me that there is no occasion to rebuild it? The nation has long been tired of operas, and has now a good opportunity of dropping them." This opinion, however, might have been the prejudice of old age. At seventy-two the voices of singing men and singing women cease to charm.

With the present age the Italian opera entered on a new life, but the literary illustrations we have given will probably

suffice to show how imperfectly it was appreciated, and how strong was the opposition it encountered during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

TIME BARGAINS.

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VIII.

FOR a little while the two gaudy parakeets in their gilt cage had the blue parlour all to themselves.

By-and-by in came Mrs. Elliott. There were dark circles round her eyes; she had been crying. She looked nervous and unhappy.

"Nearly five o'clock, and Stephen not back yet," she said to herself as she stood by one of the windows, gazing sadly out, and slowly turning her wedding-ring round and round on her finger. "In all probability this is the last day of our married life. It may be better that we should part—it must be better; but to-day of all days it was cruel of him to leave me. At a time like this to go away and paint the portrait of another woman! Oh, Stephen, Stephen, is this what your love has come to?"

A minute later one of the doors opened. She turned her head quickly, and there stood her husband, holding his soft felt hat in one hand.

"You have been asking for me!" he said enquiringly.

"It was nothing," she answered coldly. "So you have got back from London?"

"Yes, I have got back from London."

"I hope that your interview with Mdlle. Maurizio was a pleasant one?"

His eyebrows went up a little, as though asking how she had become acquainted with the object of his journey.

"A most pleasant one," he answered. "Mdlle. Maurizio is a charming woman."

"Doubtless, in your estimation," was the bitter reply. "It is for the sake of her, and of others like her, that you are so anxious for the moment to arrive that will separate you from your wife for ever!"

"The old insinuations, the old foolish jealousy without a cause! I have heard the same sort of thing from you a thousand times already; it is too late to tell it me again."

"Too late! Yes, when the next post may bring that which will make a free man of you."

"And of you a free woman; don't forget that part of the affair. The moment you have longed for will soon be here."

"I have longed for it—why not? And yet—and yet——" She turned from him, so that he could not see her face.

"And yet what?"

"You may be able to paint a woman's portrait, Stephen Elliott, but you cannot read a woman's heart."

"More enigmas. Cannot you understand that this Mdlle. Maurizio, or any other woman who may commission me to paint her portrait, is no more to me than a customer who buys my wares for a greater or a lesser number of guineas?"

"No wife can understand that who——"

"Who——?"

"Loves her husband."

"A wife's love for her husband should teach her to have perfect trust and faith in him, should teach her to sympathise in his aims, and to share in his ambition."

"Has love, then, no torments?"

"None that marriage should not cure."

"What cold-blooded creatures men are! If even you were compelled to earn your living with your brush—but you are not."

"As I have told you a hundred times already, I do not chose to be a dependent on my wife's bounty. I choose to earn my bread my own way—in the way that has been taught me, and which I love."

"You would rather lose your wife than give up your art."

"You would rather lose your husband than forego a single prejudice."

"Cruel! cruel!" exclaimed Agnes. She sat down, and pressed her handkerchief to her eyes for a moment. She was at once angry and most miserable. She was, perhaps, none the less angry because conscious in her heart that her husband was more in the right than she was.

At this juncture the inner door was noiselessly opened, and Mr. Vere Naylor and Mrs. Wapshot entered the room, radiant with smiles, each of them carrying a blue official-looking document sealed with a portentous seal.

"Ah, here you both are!" exclaimed Naylor with much unction.

"Couldn't think where you had hidden yourselves," said Mrs. Wapshot.

"Breakdown on the railway."

"Letter-bag two hours late."

"Jellicop out."

"Bag opened by Miss Ramsay."

"And here's the prize it has brought you," said Naylor with a complacent smirk, offering the sealed document to Stephen, who had come slowly forward.

"And here's the prize it has brought

you," echoed Mrs. Wapshot, making a similar offer to Agnes.

They each took the proffered document without a word. The supreme moment had come at last. They stood for a little while like two people utterly stupefied.

Then Elliott turned to his wife, and held out his hand.

"Farewell, Agnes," he said in a voice that trembled with suppressed emotion.

"Farewell, Stephen," came the almost inaudible reply. One word more and she would have broken down utterly.

A last fond lingering clasp, then their hands fell apart, and they turned away with a strange sense upon them that something had gone out of the life of each of them which nothing could ever replace.

"A telegram for Mr. Elliott."

They had all been so absorbed that no one had heard Binks enter the room.

Stephen took the telegram like a man who scarcely knows what he is doing, and tore open the envelope. He had not read more than a few words when a look of horror came into his eyes, and all the colour suddenly left his face.

Agnes went a step or two nearer him with clasped hands.

"You have heard bad news?" she cried.

"A terrible accident on the railway——" He could say no more.

He crushed the telegram with one hand; the other hand went up quickly to his eyes.

"An accident! Not—not—— Oh, Stephen! Our child!" She flung up her arms with an agonised cry, made a step or two blindly forward, and would have fallen insensible to the ground had not her husband caught her in his arms.

We are once more on the pleasant lawn at Brookfield. It is the forenoon of the day following that on which Stephen Elliott and his wife received their Letters of Separation. Lounging on rustic chairs in the welcome shadow of the elms are Vere Naylor, Cuthbert Naylor, and Captain Marmaduke, each of them intent on his letters or newspapers. Under a small umbrella-tent Mrs. Naylor Wapshot is writing busily.

Cuthbert Naylor was the first to break a silence which had lasted longer than ordinary.

"Is it a fact, Captain Marmaduke, that you are going to bid us good-bye on Tuesday next?" he asked.

"Tuesday will bring my visit at Brookfield to a close."

"And your flirtation with Mrs. Dane-Danson into the bargain," murmured Cuthbert under his breath. Then aloud with a sneer: "We shall miss you very much indeed."

Vere Naylor glanced at Marmaduke over his glasses.

"Before you go you must allow me to present you with a copy of my pamphlet, On the Elimination of Sentiment from the Concerns of Daily Life."

"Thanks. On so congenial a topic you ought to be thoroughly at home."

Mrs. Wapshot laid down her pen, and turned to Marmaduke.

"And you never attempted any classification of the beetles, moths, or butterflies indigenous to that strange country in which you lived for so many years?"

"Never, madam."

"Really now! One of my first objects in landing in a fresh country would be to set about the study of its lepidoptera."

"Had you been in my case your first object would probably have been the same as mine—to find something to eat; and your next to save yourself from being eaten by somebody else."

"If I had only had your opportunities, Captain Marmaduke! If I had only been there with you!"

Mr. Naylor coughed behind his newspaper.

"In that case, madam," responded Marmaduke gallantly, "I should never have wanted to come back."

Mrs. Wapshot shook her head. "I trust you are not frivolous, Captain Marmaduke; but really you men scarcely ever avail yourselves of your opportunities as our sex do."

Cuthbert thought it time to create a diversion. "Another paragraph in to-day's paper about Elliott," he said.

"Ah! And what do they say about him this time?" queried the Member for Fudgington.

"Why, that a certain illustrious personage visited his studio yesterday, in order to inspect his latest picture."

"Rising man that Stephen Elliott."

"Where is Stephen Elliott? Where is my husband?"

They all started and turned. Agnes was standing behind them on the verandah. None of them had seen or heard her approach. She was dressed in black, and the pallor of her face was intensified by the black lace veil which she had tied loosely round her head and throat. Her lips were parched; a feverish fire burnt in

her hollow eyes. She looked from one to the other, as though expecting an answer to the question which had so startled them all.

Mr. Naylor was the first to recover his presence of mind.

"Pardon me, my dear Mrs. Elliott-Temple," he said in his most soothing tones, "but you appear to have forgotten the fact that you have no husband."

"No husband!" She pressed her hands to her temples, and stood for a moment or two like a woman dazed. "You are right—you are right," she said with a weary sigh. "I remember everything now. My darling Freddy is safe; thank Heaven for that!" Then advancing a step or two she said with a sudden change of voice and manner: "But surely Stephen has not gone away? He will see me again before he goes!"

"Mr. Elliott left by the six o'clock train this morning," answered Vere Naylor. "Mr. Dane will join him at Cullington by the noon train. This evening they start together for the Continent."

"And it is I who have driven him to this!" said Agnes with a low wail of anguish.

Mr. Naylor looked meaningly at Mrs. Wapshot. The latter rose from her seat, and went up to Agnes. "My dear child, do let me persuade you to go indoors," she urged.

Agnes seemed scarcely to have heard what she said. "I was very ill last evening, was I not?" she asked.

"You were delirious for several hours."

"When I partially came to myself, Stephen was by my side. Then something was put to my lips, which I drank. After that I remember nothing more till I awoke an hour ago and found this under my pillow."

She produced a note from the folds of her dress.

Mrs. Wapshot took it from her unresisting fingers.

"May I?" she asked.

"Oh yes; any one may read it," answered Agnes in the tone of one to whom everything in life was a matter of indifference.

Mrs. Wapshot opened the note and read:

"Your child is safe. He was not in the train. The telegram was a blunder. Farewell."

"Then he is really gone?" said Agnes pitifully as she took back the note and pressed it fondly to her lips.

Before any one could answer, Mr. Jellicoff came round a corner of the shrubbery.

On his face, usually so jovial and sunny, sat an unwonted look of care and anxiety.

Agnes turned to him instinctively, as everyone turned to him when in distress.

"Oh, Uncle Frank, if I could but have seen him once again to ask him to forgive me!"

She put her arms round him and laid her cheek against his shoulder.

Uncle Frank shook his head sadly.

"You should have thought of that before it was too late," he said.

"She must really go indoors," urged Mrs. Wapshot.

"Yes, yes; go to your room like a good girl. If you had but taken your old uncle's advice things would never have come to this pass."

He kissed her and gave her into Mrs. Wapshot's hands. Then the two ladies went indoors.

"This is a pretty kettle o' fish, Vere Naylor, isn't it?" asked Mr. Jellicop with more temper than he usually displayed.

"Pooh! pooh! my dear squire, she will soon calm down. Women always do. Before a month is over she will be as merry as a thrush and revelling in her freedom."

"Freedom be hanged! Hasn't a married woman twice as much freedom as a single one?"

He turned away, and as he did so, he muttered to himself:

"Though whether a married man has twice as much freedom as a bachelor may be open to doubt."

He was moving off, when he stopped suddenly, and began to scratch his head.

"Marmaduke, a word with you," he said a moment or two later.

"Obsolete old rhinoceros!" muttered Cuthbert under his breath.

Said Jellicop to Marmaduke in a low voice:

"I want you to telegraph to Elliott. He's at Cullington, ten miles off, waiting the arrival of Dana. There seems to me just a faint chance that this poor misguided couple may be brought together again."

"But what can I say to Elliott that would be likely to induce him to return?"

"Say anything you like. 'Wife very ill, come back at once.' Say anything that will bring him. Will you do this?"

"I will."

The two men shook hands. Marmaduke hurried off to the railway station. Jellicop went indoors.

"Marmaduke gone, the course will be

clear before you," said Vere Naylor to his son.

"I shall not fail to make the best of the opportunity. You think Mrs. Elliott-Temple will soon come round?"

"Of course she will. The more fuss she makes about her loss now, the sooner she will be willing to be consoled by some one else. The way of the sex."

"I must go to my letters."

"And I to mine."

They rose and folded up their newspapers. Just as they reached the verandah, Binks, coming round the corner with a portmanteau and hat-box in his hands, nearly stumbled against them.

"Whose luggage have you there, Binks?" asked Mr. Naylor.

"Mr. Dane's, sir. He leaves by the noon train."

Father and son exchanged an acid smile as they went indoors.

At this moment Cecil Dane made his appearance.

"Here are your traps, sir. The dog-cart will be round in five minutes."

"All right, Binks. Here you are."

A slow broad smile overspread Binks's face. He carried a fat finger to his forehead, wished Mr. Dane a pleasant journey, and the latter was then left alone.

"A pleasant journey, forsooth!" muttered Cecil. "The train will start in half an hour, I shall pick up Elliott at Cullington, and to-morrow morning we shall be in Paris. I feel as cheerful as if I were a mute about to attend my own funeral. I don't like going without bidding Linda good-bye, and yet it were wiser, perhaps, to do so. Poor Linda, will she miss me, I wonder? Will she cry when she finds that I'm gone? Not she. She has begun to flirt already. In a month she will have forgotten me altogether. And so the world goes round."

He paced the verandah slowly, whistling a few bars dismally. Presently he said: "I'll go and see whether the dog-cart's ready. Then one grip of Jellicop's honest fist, and after that—au diable!" With these words he stalked gloomily-away.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER VII. POOR JACK.

JACK made Moor Royal his "head-quarters," as he termed it, until March. If he used the words in the sense of meaning that he honoured Moor Royal with his presence more frequently than he did any other place, or that, when he did so honour it, he gave his fullest head-power to the forwarding of anything like intellectual life there, the designation was certainly a misnomer.

These first three months of the first new year which had witnessed the dethronement of old Mrs. Ray, were unquestionably not happy ones to either the widow or her children. Old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer lived apart to themselves a great deal, and this not through any sulky desire to hold aloof from or seem to disapprove of Effie and her doings, but really because Effie made it practically impossible that their daily life should harmonise.

It was difficult to say when the divergence began with Jenifer, for Jenifer was equally at home in the saddle, and was always as safe to be there or thereabouts in the field as her sister-in-law, when she rode to hounds. But with Miss Ray, riding to hounds was not a weekly luxury. With young Mrs. Ray it was more than this—it was, she declared, a necessity. Accordingly, as the hounds met three times a week near Moor Royal, the pick of the Moor Royal stables were pretty hardly pressed to keep pace with the needs of their young mistress, who soon manifested her determination to be in the first flight in the field as well as in society. Consequently the mare that had hitherto been at Jenifer's disposal on the days when she

did hunt, was now relegated to the service of her sister-in-law.

"I wouldn't ride the bay mare if you really cared for hunting, for the world," Effie gravely assured Jenifer, "but you don't care for it; you wouldn't give up all consideration for other people, and go out, 'weather or not' permitting, as I do, now would you?"

This she said one day when she knew, from various signs and indications, that Jenifer had resolved to go to the meet at least. In fact, Jenifer had made up her mind very lovingly and carefully to make one appeal on behalf of her brother Jack to Mr. Boldero, and she knew that she could do this easily at a lawn-meet at Hallowmore.

"I feel inclined to give up consideration for you anyway to-day, Effie," Jenifer said frankly. "I've made up my mind to ride, and to ride Shooting Star. You have the choice of so many. I'm not really depriving you of an atom of pleasure."

"That's as one looks at it," Mrs. Ray said fretfully. "I wanted to spare my Reine till there really was a chance of a good run. Shooting Star potters about so well—she's not my form for galloping or fencing, but she potters deliciously."

"I am afraid you must potter about on something else to-day, Effie, however admirably Shooting Star may suit you."

"Jenny, you're going out with an object; oh, and your brothers quote you as being so guileless and superior! Jenifer, take the advice of a woman of the world. A hunting woman, especially one who has to make an effort to be one, won't attract Captain Edgcomb."

She said it with a little spitefully sarcastic laugh, and an indescribable assumption of being more conversant with Captain Edgcomb's motives than anyone else,

that would have been funny had it not been insulting.

"Be quite sure that when I want to attract Captain Edgecumb, I will come to you for instruction; to-day I won't tax either your patience or good-nature," Jenifer said temperately, but Mrs. Ray knew from her sister-in-law's averted face and measured tones that her shot had gone home.

"I've no time to argue the question now, the horses will be round in a minute or two," Effie said, walking round Jenifer in order to get a straight look into the girl's eyes; "but I'll just offer you one hint, though you're sure to take it ungracefully and misunderstand my motive in giving it. Don't think to win Captain Edgecumb by any pretence of indifference; he's very honest and straightforward himself, and has a horror of anything like finesse in a girl."

"Here are the horses," was the only reply Jenifer vouchsafed to Mrs. Ray.

Jack had come up from the home-farm to join the Moor Royal party; and, as Jenifer came out, both her brothers greeted her cordially.

"Glad to see you out with us again, Jenny dear," Jack cried heartily, and Jenifer felt self-reproachful for a moment, as she thought of how she was going to try and upset what Jack was foolish enough to fancy was his happiness.

"It will be like old times to see you in the field again, dear," Hubert said kindly, for this was the first time that Jenifer had attempted to hunt since her father's death.

"I don't think I shall follow," Jenifer said.

"I shouldn't on Shooting Star," Mrs. Ray cried contemptuously; "she's so uncertain."

"I never found her that, Effie."

"Perhaps you've never ridden her at a big thing; now I have, and it hasn't been her fault that she has got well over. You mustn't rely on Hubert to look after you to-day, please. I won't have his run spoilt if we do get a decent one."

Jenifer laughed.

"Don't be afraid, Effie; I won't spoil the look of the paragraph in which it will be told that Mr. and Mrs. Ray, of Moor Royal, were as usual in the first flight."

"I can't imagine what you come for if you don't care to ride," Effie exclaimed discontentedly, "the off days would surely do as well for you if you only want to potter about the roads; it would have spared Reine if I could have sent her on,

and ridden Shooting Star to the meet. I hate selfishness."

"You must remember, darling, that Shooting Star is Jenny's own mare," Hubert took an opportunity of saying to his wife when Jenifer and Jack trotted on a little.

"Her own! Who pays for the mare's keep, I ask? You know that you do, Hugh. I really don't think that a girl without a penny is justified in running her brother into such unnecessary expense. She's not wrapped up heart and soul in riding as I am; indeed, I'm sure she only came out to-day to spite me, because she knew I'd made up my mind to ride Shooting Star."

Hubert idolised his wife, and always acted as if he fully believed her false utterances, but he did not like to hear Jenifer called selfish.

"We must remember that only the other day Jenifer ruled absolutely at Moor Royal."

"Sometimes you tell me that your mother's was the absolute rule."

"So it was; don't you see my father gave up everything to mother, whose delight it was to give up everything to Jenny. You don't know what a dear sister she has always been to me. I owe most of the privileges and pleasures of my young manhood to Jenny."

"Pray don't be sentimental, Hugh. Jenifer seems to have transferred her interest to Jack now; she's miserable because he's only a tenant-farmer, and because he is happy in the society of keepers."

"I can't quite make Jack out, Effie," her husband said thoughtfully; "that he wishes to settle down in the country is natural enough, but that he should be contented to settle down in such a very small and mild way is startling."

"I never perplex myself by conjecturing why so-and-so does such and such a thing," Effie said scornfully; then she added: "Jack will be happy enough in his own way, if he is let alone and not worried. His tastes are not extremely refined, and he'll be more at ease among the people he has known all his life here, than he would among your friends in town."

"Jenny has been speaking to me about his going to Thurtle's house so much, but I don't see anything in it, do you, Effie?"

"Certainly not," young Mrs. Ray said with suspicion. "Jenifer overrates her own judgment dreadfully, and as she really knows nothing of the world beyond the boundaries of Exeter, she makes herself

ridiculous." Then they rode through the lodge-gates into the grounds of Hallowmore, and Mrs. Ray was soon surrounded by the members of the hunt who had the honour of being on speaking terms with its most distinguished wearer of a habit.

Meanwhile Jenifer had ridden on with Jack, and they had been joined by Mr. Boldero.

"You mean riding to-day?" Jack questioned, for the lawyer was mounted on his favourite hunter.

"I mean following, Jack, but I won't say what place I shall be in at the finish, for I'm going to ask you to allow me to have the honour of taking the charge of your sister off your hands." Now Jenifer had written to ask him to do this, for she felt the time was ripe for her again to speak for Jack's social salvation. But Jack himself had no fancy for leaving her in the company of the "family lawyer," whom his sister-in-law was teaching him to distrust.

"I think I'll look after Jenifer myself to-day, thank you," Jack said with nig-gardly courtesy.

"No, no, Jack," Jenifer put in hastily, "it's so long since I've ridden to hounds that I'd rather take it quietly to-day, and I know you will go straight. Don't let me stop you. I'll stay quite contentedly with Mr. Boldero."

But Jack, though he knew that his soul would yearn to be off when once they found, would not give in his adhesion to Jenifer's proposal yet.

"Perhaps Edgcomb will turn up presently; his mare overreached herself and goes tenderly, so he won't be able to ride hard. But you mustn't keep Mr. Boldero out of it, Jenny; he won't thank you for doing that," the young brother said, and then in his desire to secure Captain Edgcomb as an escort for his sister, he rode off, leaving her alone with Mr. Boldero.

"You know why I want to see you," she began, without any idle preface. "He is going to ruin. Once more I ask you to speak to him, to stop him."

"I cannot! This is final. With all my heart would I add my entreaties and warnings to yours, but the power to do so has been taken out of my hands. I know that he has been offered good appointments at high salaries. I know that an agency to large estates—a post for which he is exactly fitted—is open to him now, but I can't press him to accept it."

"Mr. Boldero, what is the secret power which holds you back; you surely don't

want to see us Rays ruined?" she asked simply, leaning forward on Shooting Star's neck to gain a clearer view of his face.

"Heaven forbid!"

"But it is evident that man or woman has constrained you to stand by supinely and see one of us going down. Oh, do, do! if you cared for my father as we all believe you did, save his son."

"If the sacrifice of all my worldly goods would do it, I would do it," he said fervently.

"You say that; it's easy; but you won't speak the word that might do it. I wish I had not come out, you have disappointed me this time more cruelly than before, for you must have felt that I was in extremity before I wrote to you."

She turned her horse's head and rode sharply away, to the wonderment of so much of the field as had leisure to observe her. And Mr. Boldero did not venture to follow her.

Meantime old Mrs. Ray, having nothing else to do in Jenifer's absence, had gone down to the home-farm to see what arrangements had been made in the house for Jack's comfort.

She was quite alive now to the right which was hers of taking away any furniture that she desired from Moor Royal. And she was quite resolved that if she found the farmhouse rooms inadequately furnished, she would exert that right, and have her son's new home fitted up with some of his customary surroundings.

It was a bright, keen March morning, and without going into eloquent descriptions of the state and appearance of each young blade of corn and grass, and the accurate colour or tint of every cloud and rivulet, it may be mentioned that the atmosphere was bright and invigorating, the aspect of the fields and hedgerows, the meadows and cornfields, very fair. Altogether it was an atmosphere that braced the nerves, and set one's standpoint in life in the brightest and best light.

"Poor dear boy! I dare say it's all bare and ugly enough after what he has been accustomed to at Moor Royal," the mother thought, as she walked down to inspect her son's house for the first time since he had occupied it.

In days not long gone by, she had been in the habit of driving down to the home-farm every week to see what poultry, butter, and eggs Mrs. Cowley could supply to Moor Royal.

But since the general break-up the

widow had not felt moved to tread the well-known round to which her feet had become well habituated while she was in power.

It pleased her well as she approached the house to see the old-fashioned looking garden neater and trimmer than it had ever been even under the Cowley rule. Long borders of primroses, cowslips, and snowdrops wound ribbon-like round every bed. And all the windows were bright with hyacinths of every shade, from creamy white to darkest blue and red, in glasses, and with gaudy but beautiful double tulips in pots.

"Dear Jenny has taken care that he shall have flowers to remind him of home," the mother thought tenderly, as she marked with pleasure that the flowers were softly framed by white muslin curtains as well as by the heavy dark ones that she herself had sent down from Moor Royal. Then she opened the hall-door, and went into the wide red-brick passage, calling as she entered for Elsie, the girl who had been scullery-maid for some time at Moor Royal, and who had now come "to do" for Mr. Jack, as she herself expressed it.

The kitchen-door stood open, and a fine appetising odour of bread-baking streamed forth. Something else streamed forth also, and that was a dialogue carried on by two highly-pitched female voices. The first words that fell on old Mrs. Ray's astounded ears were spoken by Elsie.

"I don't care nor know what you're a-goin' to be, Minnie Thurtle; you knows best about that yourself, I s'pose; but I know you're not a-goin' to come here now and order me about as if you was my missus. I'll take orders from none but master, and the ladies up to Moor Royal; and if you choose to come a-poking, and prying, and ordering in my kitchen, you'll have to hear what I've got to say—there!"

"You'll find yourself walked out of this house before you're many days older, Miss Impudence," were the next words that quivered forth in accents of fury, and then both speakers became aware of old Mrs. Ray's presence, and silence reigned.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. XI. OUR MAN OF GENIUS.

ON the first Monday in every month there was always an unusual air of life and motion in Shillingbury market-place as the hours drew on to eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for that was the time when our

magistrates met to administer justice in the club-room of The Black Bull. Our people seemed to be a very well-conducted lot, judged by the usual character of the charge-sheet. The justices rarely had cases to deal with more serious than those which arose from surreptitious onslaughts upon Squire Winsor's preserves, or from a difference of opinion culminating in the "argumentum ad baculum" between two village mothers, or from the effects of that "one more glass" swallowed on a market-day. Some there were, of that class which takes delight in picking holes everywhere, who used to affirm that the lightness of the calendar was due to the leniency or incompetency of the new rural police, rather than to any superior standard of morality in Shillingbury and its neighbourhood.

But on a certain Monday morning there were signs that a case of more than ordinary weight was coming on for investigation. The magistrates' room was filled as soon as the doors were opened, and after a little preliminary business had been disposed of, one Miles Lockwood was brought into the room and charged with the wilful murder of Timothy Deane, a fellow-workman.

The circumstances of the case were simple enough, but the police and the solicitor from Martlebury who defended the prisoner managed to muddle them so efficiently that it was evening before Lockwood was committed for trial. Then he was not committed on the capital charge, but for manslaughter.

The story was simply this: Lockwood and Deane were both of them stonemasons in the employ of a London contractor who was building a new wing to Mr. Winsor's mansion. On the Saturday evening these two, in company with half-a-dozen others, were sitting in the village public-house, and Deane, a quarrelsome fellow, dialiked by everybody, and feared as well for his heavy fist and sharp tongue, was doing his best to make Lockwood the butt of the company by foul-mouthed jests and brutal horse-play. At last the latter, flushed with drink and provoked beyond endurance, stood up and struck his persecutor a blow on the head with a heavy pewter measure. Deane fell heavily to the floor, and Lockwood, sobered in a moment, stood staring with the flattened pot in his hand, while the others picked up the senseless form of Deane. They laid him on a bench and sent for a doctor; but they needed no doctor to tell them that he was a dead

man. The landlord, fearing for the character of his house, was more anxious to see the policeman than Dr. Goldingham, and sent privately for the minion of the law, who very soon arrived and carried Miles Lockwood off to the Shillingbury police-station.

The case came on for trial at the next assizes. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. When the first excitement of the tragedy had subsided, we ceased to think much of Miles Lockwood and his misfortunes, and never dreamed of seeing him again; so it came somewhat as a surprise when we discovered that he was the tenant of a tumble-down cottage standing upon the confines of Pudsey Heath, but within the boundary of Shillingbury, whither he had likewise brought his wife and two children.

People were a little curious about him at first, and the boys he might meet on the heath would look with wide-mouthed awe at the man who had actually spilt another man's blood; but there was no especial enmity towards Miles on account of that hasty blow of his. He had always passed for a quiet, inoffensive man, while Deane had been universally hated as a riotous bully. In a very short time, however, all curiosity abated, and we thought no more of Miles Lockwood than of any other cottager in the place.

Lockwood was a weak-looking man with narrow chest and stooping shoulders. In his everyday work he had no part in the hewing and sawing and the other hard work of a stonemason's calling. His eye was correct, and his hand delicate enough to work at the finest details of any plan or drawing; but his powers were not limited by the mere faculty of imitation. Out of the bits of refuse stone and marble which lay about in the work-sheds he would fashion little busts and heads, and quaintly grotesque faces, perfectly correct in form, and full of such life and spirit as could only be born from the touch of a true artist. No one knew anything about his early history; but it was commonly believed that he was a man who had known better days, and that he had not been brought up in his present calling. He certainly was well acquainted with books and men of whom the average stonemason knows nothing. He was moody in humour, rarely fore-gathering with his fellow-workmen either in their recreations or their debaucheries; but when he did join them in a drinking

about he would generally swallow two or three pints of strong beer, and then either drop off to sleep or sit silent and bemused in a corner. As a workman his employers had nothing but what was good to say of him, and when he came out of prison the Governor handed him a note from his late master offering him work at once. But Miles would have no more of it. As he walked forth into freedom he knew that he must set to work at once to earn bread for himself and his family; but that inclination for solitude which had always possessed him had grown stronger during his imprisonment, and he determined that for the future he would work, as he lived, alone. The cottage on Pudsey Heath was vacant, and a more solitary abode it would have been hard to find; so he hired it, and, having got together a few sticks of furniture, he sent for his wife and children, and set to work to earn a livelihood after his own fashion.

The cottage was a miserable dwelling, thatched, and only habitable on the ground-floor; but it was not without its advantages. The rent was very low, there was a large garden attached to it, and a roomy shed in which Miles could work at his handicraft when he could get anything to do, or when it was too wet to dig the garden. It stood a stone's-throw from the roadside, with the ground sloping rapidly downwards in the rear until the heath became lost in the swampy meadows which fringed the banks of our river. About half-way down the slope a seam of chalk cropped up to the surface, and for some distance the hill had been cut away, and the chalk burnt into lime in a kiln which was now deserted and in ruins. The chalk was very hard and might be detached from the quarry in large masses. Miles had often cut faces and heads in Pudsey chalk when he had been at work at Mr. Winsor's, and perhaps he may have had his eye upon the disused chalk-pit, as a sort of Carrara, when he fixed his abode at the cottage on the heath.

Miles and his wife were not much troubled with neighbours. Two or three small farmhouses stood on the other side of the heath; and down by the river one could see the tannery and cottages of Brooksbank End; but if the Lockwood family had lived in the midst of us they would probably have been just as much isolated as they were on Pudsey Heath. Miles, as I have before said, was a recluse by disposition, and he was, besides this, a

Londoner. Our people looked very much askance at all strangers, and at Londoners in particular, and, to make matters worse, Mrs. Lockwood was an Irishwoman and a Roman Catholic.

She was a tall, handsome woman, some ten years younger than her husband, with regular features, soft grey eyes, and black hair which always hung in heavy undisciplined hanks around her face. Her smile was bright and her voice soft, and those few people who ever exchanged a word with her would declare that she was a pleasant-spoken woman, though she did worship the Virgin Mary. Lonely as she was, the life upon the wide heath was a sort of paradise after the horrors of the London court where Miles had met and married her. It was something like the hillside in Roscommon, where she was born; but the place she lived in mattered little to Nora so long as she had her husband near her, for she loved Miles with all the fervour, and with something more than the ordinary constancy, of the Celtic nature.

Miles had a voracious appetite for reading of all sorts, and would almost always have some bit of printed matter before him when he was not at work. Mr. Winsor used to lend and even to give him books, but these were generally of a sort Miles did not much appreciate. They dealt too much with the conversion of the Irish dock-labourer, and of the upward struggle of the sceptical workman towards respectability and a seat in the side aisle of the parish church. Like most town-bred men, Miles was a great lover of plants and flowers. In those days people were much more given to the study of herbs than they are now, and one of the first reports circulated concerning Miles was that he was a "rare claver man about yarbs," some going so far as to declare that he knew as much about them as old Mrs. Jillings, of Blanham, herself; but, whether he did or not, everybody knew that he gave Peggy Lawson's girl a drink which stilled her pulse and threw her into a gentle sleep, after she had been three days in a raging fever. And Lockwood had mastered other branches of the healing art as well. He had an old book on Farriery, and he could cure the stranglers, and milk-fever, and quarter evil, as well as, or better than, the cow-leech at Offbury. Once, too, when Farmer Docking's ewes were doing badly at the beginning of lambing, Miles met him on the road and wrote a few

words on a bit of paper, which he bade the farmer take to the druggist at Martlebury, and to give all his flock a teaspoonful of the powder thereon mentioned once a day for three days. Mr. Docking was in despair, so he followed Miles's advice, though the latter was a Londoner. The powder worked wonders. The plague was stayed, and Farmer Docking had a fine crop of lambs after all.

Miles set to work with a will to bring his wilderness of a garden into order. As spring came on the path leading up to the door was gay with crocus and snowdrop, and in less than a year honeysuckle and the wild hop had clothed the ragged walls, and were crawling up over the grey straw thatch. Miles did odd jobs of work for a stonemason in the town and for Mr. Winsor as well. The latter had all along shown a thoughtful kindness for Miles, and had assisted him materially at a crisis when a little help was worth a great deal of pity; but he worked harder and more constantly at his chalk images in his own workshop than at anything else, for this was labour after his own heart. Up to this time he had always worked by rule of thumb, inventing his design as he went along; but one day Mr. Winsor gave him some illustrations, loose leaves from some book on ancient art, and, as he turned them over, a new world of wonder and delight was revealed to him; such a one as Keats was aware of when he read for the first time the stately lines of Chapman's Homer. Then he began to copy them; first the more simple designs—tragic and comic masks, and such like; then busts and torsos; and finally, the full-length figures. Whatever he did, he did with the most accurate conscientious fidelity to the model before him; but, in spite of himself, he gave it a separate individuality, a touch of character imprinted by the unseen spirit of the artist which guided unconsciously his tool as he worked at the block of chalk. Week by week he toiled more and more at his busts and fauns, and less and less at the mechanical drudgery of the stonemason's yard, and he did not grow much the richer for this. The garden certainly was planted, but bread was necessary while the potatoes were growing; and it was only when the cupboard was nearly bare that Miles would forego his art and take a spell at carving cherubs on grave-stones in Mr. Toomer's yard. His wife would be a little querulous at times, not unreasonably so, seeing that she often had

to go to bed hungry. At last one of the children fell ill, and she had not a penny to buy a little meat for broth; so she went to her husband with more of anger in her voice than she had ever yet shown, and asked him why he didn't sell some of those things he wasted so much time over, if he wouldn't work to get his children their food.

But Miles could not bear the thought of parting with any of his creatures. He laughed uneasily at his wife's suggestion, and said nobody was likely to care for anything of his workmanship; he meant to go down to the stone-yard to-morrow, and perhaps the day after. Mr. Toomer owed for a job or two of work, so there would be money to take, and meanwhile there was a shilling to go and buy a bit of beef.

The next morning Miles went off to make a long day's work amongst Mr. Toomer's mortuary emblems; and almost as soon as he was gone Nora began to consider whether, in spite of her husband's modesty, some of the little images might not be saleable. She made up her mind that she would try at any rate; and, having packed six of what she considered the best in a basket, she set off to Martlebury. As she tramped the long seven miles of road she pictured Miles's delight when she should return with a sovereign or perhaps with two; for poor Nora never guessed the reason of her husband's unwillingness to hawk about his cherished works.

She had lived in Martlebury while Miles was in prison, and by Mr. Winsor's kindness she had got work as a sempstress, and it was to the ladies who had then given her work that she first exhibited her wares; but she rather scandalised one lady of a serious turn by bringing out for approval, the Venus of Capua, a subject which the lady described as unfit for any Christian household. The lady, who had a kind heart in spite of her puritanism, as soon as she saw the look of disappointment which came over the poor woman's face, made amends by buying a bust of Lucius Verus, which she pronounced very cheap at five shillings. She advised Nora to take the others to a Mr. Kerrich, a printseller in the town, who dealt in such things, and Mr. Kerrich, who had a pretty keen eye, at once saw traces of the artist's hand, and took the lot for a sovereign. Nora went home rejoicing.

Miles came back late that night from Shillingbury, and before he had time to

note the loss of his treasures his wife had told him all, and with joyous eyes put the money into his hand.

At first he did feel a twinge of regret as he thought of his empty shelf; but when he saw the pride and pleasure in Nora's eyes, he had not the heart to say a cross word. After all she was right. It was nothing better than silly selfishness to keep the things on the shelf while the children wanted proper food. He could make plenty more, and at five shillings each they would bring in money enough for their needs, and he would not want to carve any more of those hideous cherubs in Mr. Toomer's yard.

About a week after this there came a letter from Mr. Kerrich asking Miles to call upon him about some more work, and Miles came back from Martlebury with a happy look in his eyes and a bundle of drawings under his arm.

The next day a heavy waggon drew up at the cottage, and the men unloaded a lot of blocks and slabs of the finest marble, upon which Miles was now to work instead of common chalk.

The Marquis of Folkshire had gone into Mr. Kerrich's shop and had been greatly struck with the grace of the little statuettes. He at once determined that the man who had wrought these was the man he wanted to work upon the mantelpiece of his library, and for three months Miles was hard at work on sculptured figures and delicate design. The chimney-piece when it was finished was pronounced a masterpiece. Miles's fortune was as good as made. The principal stonemason in Martlebury offered him a permanent berth with good wages, but Miles declined. He knew that he would have nothing else to do except to carve ineffectual cinerary urns and stock tombstones all his life; and besides this he had grown strongly attached to his home, which he had patched up here and added to there, till it had become a seemly dwelling. Then he could not bear to leave the chalk-pit and the free work at his beloved images, work which was ten times more fascinating to him than even the marble magnificence of the Marquis of Folkshire's mantelpiece; so he stuck to the cottage on the heath, managing to make a good living by the sale of his images, for which Mr. Kerrich found a ready market, and from the produce of his garden, which he cultivated with an assiduity worthy of Candide.

But Miles Lockwood, though people had

long forgiven him the death of Timothy Deane, though he was a sober inoffensive man, was not favourably looked upon. At the time of which I am writing the belief in occult agencies and witchcraft was active amongst the common people. All that lay outside the narrow circle of their own experience was vague and mysterious, and all who came from this dim and mysterious region were glanced at suspiciously in any case; but if they happened to be skilled in handiwork or book-learning, then would arise at once a belief that they did not get their cleverness without some schooling from the Prince of Darkness. The gods of rude people are always malevolent spirits, whom it is well to conciliate by offerings of some kind or another; and it is a survival of this belief which would make old Peggy Lawson walk ten miles with a new five-shilling piece in her pocket, to consult a wise woman, after churning for three weeks and getting no butter. To the people who lived round about him Miles was an alien in every respect, and this alone was enough to kindle suspicion. Sometimes, in the dusk of a spring evening, some bird's-nesting urchins would meet Miles staggering home over the heath, with a great block of chalk on his shoulder, and would run away quickly from the glance of his keen black eyes. Again, his workshop was always closely barred to every one except his wife. The window was blocked, too, as some venturesome explorers one day discovered, and this circumstance went far to establish the belief that Lockwood must be after some very queer work, and, perhaps, have some very queer helpers, since he was afraid to be overlooked by his fellows. Mr. Wilcox, the parish clerk, said that no good was to be expected of a man who had married a Papist; and that though, for all they knew, Miles didn't worship the Virgin Mary, he certainly made graven images, which was almost as bad, as anybody who read the prayer-book would see.

After Miles had lived about six years in the cottage, it happened that Farmer Dredge, of White Olland, hired of the poor's trustees the right of pasture on the heath, and, being a man who never lost a right for want of claiming it, he gave notice to Miles that, from henceforth, all people who took chalk from the pit would have to pay for it, offering, at the same time, to let him help himself on a payment of five pounds a year. Now Mr. Dredge had about as much right to charge Miles for the chalk

from the pit as he had to put a price on the air which blew over the heath, and Miles was lawyer enough to know this. So he went on helping himself, and took no heed of Mr. Dredge's considerate offer. But one day there came for him a summons to present himself before the Shillingbury justices, and answer a charge of having stolen two blocks of chalk, value sixpence, the property of Thomas Dredge, on a certain given date.

The summons was dismissed, and Mr. Dredge, having had to pay all costs, went out of court with a hearty contempt for the law, and a resolution to do Miles an ill-turn whenever he could; but he was not able to do much, except to drop suggestive hints that he meant to have his own, however anxious other folks might be to speak the devil fair, and perhaps them as was in the devil's pay might have to swim for their lives in the mill-dam, as they used in the days he had heard his grandfather talk of.

The following summer was very wet, and the autumn was little less than a continuous deluge. There was much sickness about, and Mrs. Dredge was taken with pains in the back and limbs, disinclination for food, and other symptoms of low fever, but Mr. Dredge and other wise people took another view of the case; and, shaking their heads, affirmed that she was "under bad hands," and let it be seen that they had little doubt who was the person who had cast the spell upon her. Then Farmer Dredge's best cow died, and soon after the rot broke out amongst his sheep. Our people ignored the wet season as the cause of these misfortunes, and traced them all to that quarrel between the farmer and Miles. The latter was shunned more than ever, and those who were perforce brought near him were cringingly polite, as it was wise to be towards a man who had such potent spells at his fingers' ends.

But when the low fever spread rapidly, when there was some one sick in every other cottage down at Brooksbank End; when the sheep-rot began to spread, and three cows died of lung disease in one week, there arose a cry that something must be done, and hints were dropped that the expedition to the mill-dam, which Farmer Dredge had talked about, had better be undertaken at once. One Saturday evening there was a meeting of the more bloody-minded of the conspirators, and then began the talk of

deciding who should bell the cat, and the usual backwardness in coming forward manifested itself. No one seemed to like the task of laying hands on the wizard. The counsels of the party became less truculent, and finally it was resolved to treat Miles to a bit of "rough music" that very same evening.

In our country "rough music" was used to express public disapproval of the person serenaded. If a man brutally ill-used his wife or children, or was a bad neighbour, or made himself generally obnoxious, certain of the villagers would appoint themselves guardians of the public weal, and set forth by night armed with kettles, and horns, and bells, and other instruments of hideous clamour, to let the offender know that he must mend his ways. Such was the remedy now proposed for the havoc wrought to Farmer Dredge's stock. The serenaders picked their way in silence over the heath, and when the feeble light, shining in Lockwood's window, came in sight, Farmer Dredge ordered a halt to discuss the final disposition of the attack. The advance was then ordered, and soon the fearsome uproar began. Never before had such a devil's tattoo been heard on the lonely heath; but bad as it was, there must have been a feeling amongst some of the more ardent serenaders that rough music was a very milk-and-watery sort of way of dealing with a case of right-down witchcraft. However, it will never be known how the catastrophe of that night really did take its rise.

Everyone knows how easily mischief is begun and how rapidly it gathers strength in its progress. While the bells were clanging and the bellow of the horns was frightful to hear, a little speck of light shone upon the eaves of the thatch. It was not a candle surely, for there was no window on that side. No. It spread and spread. Suddenly the clamour ceased, and something very much like terror overspread the faces of the mischief-makers, for the fire ran rapidly along the dry straw at the eaves, and in a minute everybody knew Miles Lockwood's cottage was on fire. Then a sudden shriek. The door was thrown open, showing the inside full of smoke, and a woman in her night-clothes rushed out. The next moment Miles burst forth from the shed where he had been at work and dragged his wife into his workshop, while the courageous troop, aghast at the unlooked-for mischief,

slunk rapidly away into the darkness out of the ever widening circle of light which spread from the flames darting and creeping round the thatch and the wooden gables of the cottage.

When morning broke there was nothing left of Miles Lockwood's home but heaps of ashes and blackened walls. His work-shed had fortunately escaped, as the wind had carried the flames in the opposite direction; and there, upon his bench with no other covering than a sack and his own coat, lay his wife raving in an access of the fever from which she had been suffering for some days past. Early in the day Dr. Goldingham was there with a close carriage and a nurse, and took the poor sufferer back to his own house. If good nursing and medical skill could have saved her she might have recovered; but the shock had been too severe, and in less than a week she was dead.

She was buried in the churchyard, and after a little Miles, with the rector's consent, placed a plain slab of stone without word or date over the grave. He refused to leave his work-shed. He had fixed up some rough beds for his children; and there he now ate and slept as well as laboured. By degrees the story of the rough music leaked out, and there was some talk of police interference; but probably no one but the guilty person knew whose hand had put fire to the thatch that night. Miles was resolutely silent on the subject. He shut himself up in the shed working, so some people said, day and night, week-days and Sundays all the same. Dr. Goldingham tried to see him, for he was a little fearful for the poor fellow's reason; but when he went to the heath Miles would remark in a quiet tone, holding the shed-door half-open, that he was grateful to the doctor for all his kindness, but he wanted for nothing now. He did not say that he only wanted to be let alone, but the doctor knew what he meant, and took his leave.

Simon Deverel, of Cobb Hall, however, did get speech at Miles now and then. These two had always been good friends, and Simon had always laughed at the silly stories about witchcraft and the like.

Simon had had no trouble that winter with his flocks and herds, and our wise-acres declared that this good luck came from speaking the devil fair, for had not Simon lent Miles Lockwood a horse and cart times out of number, and didn't he let the Irishwoman have milk for her stir-

about as often as she liked to go up to the farm for it? Some, however, were far-sighted enough to maintain that old Mrs. Deverel knew as much about the black art as Miles himself, and that she could beat back any spell he might cast over Cobb Hall and its belongings. These good people none of them remembered that Simon had kept his cows well sheltered all through the wet weather, and had moved his sheep off the soddened pastures in good time.

One Saturday afternoon Simon was busy in his stable, when he heard a footstep outside, and, looking up, he saw Miles standing in the doorway. He had come to ask for the loan of a horse and cart, he said, to fetch some bits of marble which were lying at a canal wharf a few miles distant. There was a look of unusual excitement on his face, and his eye flashed and his hand trembled nervously as he spoke. Simon asked him how he was in a kindly tone, and wanted to know whether he couldn't be of help in any other way; but Miles answered shortly though courteously that he needed nothing but what he asked for, so Simon at once told him that he could have the same horse and cart that he had had before.

It was bright moonlight that night, and old Jennings, Dr. Unwin's factotum, when he took the keys into the rectory kitchen, declared that, though he didn't believe in ghosts himself, he had a sister who did, and that he was ready to swear that he had seen something white under the elms at the farther corner of the churchyard. The cook, an orthodox Protestant, remarked that she shouldn't be surprised at anything that might happen, seeing that good-for-nothing Irish were buried there just as if they had been decent Christians; but no one had the curiosity to go out and test the truth of Mr. Jennings's assertion.

But the next morning, Sunday, there was a crowd of people in the churchyard, for fully an hour before the service began, passing and repassing to and from the corner where the body of poor Nora Lockwood had been laid. Upon the stone which had hitherto marked her grave there stood the fairest monument in pure white marble that the brain of an artist could have planned. Though no one knew it, it was the facsimile of one erected to the memory of a noble lady in Florence hundreds of years ago. Miles had found the design amongst the drawings Mr. Winsor had given him, and when he had

finished it he carried it in Simon Deverel's cart down to the churchyard that Saturday night, and fixed it by the light of the moon. On the Sunday morning Simon found his horse and cart brought back, and as he had nothing particular to do, he strolled over the heath to Lockwood's place, for he could not forget that strange look in Miles's eye the afternoon before. Half dreading, he knocked at the door of the shed, but no one answered. He lifted the latch, and to his surprise found the door unfastened. He went in and found the place deserted. Dust and marble-chips covered everything. Miles Lockwood had done his last work at Shillingbury, and had vanished from our world. Nobody ever heard of him again, but it will be long before his tragic story is forgotten. The lovely monument is a witness of this, and it still stands white and pure as ever, for every spring and autumn Simon Deverel cleans it with his own hands.

WAITING.

SITTING under the birch-trees, in the beautiful April day,
Watching the gleam through the branches stream,
watching the sunlight's play;
Hearing the birds' gay carol, seeing each glancing wing,
Wishing them mute, lest the coming foot, were unheard mid the sounds of Spring.
Sitting under the birch-trees, where the thickening lilacs made,
Of white, purple, and green, a graceful screen, her lonely head to shade;
Her book of the favourite poet, unheeded at her side,
She saw the bright noon pale to twilight soon, she saw the gloaming glide,
Glide from its couch of violets, with its sad strange lovely eyes,
With its soft cool touch that says so much, with its voice like our happy sighs;
With its sweet and soothing magic, for the tired heart and frame,
That had throbb'd so strong, had tarried so long, for the footstep that never came.
Never! The evening darkened, the night fell soft o'er all,
Each bird in its nest had found its rest; the flowers heard sleep's low call;
She passed by the screen of lilacs, she passed to her silent home,
The sweet sad pain had been all in vain; the footstep had never come.

MYRTLE.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"THEN you do really like San Remo, signorina?"

"Like it!" the girl exclaimed, her speaking face all aglow as she turned towards the window and put out her hands with an eloquent impulsive gesture.

"It is beyond liking. It is the very loveliest place in all the world. I wish I need never, never leave it."

"Oh, Myrtle," sighed her mother from the sofa, where she lay wrapped in countless shawls and coverlets, despite the warm soft air stealing in through the open window, "will you never learn to be less extravagantly impetuous?"

"Never," answered Myrtle. "I can't do anything by halves. I must feel with my whole soul or not at all. It's my way. Besides, Signor Benoni is used to my ecstasies by this time. You understand me now, do you not, signore?"

She threw a swift glance up at her companion, moving imperceptibly nearer to him as she spoke.

"Yes," he answered simply, but with a look in his eyes that made words needless. "I think I always do."

"That's more than I do, then," said a young blue-eyed fellow, unmistakably English from the crown of his fair hair to the soles of his serviceable boots, as he strolled lazily towards the couple in the window. "Aunt Mary is right, Myrtle. You are certainly the oddest bundle of raptures and enthusiasms that I ever came across."

Myrtle shrugged her shoulders without looking round at him.

"Oh, you! I don't expect you to understand me, Arthur; you're too different. I never expect you to sympathise with me in anything."

"I don't know about that," returned Arthur, a little nettled. "I can sympathise well enough when there's any call to do it. But why you should want to spend your days in this little, queer, dull hole, where there's nothing in the world ever going on, and only a handful of coughing English consumptives by way of society—I beg your pardon, signore, but how my cousin can prefer San Remo to England——"

"Myrtle doesn't prefer it," interrupted Mrs. Ellis a little tartly from her sofa. "She is talking at random, as her way is. No Englishwoman would ever be content to live out of England."

"I am not talking at all at random," cried Myrtle, colouring. "But what do I know of England outside of papa's parish, and what spot on all the earth could be drearier and sadder than poor little Kersley, with its eternal fogs, and rains, and coal-dust, and its dismal, dirty surroundings? I am not bound to love England for Kersley's sake, or to love

Kersley, just because I have been doomed to live there all my life and have known nothing better till now. And I don't love it—I hate it—and to be transported suddenly into this land of perpetual summer; to wake up in the morning and know that the sun is shining, and will shine on and on just as brightly the whole day through; and to breathe this fresh, pure, sweet air; and gather these glorious outdoor roses, and know that more will bloom when these are done—why, it is all a dream of perfect delight to me. How can I but wish I need never waken from it?"

Arthur looked at his cousin with admiration and perplexity mingled on his boyish face. She was so handsome; and so dreadfully, so uncomfortably enthusiastic.

The Italian looked at her too, and it was to him, rather than to Arthur, that Myrtle turned for the mute response of his smile—a gentle, kindly smile that lit up his dark thin face wondrously, and seemed to linger on in his eyes long after it had left his lips.

Yes, he always understood her, down to her least and most vaguely expressed thought.

"There is Corsica at last!" exclaimed Myrtle, clasping her hands. "Look, signore; look, Arthur! Quick—it will be gone so soon."

Arthur craned forward his neck to see. Sure enough, the famous, faraway island that was beyond human reach of vision in the noonday now stood out against the horizon, clearly and boldly defined, as if within an easy sail.

"What, that stupid little bit of rock and hill over there?" said the young Briton scornfully. "I don't see anything wonderful in that."

"Ah, but it is so seldom seen from here, you know," explained Myrtle; "never, except just before sunrise or sunset, and then only under certain conditions of the atmosphere. It is eighty miles off, remember. I am always watching for it. I have grown superstitious about it. It is a sort of vision of the Holy Grail to me. I feel as if it were only when I was very good, or going to be very happy, that the sight of it was vouchsafed me."

"So have I always felt," murmured the Italian in his own musical tongue, gazing wistfully out towards the far-off isle. "To me it has always seemed like heaven, which the eye of faith sees clearest in the morning and the evening of our lives, and which

in the busy care-troubled noon becomes only a dream, or a longing, or perhaps just a memory of something beautiful that we have lost, but may find again. To me, too, it is always an omen of good when it so reveals itself against the sky."

"It is the first time we ever saw it together," said Myrtle softly. "The omen is for us both."

"Heaven grant it be so," said Benoni with an earnestness that made the words a prayer. "But no, signorina. The heaven I dream of is too fair and too far to be ever more than a fading vision in my life."

The lady on the sofa was watching the little group keenly. For some reason, the relapse into Italian displeased her.

"Myrtle," she interposed, "you are not aware, perhaps, that your hour has been over for some time, and that you are detaining the professor."

"The signore has no other pupil immediately after me to-day, and I am not detaining him," answered Myrtle with a sudden little antagonistic ring in her voice. "He stays because he likes, and I like, and we all like. I learn vastly more Italian out of my lessons than in."

"Especially when you talk English half the time," said Arthur.

"Ah, that is out of sheer politeness to stupid old you, who don't speak anything else. For me, I would always rather speak Italian than English. It suits the place, it suits the climate, it suits me."

"Myrtle," said Mrs. Ellis again, "you are talking yourself hoarse. Do you forget Lady Dunmore's party to-night, and that she asked you to sing?"

"Oh," exclaimed the girl, "I'm so glad you reminded me! I must run over my song again. Signore, you will stay, please, to hear? It is an Italian ballad. I want you to correct me if I mispronounce."

And without waiting his reply she abruptly began her song, in a full, rich, delicious contralto voice, which, wild and untutored as it was, might have charmed even the birds into listening, such a voice as one seldom hears in an amateur, and that having once heard one never forgets.

Mrs. Ellis's severe face softened as the song went on. Was it possible, at the moment, not to be proud to own the young singer for her daughter? Arthur thrust his hands in his pockets, and stood leaning stolidly against the wall, staring fixedly at the girl's head. Benoni seemed scarcely to breathe.

"There!" said Myrtle, springing suddenly

up and confronting the Italian with her bright, animated face; "was that right? Shall you be content to know I am singing it so to-night?"

"It was perfect," answered the professor in a tone that left no doubt of his sincerity. "I cannot say more. It was perfect."

Myrtle gave a little laugh, full of genuine childlike delight in her own rare gift and his keen appreciation of it, and clasped her hands together above her head.

"Oh, how happy I am!" she cried. "What a world this is to live in! A walk by the sea in the morning, a ramble through the old city and a visit to the orange-groves in the afternoon, Corsica and a song in the sunset, and a dance in the dead of the night. Oh, what a joy it is just to live! Arthur, I won't have you look so phlegmatic and indifferent. You look like a bit of a London fog dropped down by mistake in Italy. You don't know how out of place you are. Do wake up and be happy too."

"I'm awake enough," answered Arthur curtly, with a curious flush mounting to his cheeks; "it's the professor who is asleep. At least he looks as if he were in a dream."

Benoni started.

"Mr. Templeton is right. The music has carried me out of myself," he said in his strongly accented yet perfect English. "Signorina, I hope you will enjoy your dance. A rivederla."

"Wait one instant, signore; you shall have a reward for listening so patiently to my song. There, do you want it? It is my flower."

And the girl drew a sprig of myrtle from a vase upon the table and held it out to him smilingly, but without a shadow of coquetry in her manner.

"It is the colour of heaven at twilight," the Italian said as he took it from her. "Yes, it is your flower indeed. But to receive a reward for a pleasure, that is filling my life over full with blessings."

"Who is the fellow?" asked Arthur, hardly waiting till the door had closed upon the tall, slight figure. "Precious intimate here he seems. Quite a friend of the family, I should say."

"He's Professor Francesco Benoni, head of the San Remo Lyceum, and a remarkably learned and clever man," said Myrtle quickly.

"He is only Myrtle's Italian teacher," supplemented Mrs. Ellis with a frigid

intonation of voice. "Saving that, there is no question of intimacy or friendship, of course.

"Starved-looking fellow, isn't he, with his long thin figure, and those monstrous black eyes!" continued Arthur with a complacent look down at his own firmly-knit figure. "Just one's idea of an Italian: a man without any muscle, and only backbone enough to stand up on. The climate doesn't have the effect on him that it has on you, Myrtle. These five months have made a full-blown rose of you."

"Have they?" said Myrtle nonchalantly, and walked to the window and stood there humming softly to herself, utterly unmindful of the admiring eyes which followed her every movement.

It was impossible not to watch Myrtle, for she had that free, easy grace of motion consequent upon perfect health and utter lack of self-consciousness, which is in itself as attractive as beauty. Whatever she did, she seemed moving to music. She was scarcely nineteen, but so tall, so graceful, so admirably proportioned from head to foot, and, despite her impulsiveness, with such a proud dignity of carriage, as to give the impression of maturer years. Her face was by no means so faultless as her figure. Even her best friends admitted that her nose would not bear criticism a minute (though, to be sure, not one nose in a hundred will), and her mouth was still altogether too large, even under the alleviating circumstances of absolutely perfect teeth, brilliant red lips, and a frank sweet smile that brought two charming dimples with it. Yet in spite of its prominent defects, her face was unlike all others, and singularly attractive. No girls wore their hair, for instance, as she did hers, without a wave or a crinkle in it, the shining black locks brought smoothly down either side of the low forehead, and coiled loosely in at the neck; but it was the one way of ways for Myrtle. And then her eyes. It is quite positive that nobody ever had just such eyes before, for they were neither grey, nor green, nor brown, but bronze—real bronze eyes, looking out from their black fringe of lashes with an intense earnestness and truthfulness that seemed to lay her whole soul bare. It was impossible to look her in the eyes and not put implicit faith in every word that she said; impossible, too, to look there long and not grow to love her—particularly if you were a young man, and from your privileged position as cousin and lately-arrived guest,

had distinguishing claims upon her attention.

Mrs. Ellis noted and approved. Arthur Templeton, at twenty-two, with his smooth, obstinate, sulky face, was far younger than Myrtle at nineteen, and he was not remarkable in any way save for that spoiled-child look. But he was an only son and heir to great wealth, and his father was positively known to have heart-disease.

Mrs. Ellis was the wife of a clergyman to be sure, but had she been the spouse of St. Paul himself she could not have overlooked such manifest qualifications for a son-in-law as these. He seemed created for the office, so to speak. She had decided so upon the occasion of his first visit to them in their dreary little country home. And when he developed sufficient of a cough in the rude English winter for his parents to deem it advisable for him to join his uncle at San Remo, a few months after Mr. Ellis (anxious to try a southern climate for his wife's failing health), had gotten himself appointed chaplain to the newly-built English church there, the fact seemed like Heaven's direct and unequivocal benediction upon her schemes. But how was it that this Italian master had obtained quite his present footing in the family? Five months of lessons—yes, they had been there five months, and Myrtle had studied assiduously, and had met the professor repeatedly besides at a number of the best houses in the place, for he was of a good old family in spite of his calling, and certainly perfectly gentlemanly and well-bred—well, it was high time the lessons came to an end. Myrtle had learned all the Italian she needed, and perhaps a little more. If only on the excellent ground of economy, she must give up her teacher. It should be done to-morrow.

Later in the evening, coming from her room ready dressed for the party, Myrtle entered the tiny drawing-room, and found Benoni waiting there alone.

"I only ran in as I was passing to leave this book with you," he said apologetically, as he came forward to meet her. "We were speaking of it this afternoon, you know."

"I am so glad you came," replied Myrtle, giving him her hand in her frank, English fashion. "I want you to see my dress. I chose it myself. Do I look nice?"

It was some floating gauzy fabric of a pale amber tint, that no girl with a less

clear complexion or less rich colouring could have dared to wear, but it set off Myrtle's young glowing beauty to perfection. Her companion stood silently looking down at her with an expression almost of pain upon his refined, intellectual face.

"Well?" asked Myrtle again, in English this time. "How do I look, signore?"

"Like a star in an unattainable heaven," he answered at last, slowly as if the words were wrung from him. "Why do you ask me, signorina? What right have I to find you beautiful?"

Myrtle came a step nearer. There was a flush on her soft cheek.

"And why not you?" she asked gently.

"Because," he answered bitterly, "I am nothing but your Italian teacher. I may not aspire to be even a friend. I should be blind and deaf too."

The flush on Myrtle's cheek deepened to a swift indignant scarlet. Then he had overheard her mother's cruel speech.

"Signore," she said in her clear, fresh, true young voice, "I am nothing but the daughter of a poor English chaplain. In rank and poverty at least we are equals—you and I—though in all other things I know myself beneath you, not above you, and am proud to count you as my friend."

The Italian held out both his hands. A wild joy leaped up in his eyes.

"Myrtle—Myrtle, do you mean it? May I dare speak? May I dare ask more—ask if you could be content, not as my friend, but as my wife—content only with me and my love?"

Myrtle looked him full in the face, with her head thrown back and her steady eyes fastened fearlessly on his.

"I should be more than content," she said simply; "I should be very proud."

The door opened as she said the last words and Arthur came in. He too was dressed for the evening's gaiety, and in his hand he held an exquisite bouquet of pink roses.

He came up and eyed his cousin contemplatively an instant; then walked critically around her with distinct approbation of expression.

"You look awfully jolly," he commented, taking a fold of her dress clumsily between his finger and thumb. "This is just the go. I never saw you show up better. And here, take this—I got it for you;" and he thrust the flowers awkwardly into her hand.

"Oh, how lovely they are!" said Myrtle, plunging her flushed face among

the cool, sweet petals. "It was ever so kind of you, Arthur, but——"

"But what?"

Myrtle held off the bouquet at arm's-length with a gay laugh.

"Don't be angry, please, but I cannot carry it. Don't you see? It would be impossible."

"And why, pray?"

"Oh, don't you see? These pink roses with this yellow dress—the colours are both lovely; but together! Oh, it spoils both! I just couldn't!"

Arthur looked very crestfallen.

"How was a fellow to know you were going to wear a yellow dress, I'd like to know? Nobody ever wears yellow; everybody always wears pink or blue."

"Of course they do. That's why I didn't," laughed Myrtle. "But I'm so sorry it happened, and I love pink roses; they are beautiful. However, they sha'n't be lost; Signor Benoni shall take them home to his sister—didn't you tell me she was not so well again to-day, signore?—and so they will give even more pleasure, perhaps, than if I carried them."

She held out the bouquet to the professor with one of her charming smiles; but Arthur instantly sprang forward and snatched it rudely from her hand.

"No one shall have the flowers if you won't," he said with the utmost irritation of voice and manner, and turning to the open window, he threw the unfortunate bunch with all his strength far out into the darkness.

In the awkward silence that followed his words they could hear it crash down among the shrubs and bushes of a neighbouring garden.

"Oh, Arthur!" Myrtle exclaimed reproachfully.

"Well," he retorted crossly, "I got them for you, and you won't have them. What I do with them afterwards is no look-out of yours." And he turned on his heel and went and sat down at the table with a book, turning the lamp viciously up till it smoked furiously. "Beastly Italian lights!" he muttered as he turned it back again lower than before. "How is anyone ever to read by them?"

"A dimani," said Benoni in a low voice as he held Myrtle's hand in a grasp that nearly crushed it, firm and substantial though it was. "A flower has bloomed in my life to-night sweeter than any blossom your hand can ever bestow again. Addio, a dimani!"

"To-morrow," repeated Myrtle; "only until to-morrow."

The morrow came, one of the few dull, drizzly mornings that ever dawn on San Remo. There was no faintest suggestion of Corsica behind the clouds that lay heavy and grey along the horizon, when Myrtle glanced from her window.

"Heaven is all in my heart," she said to herself, turning away. "All in my heart and his. We need no outward symbol."

She kept aloof from the rest all the morning. She could not bring herself to speak and act in her everyday manner with this sweet secret brimming over in her heart, and she felt safer out of sight. Most girls would have fled at once to their mothers to whisper it all out with happy blushes and broken, eager words; but Mrs. Ellis was not one of the parents who invite confidences. It was a strange little family altogether, and Myrtle seemed always a third in it; not the uniting link between the other two as an only child should have been. So now she kept apart and waited. Her lover must speak first to her father, and then—then she could step proudly forward and claim him before them all.

When he came and she heard him shown into her father's study, she fled into her own little room and shut the door. She could hear nothing there. She could only wait. Her heart was beating high, but not with fear. Oh no. Only with gladness—only with gladness, she told herself. What was there to fear? She sat at her window looking out towards invisible Corsica. The dull cloud had not lifted from it, not even when the sun, relenting, shot out a flickering beam across the waters, that turned their greyness blue, and lit up the long line of breakers with silver touches here and there among the rocks.

She could see nothing else from the window but the sea and the sloping, curving shore; but ever and anon she glanced lovingly towards the further end of her room, piercing the wall with her mind's eye, and seeing in fancy the quaint old city of San Remo, that crept straightly up the hill at their backs, as if it had wanted to get among the olive-groves without any loss of time, and had chosen the shortest and steepest way.

"Dear old San Remo," she murmured lovingly to herself. "Dear, beautiful Summerland. Now I shall never, never leave you again!"

How long she waited in the window she did not know, though the changing lights and shadows wrote out the hours on the blue face of the Mediterranean as on a turquoise dial; but at last a summons came for her to go to the drawing-room. On her way she passed Arthur, who looked at her with a very humble, almost a pleading look, which she answered with one of faint, fleeting surprise. How could she stop to think of Arthur now?

Only her parents were in the drawing-room when she entered, Mrs. Ellis not on the sofa as was her wont, but seated upright, stiff and unbending, with a very stern look on her thin, marked face. Mr. Ellis, a short, thick-set man, with a large head and bushy grey eyebrows that seemed in some way to give an utterly unpromising look to his whole face, that upon further scrutiny his close-set lips and sharp grey eyes did not belie, was walking slowly up and down the room with his hands behind him.

He stopped short as Myrtle entered and turned to face her. She felt instinctively that it was an atmosphere of war to the death, and paused near the door, slightly throwing back her head.

"Myrtle," said her father, looking keenly up at her from under his overhanging brows—the girl was if anything taller than he, "I sent for you merely to say that I have dismissed your Italian teacher. He will not come again."

Myrtle looked steadily back at him, never flinching.

"Why, papa?"

"Because," said Mr. Ellis slowly and distinctly, as if each word were sharpened on a grindstone before he spoke it; "because I find he has dared to take advantage of your innocence, your unsophisticatedness, and your, perhaps, too great freedom of manner, to speak of feelings that he has had the effrontery to allow himself to entertain for you."

Myrtle drew a quick breath.

"You mean, papa, that Signor Benoni has told you he loves me, and has asked me for his wife."

"My words are plain enough and better chosen," said Mr. Ellis dryly. "I hope you understand that you will never see the fellow again."

Myrtle did not move.

"Father," she began—her lips were very dry, and she stopped to moisten them—"father, I love him."

Mr. Ellis laughed—a short sneering laugh that cut through to the girl's heart.

"You love him? the man whom you pay four francs an hour to teach you Italian grammar? Upon my word, Myrtle, if you have lowered yourself to such an extent, at least I wonder that you confess it."

Myrtle reddened to her brows, but not with shame.

"I am willing to confess it before all the world, papa. I am proud of his love, and he is more than worthy of the best I have to give in return. Who am I to have the right to more than he can offer me? Am I rich? Am I noble? How is he beneath me? And papa, oh, papa," she broke down just a little, and stretched out her hands towards him imploringly, "is it nothing to you that I love him?"

"Love him!" repeated Mr. Ellis contemptuously. "Every girl fancies she loves the first man who courts her, whoever he is, and is quite as ready to break her heart again over the second as over the first. Anything to get married, anything not to be an old maid. But look here, Myrtle, once for all. I'll not have you name this fellow to me again, and you may spare me any heroics on the subject. I'll not have it. I hope that is distinct enough."

Myrtle turned very white, and did not answer.

"We understand each other now, I believe," continued Mr. Ellis, "and will never refer to this topic again, if you please. Now one word more on a pleasanter subject, and I must go to my study. Your cousin Arthur has done you the honour to ask you of me in marriage, and I have given him my full and free consent to address you."

"Arthur!" the girl cried in blankest amazement. "Arthur!"

"I do not wonder you are surprised," said Mr. Ellis, his cold, keen eyes watching her closely. "It is such a marriage as you could hardly have dreamed of making, you who were willing to throw away all your life to the first bidder. It is a match in every way desirable, and enviable, and proper, and when I have told you that I not only approve of it, but wish it, I need say nothing more."

"Never, never!" cried Myrtle wildly. "I will not, father, I will not!"

"I have nothing more to say to you now, Myrtle. You know perfectly what I desire and expect of you. I am demanding

no manner of sacrifice. From beginning to end I am consulting but your own best interests. But remember, I will have no more scenes—no more disgraceful folly. That is all."

Myrtle stood motionless an instant after her father left the room, then turned in heart-broken appeal to the silent figure in the easy-chair, who had never once spoken, or moved her grave eyes from her daughter's face.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, "have you, too, no pity for me? Do you, too, care nothing for my happiness? You, too, mamma? Oh, cannot you understand?"

"I do understand, far better than you, child," replied the mother. "What do you know about life, you who have just begun to live? I have learned what life really is. I have measured its experiences, and its emotions, and its miseries. I know what is best worth having in it, and can choose for you better than you can choose for yourself."

"Oh no, no, you cannot, mamma! You would choose Arthur—that is, you choose riches for me, wealth and ease, a grand home, servants, rich gowns, and the things that money gives. But I care nothing for these, mamma. I only want happiness—I only want happiness!"

"You only want the impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Ellis with sudden fire. "Child, you are crying for the moon. There is no happiness on earth."

"There is!" answered Myrtle. "And I want it. Do not make me miss it, mamma, as you have done. Let me be happier than you have been. Mamma, mamma, did you never love?"

"Hush!" said Mrs. Ellis almost fiercely, and then she suddenly broke into a bitter laugh of scorn. "What is love? Ah, you have got that yet to learn. You think it is something as lasting as life, strong as death, perfect as heaven. You would sacrifice everything for it, and what is it? The most unreal, the most unthankful, the most frail—most evanescent of human passions!"

"Mamma," interrupted Myrtle, "I do not know what love was to you, but I have not needed to learn first what love is—to understand as clearly as had you told me, that whatever influenced you to marry papa, it was not love. You could never have loved him, and you have loved me, too, less because I am his child. But I am not like you, mamma. Love is a real thing and a holy thing to me. It is life itself."

And where I have once given my love, I have given it wholly, without reserve and beyond change. You may force me to give up Francesco Benoni, since I would never marry against your consent. You may even force me to marry Arthur; but you can never, never, never reach my heart to alter it. There is truth in my love if in no other love in the world, and though I should never see Francesco again, I will love him till I die."

"Death is a long way off," said Mrs. Ellis with a grim smile. "Your love will be very weary before it has held so far; and in the meantime Arthur will make you a very excellent, a very sensible, and a very comfortable husband."

Alas, poor Myrtle! Her will, though so strong and brave, was at war with two older and stronger wills, before which in the end hers could but yield, weary, wounded, and defeated, though still defiant.

It was a long and unintermittent struggle, through which, to all outward eyes, life went on the same as ever in the little parsonage, save that Signor Benoni came no more, and that Myrtle went nowhere unless accompanied by either father or mother, under that system of unobtrusive but relentless espionage which is so infinitely harder to bear up against than the most open warfare.

Meanwhile Arthur waited very patiently. Those can always brook delay who are confident of ultimate success, and certainly marriage itself could give him but little more of Myrtle's companionship than he enjoyed now. He never spoke to her of love. He was shy at it, and was quite willing to leave his uncle to speak for him. Only once when Myrtle in desperation turned suddenly upon him, appealing to him to be generous, to give her up and go away, he looked at her silently a moment, flushing scarlet, and, as he looked, an obstinate, determined, unyielding expression grew into his boyish face and filled Myrtle with despair.

"I won't," he said doggedly, after that moment's silence.

And so the struggle went on day after day through all life's commonplaceness, until at last out of sheer weariness Myrtle gave it up.

"Papa," she said, "Arthur only wants me, not my heart, and if you think it right for me to marry one man, loving another, then I will marry Arthur Templeton, solely because he is rich and

will make your old age comfortable, and because, since I may not marry the man I love, it matters nothing to me whether it is Arthur or another to whom you bind my life. But understand this: While I live I shall love Francesco Benoni and him only. If there be sin in this marriage you are forcing upon me, the sin lies at your door, not mine."

"I accept the melodramatic situation without a scruple," said Mr. Ellis calmly. "You will be thoroughly happy as Arthur's wife after you have outlived this present folly."

"I shall never outlive it!" cried Myrtle passionately. "Father, do not make that mistake. I shall never outlive it!"

Mr. Ellis smiled the cruel smile of superior unbelief.

"Love is merely the passion of an hour," he said quietly. "And the hotter it is at the beginning the colder is the end. I will not have you wreck your whole life for a moment's fancy."

"You have taken my life into your own hands," answered Myrtle, controlling herself to speak with a calm equal to his, but with a sudden lightning flash of her eyes. "If it must be a wreck, so be it. But whether it be better to wreck it for money or for love, let Heaven judge."

Mr. Ellis only drew his bushy brows together in reply to this tragic appeal to a higher court. In his heart was the thorough conviction that though God governed the universe, He delegated the ruling of children entirely to the able judgment of their fathers, and never interfered in the matter at all.

And so Myrtle's engagement to Arthur became a settled and announced fact, and the wedding-day was fixed for no very distant date.

Only once before her marriage did Myrtle see Benoni again. It was in the evening, and a party of English visitors had been exploring San Remo by moonlight, under the chaperonage of Mr. Ellis and a native guide.

They were on foot, the steep, closely-crowded old city being altogether impassable to carriages, and it seemed to Myrtle that they had been wandering about for hours through the narrow, crooked, twisting streets which ran hither and thither just where they would without any plan or reason, here running up a few zigzag stairs as if with burglarious intent to get in a second-storey window, there diving unexpectedly down under an

archway, and here again making a bolt at a house and actually going clean through it without any ceremony whatever, and continuing its wild flight on the other side as if nothing had happened. Quaint and strange as it all was by daylight, by moonlight it was weirdly beautiful. The tall, ugly, fantastic old houses hustled so thickly together, and here and there bound to opposite neighbours with springing archways as if they had suddenly clasped hands across the narrow streets, stood out now all transfigured in the radiance of the unearthly silver glow, its brilliance made the more intense by the deep black of the contrasting shadows. The little party slowly wound its way homeward at last, with many a gay laugh and jest among themselves, that occasionally brought a dark-haired head to the window to gaze wonderingly after them, or momentarily checked the song of a troop of picturesquely-clad boys shouting out an operatic air as they rushed down the empty lanes.

Myrtle had been over every step of the way time and time before, and engrossed in her own thoughts, she was lagging wearily behind the rest, when as she was crossing a little patch of bright light that lay upon the pavement like a fallen jewel, she found herself face to face with Benoni. They both stopped involuntarily. Myrtle gave a faint cry, and instantly her father was by her side and drew her hand through his arm.

"Come on immediately, Myrtle. Why are you standing here?" he said sharply.

With a rapid movement the Italian threw himself in their way.

"Nay," he exclaimed, "I will speak with her this once. You shall not prevent me from only speaking with her this one time more. Signorina"—his voice dropped into low, rapid Italian—"tell me—only tell me—was it so? Did you think it presumptuous, my darling, to love you, and to claim you? Was it false, that hope you gave me?"

Myrtle twisted her hand out of her father's arm, and stood looking in her lover's face with eyes full of hopeless misery.

"It was not false, signore," she replied in English, very low but very distinctly. "Do you not know that I am true to my heart's core?"

"But this marriage that they tell of, signorina—Myrtle?"

"It is so," answered Myrtle, still in English. "They force me to it. I shall

never see you again, but I shall never forget—never change. Good-bye."

"Heaven help us both!" said Benoni in a suffocated voice. "I will be faithful till I die."

And then Myrtle was hurried away by her angry father, and a sudden cloud caught the moon in its dusky meshes, and darkness fell upon all San Remo.

TIME BARGAINS.

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

SCARCELY had Cecil disappeared, when Linda popped her head from behind a near-at-hand clump of evergreens.

"He did not know that I was so near him," she said as she came forward. "That look on his face—how well I remember it. It never comes but when he is in trouble. What troubles him now? Can it be the thought of leaving me? No, no! I dare not think so, for is he not about to leave me for ever? Oh, my darling, come back to me—come back!"

Her heart gave a great sob. She dashed the tears from her eyes with a passionate gesture.

"This is the portmanteau, marked with his initials, that he took with him on his wedding-tour. Oh, happy days!" From the folds of her dress she brought out a small morocco-covered case. "Here is something for him to remember his lost Linda by." She laid the case on the top of the portmanteau. "My last gift. Surely he will not refuse it. His foot-step! He must not see me here. Yet how can I bear to let him go without a word?"

A sudden thought struck her. She sprang back through the open French window, and wrapped one of the long lace curtains loosely round her. From this coign of vantage she could see without being seen. Cecil came swinging slowly round the corner. He glanced round with an air of disappointment.

"I half hoped she would be somewhere about to say one last word. But she is wiser than I, and there will be one regret the fewer in time to come. What is this? Who has been here?" he asked as the case, lying on the portmanteau, caught his eye. He took it up and opened it. Inside it was a meerschaum-pipe and a card. On the latter was some writing which he read aloud. "'A farewell gift from Linda, with her undying love.' She

has been here and left me this—she, who always held smoking in such utter abhorrence! And with her undying love! I must see her now, if it be only to say the one word—farewell.”

He replaced the pipe in the case, pressed the latter to his lips, and put it away.

“Where can she be? Where shall I find her?” He put his head into the room and glanced round: “Not here. And yet she cannot be far away. Ah!” A faint sound had caught his ear. He tore the curtain aside. There stood Linda, “You—and here!” he said, not without a touch of coldness in his tone.

Her bosom heaved, her eyes were suffused, a delicate colour tinged her cheeks: to Cecil she had never looked more lovely than at that moment. She stepped from behind the curtain.

“I thought you might refuse my little gift, and, in fact, I wanted to see——”

“What I should do with it?”

“Yes—what you would do with it.”

“I will take the pipe, Linda, and smoke it when I am far away.”

“So long as you keep it, I shall not be quite forgotten.”

“A strange present for you to make.”

“You won’t be near me when you smoke it.”

“I had forgotten that. The hidden irony of your gift had escaped me.”

Linda bit her lip and turned away. Cecil had yet to learn that it comes natural to women to sometimes sting even those they love best.

A discreet cough, and Binks appeared on the scene.

“Dog-cart ready, sir.”

“Eh—yes—all right, Binks.” Then turning to Linda he held out his hand. “The moment for saying good-bye has come.” His voice trembled a little. Linda took his hand, but did not speak.

At this instant, through the open windows of one of the rooms, the pleasant strains of music came floating on the summer breeze. Someone was playing a waltz-tune on the piano. Linda and Cecil both started—involuntarily their eyes met.

“That air! Why—is it—can it be?”

“Oh, Cecil; don’t you remember?”

“It is the tune we danced to that night——”

“When you first told me that you loved me.”

“And I did love you then, by Jove!”

“‘One more turn,’ you said when I

wanted to sit down; and just as the music was dying away you whispered, ‘Be my wife.’” Involuntarily she crept a little closer to his side. “I was too bewildered to answer you. Then, somehow, we found ourselves in the conservatory—we two, and no one else. You have not forgotten?”

“Why should a man be supposed to forget such moments any more than a woman?”

“Dear Cecil!” The words came like a whispered sigh. She was very close to him by this time. And still the sweet strains of the music rose and fell lightly on the summer air. “Then you wrapped a shawl round me,” went on Linda in a low, dreamy voice, looking straight before her with eyes that saw once more the pictures of the past which the music had called up; “and then we stole out like two guilty things into the Lime-tree Walk, and then—and then——”

“I told you all the nonsense there was in my heart.”

“And made me the happiest girl in England. But you did not think it nonsense then, Cecil.”

“No, by Jove! I was awfully in earnest.”

He never could afterwards tell how it came to pass that at this juncture he found himself with his arm round her waist. The music must have been to blame in the matter. Now high, now low, its cadences rose and fell, an idyl of love translated into harmonious sounds.

“Suppose I had said ‘No’ to you instead of ‘Yes?’” suggested Linda.

Her heart was beating against his arm like some frightened creature that had been caught against its will.

“That would have made me more desperate still,” answered Cecil.

“I’m glad I did not quite drive you to desperation.” They went forward a few steps, his arm still round her waist. “How horrified my aunt was when I told her,” continued Linda.

“She wanted you reserved for her friend, the rector.”

“Poor Mr. Glossop! How freckled he was, and what very large hands he had!”

“And then those terrible goloshes that he used to wear!”

They both laughed a little at the recollection of “poor Mr. Glossop.”

They were still strolling along like a new Romeo and Juliet, when Binks, the discreet, once more put in an appearance.

Whatever the message he was about to deliver the words died on his lips, as his eyes fell on the retreating couple.

"Well, I'm blown!" he whispered softly to himself, after a moment or two. "It seems to me that Mr. Dane's train will have to go without Mr. Dane."

A moment later the music ceased, and Lilian, all aglow with excitement, rushed out on to the verandah. Clapping her hands gleefully, she cried aloud:

"They have actually gone off together for all the world like a pair of sweet-hearts!"

"Eh, what's that you say?" queried Mr. Jellicop, who at that moment put in an appearance.

Lilian took him by the arm and pointed along the terrace.

"Do look, uncle," she said; "there go Cecil and Linda, his arm round her waist, and neither of them seeming to care a bit. And now—yes—he's actually kissing her!"

"What magic has done this?"

"I know no more than you."

"Well, it's never too late to mend, and I hope with all my heart the old adage may prove true in their case. Who knows? There may be happiness in store for them yet." He tucked Lilian's hand under one of his arms, and patted it fondly. "It will be your turn some day, Lily."

"My turn, uncle!" She spoke as demurely as you please, but for all that her cheeks flushed suddenly.

"For a husband, I mean. When that time does come, little one, bear in mind this—that all married people, however fond they may be of each other, can't expect to get through life without having their little tiffs now and then. We have all got tempers of our own, and we can't help showing 'em off at times. When my Moggy and I were first married, many's the little rumpus we used to have, and I dare say I often wished myself a bachelor again, while it's just as likely that she sometimes said to herself, 'I wish Frank and I had never met.' But, by-and-by, we got to know each other better; then one would give way a bit, and the other would give way a bit, till now there's hardly a sharp word passes between us from January to December, and I'm sure we love each other better every year we live together."

"Who could help loving dear Aunt Jellicop?"

"Ha, ha! I drew a prize, that's certain."

He stooped and kissed her, then he consulted his watch, and then he said a little anxiously: "I wonder whether Marmaduke sent that telegram? I had better go and hunt him up." With which words he went quickly back indoors.

"How it thrills me to hear that name spoken by another!" said Lilian to herself. "When I was engaged to Cuthbert I never had the same feeling that I have now. I don't know what it is, only that it is something very strange and delicious."

She was pacing the verandah slowly backwards and forwards, her hands intertwined in front of her; her eyes suffused with tender light; a smile, evanescent as April sunshine, playing round the coral curves of her lips.

"He has another name—Alan," she murmured under her breath. "I never thought Alan a nice name till now. Will he finish telling me to-day what he left untold yesterday? What if he has changed his mind? Men do sometimes change their minds, I suppose."

This thought was almost more than she could bear. The April sunshine vanished from her lips, and April tears came into her eyes. "I—I think I had better go and look at the Times, and see whether anybody is in want of a governess."

She was going back dejectedly, her eyes bent on the ground, when just as she reached the outside of the French window the object of her thoughts appeared on the inner side.

"Lilian!" he exclaimed, and there was no mistaking the eagerness of his tone.

"Alan!" she cried, startled into a momentary forgetfulness of what she ought to have said.

He sprang forward, and seized both her hands in his. "My own!"

"What have I said!" she cried in a lovely confusion. "Do please let me go, Captain Marmaduke," and she tried to take back her captive hands.

"Not till you have said that name again." His long brown fingers still held her fast.

"It was a mistake. I did not know what I was saying. Indeed I must go. I—I am wanted indoors."

"You must not go till I have told you all I want to say. Lilian, I love you! Will you be mine?"

It would appear that Captain Marmaduke had the faculty of stating a case clearly, and in the fewest possible words.

No beating about the bush with him evidently.

Lilian was all in a tremble. Her face was white enough now.

"Yours!" she contrived to stammer out after a moment or two of silence.

"Your——"

"My wife."

Again silence. Then in a whisper so faint that he could scarcely hear the words:

"Can you be in earnest?"

"Never more so in my life."

"It seems like a dream."

"Say yes, and make it a reality."

She did not speak; her eyes were bent on the ground; her heart was beating painfully; her hands were still in bondage.

"Lily, look into my eyes and answer me. Will you have me for your husband?"

Timidly, yet gladly, came the low-breathed answer: "Yes—yes." But there was a little sob in her voice for all that.

"My own darling!" The flame of love alight in his dark eyes leapt yet higher. He drew her fondly to him.

"No three years' marriage system for us," continued Marmaduke. "Our union must be for life or not at all." Tenderly between his hands he took the sweet young face that was turned up so lovingly to his own. He kissed the softly trustful eyes, he kissed the glowing cheeks, he kissed her lips. Evidently he was a greedy man, this Alan Marmaduke. It is sad to be compelled to write that he was not repulsed.

"The old she-dragon, as I live!" exclaimed Marmaduke suddenly, as Mrs. Wapshot came round the corner. And incontinently he fled. All men are cowards, it is said, and apparently he was no exception to the rule.

"I hope I am not interrupting," said Mrs. Wapshot grimly.

"Not at all," answered Lilian hurriedly; but in truth she was too confused to know what she said.

"Beware, my dear, beware! All men are libertines at heart, and this stranger from over the seas—what do we really know about him? For your own sake you must be got out of harm's way."

Here Mrs. Wapshot coughed and began to fumble in a voluminous pocket.

"I have not been unmindful of your interests. I have here a note from Lady Glendower. Her invalid daughter is in want of a companion. Just the sort of situation you are fitted for. I have already

replied to her ladyship, and accepted it in your name."

By this time Lilian had recovered from her confusion. Her spirit was up in arms.

"A thousand thanks, my dear Mrs. Wapshot," she replied in her most dulcet tones. "I hope her ladyship won't be disappointed when she hears that I have already accepted another situation."

"Another situation, child!"

"Yes, that of Captain Marmaduke's promised wife."

"What! You don't mean to tell me you are going to marry that man?"

"Indeed, but I hope I am going to marry that man."

For a moment or two Mrs. Wapshot was speechless. Then she said, shaking her lean forefinger in the girl's face:

"Lilian Ramsay, you will repent this rash and ill-advised step to your dying day. You may depend upon it, that man left four or five black wives behind him among the savages."

"Poor things! How I pity them!" answered Lilian sweetly. "They will never—never see him again." And making Mrs. Wapshot one of her most demure curtsies, she turned, without another word, and fled indoors.

"Well, of all the artful young minxes!" muttered the discomfited matron to herself when she found herself thus unceremoniously left alone. "The world is coming to a pretty pass when I'm to be talked to in that style. I must go and tell Vere and Cuthbert the news."

CHAPTER X.

THE verandah and the terrace in front of it had not been left to solitude more than a few minutes when Linda and Cecil came strolling back cosily arm-in-arm.

"You shall smoke as much as you like and as often as you like," Linda was saying.

"Just as I was thinking of cutting down my smoke one-half!"

"You must not do anything of the kind, dear, because—because"—this, in a confidential whisper—"I am learning to smoke myself."

Cecil turned and faced his wife in sheer astonishment. "The deuce you are!" he said slowly.

"Only the most tiny, delicious, perfumed cigarettes imaginable. From Spain, you know. All Spanish ladies smoke, don't they?"

"But you are an English lady."

"There, now, I believe you are angry. When I thought I was doing my best to please you!"

"Imitation the sincerest form of flattery—eh? Do you happen to have any of those tiny, delicious, perfumed trifles about you?"

"Here are all I have," answered Linda, putting into his hand an embroidered cigarette-case.

"Allow me to take charge of them," he said as he dropped the case into his pocket. "And I think, if I were you, I wouldn't smoke any more of them till I found myself in Spain."

"Very well, Cecil. But you will kiss me to show you are not angry."

His answer was, not one kiss but two.

"I have something here that I am positive will please you," resumed Linda, when that little ceremony had been satisfactorily gone through.

"Eh?" asked Cecil a little dubiously.

"A silver latch-key, dear. I had it made six months ago, but we had one or two little tiffs about that time, and I didn't give it you. But now that my own one is coming back to me, here it is."

Cecil took the key, turned it over in his hand, and looked at it doubtfully.

"No, Linda, you sha'n't put such a temptation into my pocket," he said. "Take it back and keep it till I ask you for it."

"Yes, Cecil, of course, if you wish it; but it seems as if I had no confidence in you, when I have."

"More, perhaps, than I have in myself. But these concessions must not be all on your side. I'll—yes, I'll go with you to a classical concert, now and then, and try my hardest to like it."

"You dear, darling old boy!"

"And if, sometimes, when they are deep in a symphony, or far gone in a sonata, you see my eyes gradually close, and my head begin to nod, a pinch in the soft part of the arm will never fail to bring me round."

"As if I could bear to hurt my pet!"

"And—yes, by Jove! you shall buy as much old crockery as you like."

"Old crockery, dear!"

"Ceramic stuff, you know—hideous cups and saucers, cracked plates, idiotic teapots, monsters from Japan. You shall fill the house with them!"

"How kind of you—how noble!"

While talking, they had strolled a little way down the lawn. They now sat down side by side on a rustic seat.

"For all the world like our courting days over again," murmured Linda in a tone of perfect contentment.

"There they are," whispered Cuthbert to his father, as the two emerged from one of the winding walks. "I've been watching them for the last half-hour. I saw him put his arm round her waist and kiss her, and look how they are sitting now. They—they can't have made it up again—eh?"

The two men stared blankly at each other for a few moments.

"We will soon find out," said the elder one. "You remain here."

With that, he advanced across the grass and touched Dane lightly on the shoulder.

"Ha, ha, not gone yet!" he said pleasantly. "I thought you were miles away by this time. Your friend Elliott will wonder what has become of you."

"I've changed my mind; I'm not going," answered Cecil. "By Jove! though, I had forgotten about Elliott. I must send him a telegram."

"Not going!" exclaimed Naylor, aghast. Mr. Dane shook his head.

"And there is something else that you will be still more pleased to hear," remarked Linda with a saucy triumph in her eyes.

"What may that be, madam!—what may that be?"

"That I have just had an offer of marriage."

"An offer! You!"

"Why not I as well as anyone else? And what is more, I've not said 'no.' Don't blush, dear," she added, turning to Cecil.

Not that there was the remotest probability of that cool individual doing anything of the kind.

Mr. Naylor stared from one to the other.

"You don't mean to say that you are going to re-marry each other?" he gasped out.

"That is precisely what we are going to do," responded Dane, gazing at him blandly through his eyeglass.

Tears had not been so close to Mr. Naylor's eyes since the days when he was birched at school as they were at the present moment.

"My dear madam, my dear Dane," he exclaimed with a sort of comic pathos, "let me beg of you to pause, to—hesitate, to reconsider your decision, before making up your minds to do anything so utterly rash and ill-advised. If you must

marry again, marry somebody else. There are plenty of other people in the world. It will be wrong, it will be revolutionary, it will be 'bad form.' Think what the verdict of society will be. Above all, why deliberately make yourselves unhappy again!"

Linda shook her pretty head, utterly unconvinced.

"We have decided that it is better to be unhappy together than miserable apart."

Mr. Naylor could only throw up his hands, give utterance to a groan, and go back disconsolately to his son.

"A brace of arrant fools," was his remark to the latter. "Nothing to be done in that quarter. Your only chance is with the other one."

"I am not sorry. If I have a preference in the matter it is for Mrs. Elliott-Temple."

"And her fortune is not much less than that of Mrs. Dana. Suppose we go and consult your mother. She has a fine fund of common-sense when one can get her away from that entomological hobby of hers."

"And can't we re-marry till the end of six months?" asked Linda with a little quaver in her voice.

"The law says we cannot."

"Then the law's a great stupid."

"Other people have had reason to make the same remark."

"Why can't all the months be as short as February?" sighed Linda.

Mr. Jellicop and Marmaduke came strolling across the grass together.

"There's no one, Marmaduke, to whom I would give my Lily sooner than to you," said the former.

"The future will prove that your confidence has not been misplaced."

Linda and Cecil had risen, and the four now met face to face.

"So, so," said Jellicop, "these are the young idiots, are they, who have had sense enough, at the last moment, to see the folly of their ways?"

"Yes, uncle, we have come to our senses at last."

"And is it really true that you have fallen in love with each other over again?"

"Quite true—isn't it, Cis?"

"Dreadful case of spoons, really," responded Cecil the serene.

"Are you not glad, uncle?"

"Very glad indeed, my dear." And with that he gave her one of his hearty old-fashioned kisses. "I only hope the

lesson won't be thrown away on either of you. If only Elliott and Agnes would follow suit, I should be one of the happiest fellows in Christendom."

It almost seemed as if Agnes might have overheard his words, for next moment she emerged from the house, and came down the verandah steps arm-in-arm with Lillian, Mrs. Wapshot following closely behind.

"Why, little white-face, I thought you were told that you had no business out of your room?" said her uncle with an unwonted tenderness in his voice.

"She is so headstrong, that there is no doing anything with her," interpolated Mrs. Wapshot in her most acidulated tones.

"When I heard of Lillian's happiness, it brought back my loss so keenly, that I felt I must see her and talk to her," said Agnes, as she gazed with wistful sorrow-charged eyes into her uncle's face. "And Linda and Cecil too. Oh, uncle, why did you let Stephen go before I could ask him to forgive me, before I could tell him——"

Suddenly she stopped. She had heard a sound unheard by any of the others. Her face changed on the instant. It was as though another woman had stepped suddenly into her place. Her eyes went out to meet the coming footsteps, and the eyes of all there, magnetised by hers, followed the same direction.

A moment later, and Stephen Elliott, his travelling cape thrown over his arm, appeared round the left wing of the house. He had driven from the station, and had been told that he would find Mr. Jellicop on the lawn.

At sight of him Agnes took a step or two forward with outstretched arms.

"Stephen! Husband!" she cried.

Only those two words; but there was a world of pathetic meaning in the way they were uttered.

Mrs. Wapshot laid a hand lightly on her arm.

"You forget yourself, child; you have no husband."

"And Elliott no wife," added Mr. Naylor, who had appeared as if by magic on the scene.

Elliott came forward, and turning to Jellicop, not without a certain sternness, said:

"What trickery is this, sir? I was telegraphed for; told that she," pointing to Agnes, "was ill—perhaps dying. I am at a loss to know why I have been fetched back."

"There is no trickery in the affair at

all," answered the squire with a red spot burning in each cheek. "That's a kind of commodity I'm not in the habit of dealing in. It was I who sent for you. If your wife is not dying, she is breaking her heart, and that comes to pretty much the same thing."

"Breaking her heart!" said Stephen incredulously.

Agnes drew a step or two nearer to him.

"Stephen!"

Truly it sounded like the cry of one whose heart was breaking.

But he only drew back a little and said coldly:

"I am here."

Agnes shivered slightly, as if suddenly smitten by an icy wind. Controlling herself by a supreme effort, she said:

"Will you not listen to what I have to say? I will not detain you long."

Stephen bowed a grave assent, but did not speak.

"When, this morning, my senses came back to me," said Agnes, "and I found that you had gone, and when I thought that I might never see you again, the scales seemed to fall from my eyes. I saw things as I had never seen them before. I saw what a weak, wicked, and selfish creature I had been—I say this openly before all now present. I saw how I had ruined my home, wrecked my happiness, and changed my husband's love to gall. And all because I was tormented by a foolish jealousy which I knew in my heart to have no foundation in fact. Then I felt that it would kill me if you left me for ever without saying that you forgave me. Leave me, if it must be so, but do not go till you have said: 'Agnes, you are forgiven!'"

All Stephen Elliott's sternness, which was far more assumed than real, had vanished long before Agnes ended her appeal. Various conflicting emotions—surprise, pity, love, joy—vibrated in his heart and shone out of his eyes as he listened.

"If I dared but believe——" he said, and then he hesitated and was silent.

Again the appealing arms went out towards him.

"You may believe!"

Her voice thrilled the hearts of her hearers strangely. Linda clung in tears to her husband's arm. Lilian was crying silently. Jellicop's hand had found the hand of Marmaduke and grasped it tightly. Even Vere Naylor fumbled for his handkerchief.

"Is there no such thing as repentance? Oh, Stephen, believe me that I do repent with all my heart!"

The words were scarcely out of her mouth before Stephen's arms were round her and his lips pressed fondly to hers.

"Let all the unhappy past be forgotten and as though it had never been," he said.

"And am I to be yours again, never to part from you?" she asked, a great wonder and gladness shining out of her face.

Solemnly yet tenderly he gazed upon her.

"Mine, never to part from me again."

"The lesson they have learned to-day will not readily be forgotten," said Jellicop to Marmaduke.

"If this sort of thing becomes common, my Marriage Act will turn out to be a dead letter," remarked Naylor grimly.

"They can't re-marry for six months—that's one comfort," said Cuthbert gloomily.

Mrs. Wapshot nodded her head as one who knows.

"Let them bide a wee," she said. "They will be tired of each other again long before then."

Jellicop slapped the Member for Fudgington on the shoulder.

"Naylor," said he, in his bluff hearty voice, "we'll have up a magnum of 'fifty-eight port to drink health and happiness to the young folk and confusion to your New Marriage Act!"

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER VIII. A MOTHER'S APPEAL.

FOR a moment or two Elsie looked crest-fallen; habit is potent with us all, and for a few years she had been in the habit of speaking in lowered tones whenever she knew that "the missus" was within ear-shot. Now she could not help feeling a little shocked that her jeremiad against the bold invader, Minnie Thurtle, should have been overheard by her former mistress. But after a moment or two this feeling of shock passed off, and she felt grimly exultant that her burst of eloquence in aid of the proprietries had fallen upon ears that surely would be sympathetic.

But if Elsie deemed that her former play and school fellow, Minnie Thurtle, would now without fail meet with well-deserved punishment and downfall, she was bitterly mistaken. Minnie might have failed to extricate herself from the difficult situation had Jenifer's eyes been upon her. But under old Mrs. Ray's affrighted and perplexed gaze she speedily recovered from the severe but momentary shock.

"I've just come up with a message from father to Mr. Jack, mum," she said glibly, dropping an almost imperceptible curtsy as she spoke; "father's mad almost, he's so vexed about it, and he thought Mr. Jack ought to know of it at once."

"What is it, Minnie?" old Mrs. Ray asked, accepting Minnie's insinuating explanation of her presence in the farmhouse kitchen with a readiness that made Elsie morally grind her teeth.

"It's those poaching chaps, the Mitchells, mum; father is always coming across them and their lurchers in the woods, and he

says they're a bad lot, and the sooner they're out of the parish the better."

"You weren't so ready to tell on them when you and Bill Mitchell kept company," Elsie said savagely, for she saw that justice was being averted from the offender, on whom she did virtually desire to see condign punishment fall.

"Hush! Elsie," old Mrs. Ray said gently; "how often have I asked you not to indulge in a quarrelsome spirit? Well, Minnie, I will tell Mr. Jack what your father says, though I am very sorry to hear it. I always thought the Mitchells such a nice, well-conducted family."

"They're bad root and branch, mum, father says," Minnie answered with suave spleen. For Elsie was generally understood to have tender yearnings towards that very Bill Mitchell whom Minnie had thrown over. Then feeling that she no longer had any fair excuse for staying, Minnie picked up a little basket which always accompanied her, and took a self-possessed, respectful leave of Mr. Jack's mother.

But for all her outward self-possession, Minnie's soul quailed as she went away leaving her former friend, and now bitterest foe, in possession. She knew if the flood-gates of Elsie's speech were once opened, and her praiseworthy awe of old Mrs. Ray once overcome, that "black" would not be a colour dark enough in which to delineate her (Minnie's) delinquencies. Nevertheless, though this knowledge pressed sore upon her, she managed to walk away with a firm step and a head erect, for she had a very sustaining secret.

"It don't matter much," Minnie said, tossing her head contemptuously to the surrounding scenery, as she made her way out from the farmhouse, ignominiously, by the back-door; "Jack says he'll have them behave as if they thought me as good as

themselves, and if that proud minx Jenifer gives herself any airs, her brother won't speak to her, that's all. Mrs. Hubert's the only one I care tuppence for, and she's a real lady, and her and I'll be great friends."

So Miss Minnie Thurtle carried her basket of eggs jauntily enough.

Meantime old Mrs. Ray nearly caused Elsie to die of stifled fury by refraining from asking a single question or offering a single remark relative to Minnie Thurtle's visit to the home-farm. To Elsie's righteous indignation old Mrs. Ray merely cheerfully announced her intention of looking over the house without asking Elsie to accompany her.

"I thought missus would ha' plucked up spirit to say suthing when she saw that thing here," the aggrieved serving-maid said to herself as she plunged into her bread again, and kneaded it with a vigour that almost awoke consciousness in the dough. But as "missus" declined the combat, Elsie had no appeal, and Minnie's shortcomings were not dragged into the fierce light which shines upon everyone who is suspected by an anxious mother.

Old Mrs. Ray took her way hopefully into the dining-room first. She expected to find it insufficiently furnished with old-fashioned, genuine, good odd tables and chairs which had been sent down from Moor Royal. To her surprise—to her anything but pleased surprise—she found the room gleaming with new, shiny, Tottenham Court Road polished oak of a misguided early English order. Antimacassars of white cotton, crocheted into various inartistic but elaborate designs, decorated the backs of the sofa and armchairs. The mantelpiece was adorned with a brace of big Birmingham Bohemian glass vases, an intensely yellow gilt clock, and—the photograph of Minnie Thurtle framed in old-gold plush.

In a minute all the fell possibilities of the case flashed upon the mother. The dining-room was decorated by the taste of the keeper's daughter, and the youngest son of Ray of Moor Royal was going to disgrace his family by marrying beneath him!

Old Mrs. Ray was a very loving mother, but she was also a proud woman. It had never occurred to her as being within the bounds of possibility that either one of her children could possibly do anything at which the most rigorous stickler for social status could look askance. And now, all in a moment, the fell truth was flashed in

upon her mind that Jack was going to link himself with the lower classes, and that his children would be as closely related by the ties of blood to the game-keeper Thurtle as they would be to herself.

Sudden as the revelation was, it was very complete. She remembered Jenifer's strong but hitherto inexplicable aversion to Minnie, and acknowledged that Jenifer had good cause for disliking the girl and wishing to separate Jack from all Thurtle associations.

In her misery, old Mrs. Ray thought, as her daughter had thought before her, that if anyone could pluck Jack back from the edge of this precipice, it would be that good, true, wise friend on whom her husband had always so greatly relied—Mr. Boldero.

She would get herself driven over to see him this very day, she resolved; and then she made a sorrowful progress over the rest of the house, and found it to be fully furnished in the flashiest style.

She could not trust herself to see Elsie and say any word to her after this. It was all too painfully, horribly evident. The house had been vulgarly prepared for a vulgar woman, and this woman was going to be her son's wife, and might be the mother of her son's children.

It nearly broke her heart.

The way back to Moor Royal, though the distance was in reality short, seemed endless to old Mrs. Ray this day. Her feet seemed weighted by the sorrow at her heart. This miserable marriage would be the cause of estrangement between the boy who was dear as only a son can be to his mother, and all his kith and kin. And the evil might not even end here. The misalliance might, probably would—nay, certainly would injure Jenifer's prospects.

The mother's heart beat quicker than ever with indignation against Minnie and her wiles, as this view of the case presented itself before her.

She had reached the plantation that skirted the Moor Royal gardens as her reflections reached this point, and taking a narrow path that ran through it, and was a short cut to the house, she came full upon Thurtle, the keeper.

For an instant she thought of turning sharply aside, and of letting him pass unnoticed. But her spirit rose and her determination changed when she marked the jaunty air of assurance which the hitherto subservient keeper put on at sight of her.

"Thurtle," she said, speaking in her

ordinary gentle, gracious, gentlewoman's accents, but with the light of recently aroused wrathful pride in her eyes—"Thurtle, I have just discovered something which has distressed and angered me more than any other circumstance of my life."

"Sorry to hear it, ma'am; but I know of nothing that need give you uneasiness. I always gave great satisfaction to the late master, and if there's any fault to be found with the dooty done in my department, Mr. Hubert—leastways, Mr. Ray—is my master now."

"I never interfered with my husband's servants, and I should never dream of doing so with my son's," she said, still speaking very quietly, but with just a touch of hauteur creeping into her tones, as she felt the man was going to trade over the power wielded by his daughter. "What has distressed and angered me is a concern of yours as well as of mine. I have been down to the home-farm to Mr. Jack's house, and I found your daughter there wrangling with the servant and striving to exercise authority. I found her likeness framed in a prominent place. Surely you, as her father, must know that either this will tend to her disgrace or his!"

"Minnie isn't one ever to disgrace herself, Mrs. Ray—don't you go and imply that, if you please," he replied with a tinge more insolence in his manner. "Whatever is between them—and I'm not going to deny that there is something—is all fair and above-board. Mr. Jack is courting my Minnie to make her his wife, and he might have looked far and near for a handsomer one and not have found her."

"And you, her father, justify this course? It seems incredible that you should support her in a course that will bring misery upon both of them. Do you realise that this marriage, if it does unfortunately ever take place, will separate my son from his family and from friends of his own class? What can she give him that will compensate for this social degradation?"

"She've given him her love. I fancy he thinks that enough."

She was nearly breaking forth into a tempest of tears, but she restrained herself, and spoke with sorrowful dignity to the last.

"I did hope that regard for a master whom you served for so many years would

have stopped you from giving a helping hand to the downfall of his son. This is very bitter to me, Thurtle. I believed that you would have used your influence with your daughter to spare them both the certain misery which must ensue from such a wretchedly unequal marriage."

"Minnie's of age, Mrs. Ray, and I can't lock her up, and it's no use my trying to thwart her. Perhaps I'm no more anxious that she should marry a gentleman and be looked down on by all his folks than you are that your son should marry my girl; but that's neither here nor there. Jack"—old Mrs. Ray shrank as if from a blow at the ruthless familiarity—"Jack and Minnie have made up their minds they'll get married. They will, whether all the rest go down on their bended knees to stop it or not. And she won't be beholden to any one but her own father for comforts in her house, for I've saved a tidy bit of money, and Minnie has had what she wants of it to furnish the home-farmhouse. So she won't be beholden to any one what looks down on her for a bit of tidy comfort in her house."

Mrs. Ray bent her head in token that she dismissed him and his subject from her path for the present, and passed on.

And Thurtle, a little discomfited by the silent reception his last vaunt had met with, went on his way, shaking his head knowingly at intervals, but in reality feeling rather at sea.

"If his ma gets hold of him before Minnie sees him to-day, Jack may be worked on to behave dishonourable; but if he do, I'll take the law of him—I'll take the law of him," Thurtle repeated again and again to himself, thinking the while with grim satisfaction that he could do so with impunity, as Minnie had been discreet enough to lodge all Mr. Jack's impassioned written protestations in his paternal hands.

It was terrible to old Mrs. Ray as she went into the house, to think of the long solitary day that was before her. She could not reasonably expect Jenifer back till late, though Jenifer had expressed a doubt as to her following the hounds. Still, the temptation would be strong upon the girl to do so when once she faced the old familiar sights and sounds of the field.

And even if she did come home before the others, what would it avail? The miserable, disappointed, heart-sore mother would only hear from Jenifer that which her own motherly heart knew already,

namely, that Jack was about to destroy himself in the world.

Not that old Mrs. Ray feared for a moment that there would be any harshness in the words which her daughter would use about her son. Jenifer, like herself, would love Jack to the last, but there would be shame and sorrow mingled with the love.

As she sat alone brooding over this new trouble, a dozen unpleasant pictures painted and protruded themselves vividly before her. Jack, with his half-cultured mind and buoyant spirit, would take to lower forms of excitement than those to which he had been accustomed under the home-rule. Jack's wife would be a Ray, and would fight for the recognition and status that had always been accorded to the Rays. Jack's children, if he had any, would probably inherit quite as much of the bold, dark, unrefined beauty of their mother, as of the blonde, aristocratic, good looks of their father. They would be her grandchildren, too, whatever else they might be, and she would love them, and pity them, and not be able to pleasantly deceive them into thinking that she loved their mother.

Ah, to which of her sons, to which of her daughters-in-law should she turn for help, comfort, and loving sympathy in the days of old age which were coming? It was beginning to be clear even to her love-blinded eyes, that not only was Effie careless of the happiness and comfort of others, but that she was weaning Hubert to her ways, and making him indifferent to his mother and sister. But this, though hard to bear, was not so grievous to old Mrs. Ray, as was the prospect of Minnie Thurtle for a daughter-in-law. Effie was a gentlewoman, and a very fascinating one, too; the sort of woman, in fact, who, if she murdered one, would do it with a highly-polished rapier. But Minnie, with her unrefined good looks and florid, gaudy mien, her plebeian self-complacency and uncultured mind and tastes, would always be a source of heart-burning and bitter mortification to the mother of the man who married her.

After sitting with her usually busy hands idle before her for some time, the resolution she had come to while walking home returned in full force, namely, to go without delay and plead for Mr. Boldero's intervention.

It was long since she had ordered a carriage round for her own use. In these

latter days, whenever she could be induced to go out, Jenifer had driven her in the pony-trap with fat little Nettle between the shafts. But this day she thought she would go in greater state, and so have a better effect on the man whom she desired to gain to her cause, than if she went to him in a little insignificant village-cart. Accordingly she ordered the landau, and soon learnt to her surprise that "Mrs. Ray had given express orders that the carriage-horses should only be exercised, not used, during any of her absences!"

It was hard, but of course the horses were Hubert's now, and Hubert's wife had an undeniable right to do as she pleased with them. It was a slight to her, the widowed mother, that such an order should have been given, but it was well she should learn to endure slights patiently. After all, she could drive Nettle, and be independent! So thinking, she ordered the pony-trap, and was told that the coachman had driven Mrs. Ray's maid into Exeter to do some shopping for her mistress.

It was hard! But she must get used to hardships! Fortunately before she had time to brood over this reflection, Jenifer came home, and old Mrs. Ray felt strengthened to bear whatever might be before her, as in response to her pitiful story of the discovery she had this morning made, Jenifer gave her heartfelt sympathy.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

CHESHIRE. PART I.

WITH all its wealth and prosperity there is perhaps something stern and sad—or if not sad, anyhow anxious and careworn—in the genius of Lancashire; but in Cheshire we have something quite different. With fat pastures and green meadows, the kine meditating in luxurious idleness, the smell of hay, the aroma of the rich milk-pails; a land of summer and sunshine, fertile, bountiful, a very land of promise; while beyond are the blue distant mountains of Wales, beautiful blue mountains that inspire an indefinite longing for pilgrimage, and distant mountains supply an element of contrast that corrects the almost oppressiveness of all this exuberant fertility. A little slice this still left of old and merry England, with its stout yeomen and farmers and long descended squires; with a good deal of the old intimate bond of lords and homagers still in force; and many of the

gay customs of former times, if not actually existing, yet only just now passed away. Nowhere else in England are feasts and wakes kept up with as much of primitive spirit. May-poles have been heard of within memory of man, objected to by divines not long deceased as savouring too much of the heathen worship of the goddess Flora, while mummers and morris-dancers linger perhaps still in nooks and corners. Here, too, the poor go "a souling," that is, begging, at Hallowtide—a curious relic of the old faith—for money for masses for the dead on the eve of All Souls Day, the French "jour des morts," when in the old days we were wont to visit the graveyards and carry wreaths and posies to deck the tombs of our dead. We can't spare the dead one day a year now; and yet curiously enough the custom has sprung up again in America—a new growth not connected with the ancient faith, but arising from the custom of decorating the graves of the soldiers who fell in the war of secession. This souling is just a pretext for begging now, but is carried on by people who would be ashamed to beg at other times. Formerly the Welsh used to cross the borders in great numbers begging at Christmas and Hallowtide, and perhaps the practice is not entirely discontinued even now. This practice is connected with the ancient belief that a mass paid for by charity is much more efficacious than any other; a belief still current in Normandy, where quite well-to-do people are often to be found begging for money to pay for a mass for a sick child, perhaps.

A certain robust faith, indeed, seems always to have characterised the Cheshire folk, with many other amiable qualities. "The people of nature very gentle and courteous," writes the historian of Vale Royal in the middle of the sixteenth century; "in religion very zealous, howbeit addicted to superstition which cometh through want of preaching." There is no want of preaching in the present day, and yet, perhaps, superstition is not entirely eradicated. "Of stomach, stout, bold, and hardy," goes on our writer, while to complete the picture and make his readers envious of the stout men of Cheshire, he adds, "Likewise be the women very friendly and loving," of a rich and fruitful nature like their soil, indeed, both men and women.

But, in adopting modern usages, the Cheshire people have always been behind-hand. "In building, till of late years," to

quote from the same author, "they used the old manner of the Saxons. For they had the fire in the middle of the house against a hob of clay, and their oxen also under the same roof, but within these forty years it is altogether altered, for that they have builded chimneys," etc. At that date, and, indeed, till recent times, all the labour on the farms was done with oxen: great, wide-horned, patient, stubborn creatures, of which, perhaps, a team here and there may still be met with in the Cheshire lanes. These oxen, as we see above, were formerly literally housed with the farmer and his family during the winter; but now the kine were left in the fields, the farms being mostly pasture, and the great result of farming, then as now, being milk and cheese. They had no notion of cheese factories in those days, such as are now springing up in Cheshire, after American models, where the milk of many farms is collected and manufactured into cheese. But in their cool old-fashioned dairies the Cheshire house-wives could turn out splendid golden butter, and cheese of that ruddy hue and rich flavour which have made the county famous, without the aid of anatto or other pigments. "They make great store of butter and cheese, so that no other country in the realm may compare therewith, nor yet beyond the seas; no, not Holland in goodness, although in quantity it far exceed," again to quote our seventeenth century author, and he notes how Cheshire shares in the great wave of wealth and prosperity that, in spite of civil wars and the embroilment of the ruling classes, transformed the face of England during the seventeenth century. "Divers men which are but farmers, in their housekeeping may compare"—like the yeoman of Kent—"with a lord or baron in some countreys beyond the seas. Yea, although I named a higher degree, I were able to justifie it."

But in entering this promised land of Cheshire from the Mersey ferry, we first encounter a kind of rival Liverpool, with docks and tramways, with the rattle of thousands of hammers in the ship-building yards. Hence sailed out the Alabama on her trial trip, the custom-house authorities calling out in vain "Come back," as her trial trip lengthened out into that adventurous cruise that cost us such a nice little sum in millions later on. But Chester is our aim, ancient Chester, and to reach it, the peninsula of Wirral must be traversed from end to end, with passing glimpses on

our way of the great basin of the Mersey on one hand, its slopes covered with villas and mansions, and the waters sprinkled far and near with white sails, while steamers leave a continuous trail of smoke. On the other hand lies the great sandy estuary of the Dee, stretching away towards Flint, with something of a haven, though a sandy one, at Parkgate, where the good citizens of Chester resort to eat shrimps and inhale the sea breezes. Here and there some trading brig or stone-laden barge may be seen working its way along the winding channel; but the Dee, although finer as a river than the Mersey (which is but a two-penny affair when it ceases to be tidal), has had its good times in the past, and, in spite of cuts and navigations, plays but an insignificant part in the commerce of to-day.

The peninsula of Wirall, that divides Dee from Mersey—at one time, it is surmised that a channel connected the two rivers—is compared by our old friend above quoted, in shape to “the sole of a lady’s left foot pantofle,” a comparison that shows how very much more on Nature’s lines was the pantofle of our old writer’s days than the lady’s slipper of the present; resembling, indeed, rather the Indian moccasin than the sharp-toed variety now known. But taking the natural shape of the foot, undistorted by the shoemaker’s art, the comparison is not a bad one. New Brighton is at the big toe and Chester at the heel, while the inward sweep of the instep—it is a left foot pantofle, mark you, a right one would have made all the difference in the world, would have left Liverpool a village, and made Chester an imperial port, for this inward sweep on the Liverpool side of the pantofle goes to form the vast basin whose pent-up waters, rushing out with each ebb-tide, scour the narrow neck of the Mersey better than a whole fleet of dredges, while for want of this continual scour, having only the straight outward edge of the pantofle, again following Nature’s lines and not the shoemaker’s art, poor Chester and its river have been hopelessly drifted up.

We may be grateful that Chester has continued in its modest estate of county town, confined pretty much within its ancient limits, within the compass of its fine old walls. Walls and gates, and general aspect, perhaps, not far different from the scene that the sentinel looked upon—Syrian, perhaps, or Phœnician—as he watched over Deva and its twentieth

legion, and the little fleet of galleys that lay anchored in the port, the river winding at its will, in the distance the soft profiles of the hills of wild Dimetia, that might remind him, perhaps, of the purple peaks of his own Lebanon, while the peaceful city slept securely within its walls. On these walls, too, what a gathering of British wives and maidens, as they watched their men marching tumultuously out to fight the hated Saxon, when as Baeda tells us, “The warlike king of the Angles, Ethelfrith, having raised a mighty army, made a very great slaughter of that perfidious nation, the Britons, at the City of Legions, which by the English is called Legacester, but by the Britons, more rightly, Carlegion,” a slaughter, too, not only of the fighting men, but of priests and monks, who had come in swarms from their great monastery of Bangor, a now unimportant village a dozen miles or so higher up the river, to pray for the success of their countrymen.

Whether, after this terrible defeat, Chester was again occupied by the Welsh is an uncertain point in its history. Certainly the tide of conquest swept backwards and forwards many times before the aggressive and progressive Angles fairly established themselves in the fat plains of Cheshire, giving the land their own names, with their “hams” and “tons,” replacing the graceful Celtic nomenclature, and only ancient Dee retaining its Celtic and classic title. The city is described as waste by the Saxon chronicler at the time an army of marauding Danes took possession of it in the ninth century, although it is difficult to believe that the site was ever entirely deserted, admirably situated as it is for a meeting-place and market for the people of the hills and the plains. But, anyhow, Chester may look reverently back to Ethelfleda, the daughter of Alfred the Great, as its practical founder and regenerator, “made it nigh two such as it was before,” says the old historian of Chester, although traces of Roman foundations here and there in the walls tend to negative this statement. But a marvellous sight must have been that procession of the royal barge—the famous eight-oared barge of which King Edgar was coxswain, with a tributary prince at each oar—starting from Edgar’s Field, as it is still called, where the ancient palace stood beneath the castle walls, and landing by the monastery of St. John’s outside the city. This is a course that no man can row at this day; for, when the Normans

conquered Chester, William's nephew, Hugh of Avranches, was made earl over the county, and built the weir between the two points whose waters make such a pleasant rushing sound—a thirst-inducing murmur—a thirst there are innumerable means of quenching in the form of little ale-houses, the more primitive with a chequered board on each side of the doorway. Hugh, too, was a thirsty soul and a jolly—not a monkish man at all, except in as far as monks are of the quaffing and laughing order, although he founded here a Benedictine monastery in the old Saxon secular foundation of St. Werburgh, bringing the monks over from Bec Hellouin, in the pleasant valley of the Rille in Normandy. Very fat and jolly was this Hugh Lupus, wolfish perhaps in getting was the great earl, who was almost an independent prince, with his little court of exchequer and his subject barons, and holding a tight hand on this refractory city of Chester. Perhaps Hugh was the original Miller of the Dee, if he were really the founder of the earl's mills, that are still grinding on with thunderous murmur, as the cool waters dash into their cavernous recesses. A pleasant view it is from the old Dee bridge, with its projecting piers dividing the swift current and its cool-looking, old-fashioned arches, and the great dusty mills thundering away at one end; a pleasant sight, too, is the rush of waters over the weir—a foaming cataract at times when the river is in flood and tide at ebb, while at very high tides again there is only a bar of agitated water to show that the weir exists. In quiet times, in the pool below, there is often a congress of silvery salmon waiting for the first flood through which they may cleave their way over the weir, and away to their haunts in quiet pools among the Welsh hills, and here there is a famous fishery producing a large annual revenue—practically the same fishery which was mentioned in Domesday, that Hugh, the earl, had, but higher up the river then, the weir being not perhaps then made, at Etone, where the Duke of Westminster lives now, and which brought the earl a thousand salmon yearly.

Overlooking old Dee bridge is the castle, though of the strong castle of Hugh Lupus, as of the mediæval buildings in general, hardly a stone remains in its place. Modern gaol, law courts, barracks, occupy the site, with an armoury that had once a narrow escape of being seized by the Fenians, who arrived in considerable numbers in the

guise of excursionists come to see the town. Once possessed of arms and ammunition, they were to have seized the railway to Holyhead, and the steamers there, and then sailed off to capture Dublin and the Lord Lieutenant by a coup de main. The scheme was clever, but somebody went and told, as usual, at the last moment, the authorities were on the alert, and the Fenian excursionists went back as they came.

Beyond the castle the walls look down on the green Roodee, about which the silver Dee takes a wide sweep, where a few cattle are now grazing, but which at race times—at least on the Cup Day—is crowded with booths and vehicles, and a dense human swarm—not so great a racing event as of old, this Chester Cup, but still with wide local celebrity. In old times no doubt the river ran close under the city walls, as the names Watergate and Water-tower still testify. The present racecourse was then a green island between two channels of the stream—a little chapel or oratory in the middle, with a celebrated rood or holy cross, the resort of pilgrims. Then, when Hugh Lupus made the weir and the mills, the course of the river changed, no doubt, by degrees, and the island was left high and dry—the rood, it seems, was transferred to St. John's—and presently the green meadows, which still retained the name of the Rood Eye, or Island, was found a convenient spot for races. It must be said, however, that there are Welshmen who will have none of this Saxon etymology, but declare that the place was known as Rhydd-ddu—the black or unlucky ford—and that the story about the rood and the island grew out of the name. Anyhow, of the crowds who throng to the races, few are likely to trouble themselves about the matter, or, indeed, as to the history of the races themselves, although their origin is very ancient and respectable. For races here can be traced back to A.D. 1512, and the bell and the bowl, to be run for on St. George's Day, were long carried in procession to the course with civic pomp.

Another interesting point on the walls is the Phoenix Tower—Phoenix from the device of some trade guild to which it had been assigned for defence, perhaps, and also, no doubt, for summer afternoon pipes and potations—looking over the somewhat Dutch landscape below, canal and red roofs, and a sleepy kind of activity. From this tower, as an inscription records,

Charles the First watched the fight on Rowton Moor, the Royalists trying to break through the besieging troops and relieve the city, while the Parliamentary army were resolute to prevent them, and, as the battle died away in the distance, the Royalists retiring defeated, so must the king's heart have sunk within him.

Upon the old cathedral, too, the walls look down, not long since threatening to tumble to pieces from sheer age and decay, but now quite renovated and renewed, with fragments of architecture dating from the time of Hugh Lupus, who, it will be remembered, was the founder of the abbey, and who, it is said, died within its walls in monkish habit, trusting to the cowl to cover all his sins and iniquities. A wealthy and powerful foundation this, whose last abbot at the time of dissolution, taking things in a calm and prudent way, became the dean of the new cathedral establishment. The abbot's lodging thus became the deanery by natural transition, and the conventual buildings were utilised for various ecclesiastical purposes—the custody of wills among others—and have survived in a more perfect state than most of the old abbey buildings throughout the country.

A postern-gate in the city walls near the abbey recalls the memory of the monks, for this postern was opened in the reign of Edward the First, to give the brethren access to their garden, the site of which is still known as the "Kale Yards."

Outside the walls stands another interesting church on a pleasant site overlooking the river—the old collegiate church of St. John, which might almost claim the dignity of a cathedral. For soon after the Conquest the Bishop of Lichfield migrated to Chester with his chapter, and established himself there for life. His successor, however, went back to the Midlands, and after that there was no other Bishop of Chester till Henry the Eighth's time. St. John's was formerly a church of much magnificence, but is now only partially restored from its ruins; the great central tower having shared the fate of so many of its brethren and come down with a crash in the sixteenth century. And so the chancel remains in ruins, while the nave has been restored, and is used as a parish church. But, for all its incompleteness, few churches can compare with it in historic interest. One of the earliest churches founded in England, it was a flourishing seat of religious life long before

the Conquest. Here landed King Edgar from his renowned excursion on the Dee with his crew of princes, and a goodly offering, no doubt, was laid upon the altar. And there is a tradition which tells how Harold, the last of the Saxon kings, escaping from the fatal fight at Senlac, made his way to Chester, and assuming the character of an anchorite, there ended his days in a little hermitage in the churchyard of St. John's. The story is of undoubted antiquity. Gerald, the Welsh priest, heard it in this very Chester, and repeats it, barely a century after the Conquest, when the event was still fresh in men's minds, although the actors in it had passed away; just as the French Revolution is to us now. It is the story repeated in so many forms about every hero of a lost cause. Popular affection will not let its heroes die, turning away from the plain truth as too sorrowful.

Another and still more fanciful tradition assigns the hermitage—an ancient building, without doubt, and likely enough the abode of an anchorite of old—to the Emperor Henry the Fifth, though what his majesty should be about in Chester does not appear. We may believe both stories if we like. Harold might have lived long enough to hand over the keys to his imperial successor.

But the great charm of Chester, after all, is its Rows, of which there is not the like in the civilised or uncivilised world. We may have piazzas, terraces, arcades, and old houses storey over storey overshadowing ancient streets, but in none of these shall we find quite the equivalent of the Chester Row. Perhaps Albert Smith's description of the rows is most understandable by the people who have not seen them: houses with a thoroughfare through the first-pair front: "Thy very streets are galleries." Then there are quaint staircases where other streets cross, and down to the street below—along which street a stranger might walk without noticing the curious pathway above—a pathway so cool and shaded, with quaint glimpses into the sunlit world outside, picturesque curved gables and twisted balustrades, that it is quite a disenchantment to come out into full daylight again. There are little bits and fragments of rows anywhere about the city, but they are only seen to perfection in the chief thoroughfare that no doubt follows the line of the Roman main street from Eastgate to Watergate—where the

rows are occupied by some of the best shops in the city, with a general feeling of hoar antiquity, combined with modern plate-glass, and bright displays of trinkets and merceries; with bright eyes, too, and complexions of milk and roses, very friendly and loving, too, we will hope, as of old, to say nothing of the pretty children who run about and in and out, quite at home in all these passages and galleries.

Early in the century, before the age of railways, when Chester was a centre of provincial fashion (the magnates of North Wales holding their town houses in Chester as now in Tyburnia or Belgravia, with a great store of dowagers and spinsters of the chief families of Wales and Cheshire), these old rows would be alive at night with a press of sedan-chairs passing along to card-parties and assemblies. A great amusement of the mischievous boyhood of the period—described to the writer by an old boy who was then a young one—was to roam about at night armed with a stout pin set in a stick with which to prod the calves of the chairmen, the cream of the fun being the alarm of the dame within at the unlooked-for prancing of her human steeds, and their involuntary bad language. Retribution rarely followed, for it required a common consent between the two bearers of the chair to set it down, and by the time this was done, and their shoulders unyoked, their tormentors were far away, lost to sight in the deep shadows of ancient Chester.

But if in the later centuries Chester has been socially and politically the capital of North Wales, as well as the chief town of its own county, for long ages before a fierce irregular warfare had gone on between the citizens of Chester and the hardy warriors from those fastnesses among the blue hills. Like the Highlanders the Welsh were magnificent at a rush; like them, too, when they had made their pile of booty the war was over for them, and anybody else might fight it out. Thus, though at times they overran the country and reached up to the very walls of Chester, they never succeeded in penetrating to the guarded town within. And English domination crept gradually along the coast—a process indicated by English names of places interspersed with the Welsh—and wherever knights and men-at-arms could freely ride, and wherever a strong castle of stone could be built, to that extent the Welsh were curbed and driven back. Of these strong castles Hawarden

is the first on the line from Chester, with Rhuddlan in advance, the latter a grand fortress whose ruddy towers still rise magnificently over the little town.

It was early in the thirteenth century that Ranulph, Earl of Chester, a descendant of the Wolf of Avranches, but of quite a different temper from that dissolute old patriarch—a man indeed whom people called “the good,” who had fought valiantly for Christ’s sepulchre, and had come home to fight the Welsh; well, this Earl Ranulph, lying in his castle of Rhuddlan, then the advanced post of his earldom, was almost surprised by a sudden flood of Welsh, who carried fire and sword into the little town and surged against the strong walls of the castle; but failing in their rush, sitting patiently down to starve their enemy out. News of this was somehow brought to the citizens of Chester and their neighbours, then assembled at their great annual fair on John the Baptist’s Day, at Midsummer. The earl was popular and well-beloved, and one Ralph Dutton, son-in-law of the constable of the castle, called upon the people assembled at the fair to go out with him and fight against the Welsh. A motley crowd answered the appeal. Troubadours, jongleurs, mountebanks, all marched off tumultuously to the war, with Dutton at their head, and perhaps with some solid backbone of stout men-at-arms, and followed the road to Rhuddlan. Already the place had musical associations, for that sweet melancholy Welsh air “Morfa Rhuddlan” commemorates a defeat by Offa, the dyke-builder, of the Welsh, on that very spot. The tumult of the approaching host seems to have created a panic among the Welsh, who drew off without showing fight; and the popular earl was brought back to Chester in triumph, accompanied, no doubt, with musical honours. It is certain that the family of Dutton from that time forth had the privilege of granting licences to all wandering minstrels in the county, who long pursued their calling under the protection of the Duttons without fear of molestation by tything men or constables.

The Welsh have another story to tell, perhaps not without secret pride, a story which was long a source of bad blood between townfolk and hill-men. The Mayor of Chester, the story goes, went to the fair at Mold with his friends, and quarrelled with one Reinallt, the fierce lord of a neighbouring tower—it was during the Wars of the Roses, when law and justice

were in abeyance. Reinall thereupon seized the Mayor of Chester, and dragging him to his hold, hung him to a staple in the hall—the staple being still in evidence. The enraged Cestrians, two hundred strong, sallied out to avenge their mayor. But the cunning Reinall was not at home to receive them, and the men of Chester took possession of his tower without resistance. Once inside, however, they found themselves in a trap, the entrance made fast upon them, and flames bursting out in all directions from combustibles cunningly stored away by the chief, while, outside, the wild chief and his men formed a ring of steel, and thrust back upon the flames any who tried to escape. No man, it is said, returned to Chester to tell the tale, and wives and sweethearts watched and waited long in vain for those who would never come back to the town.

A HAUNTED ROOM.

WELL I know a haunted chamber, where the
tapestry is hanging
In tatters on the dusty wall, and trails upon the
floor,
Where dusky shadows glide and dance, the midnight
hours chasing,
Where moonbeams are like spirit forms, that wait
around the door.
When round the house, the wild north wind with
all its strength is moaning,
I hear soft footsteps gliding up the wide and
polished stair,
And a figure of a lady, clad in raiment grey and
flowing,
Seems to pass into the silence that reigns for ever
there.
Then I take my darling's hand in mine, and as the
shadow passes
The memory of a bygone crime doth rise from out
the gloom,
Though so long ago that lady lived, yet still her
weird she's dressing,
Still she walks, unresting, up and down that sad
old haunted room.
None can lay the poor pale spirit to the rest that
she is seeking,
None restore her to the quiet tomb, where still
her ashes lie,
She must wander ever restless, ever moaning in the
silence,
Dead to all she loved and worshipped, yet her sins
can never die !
Ah ! my sweetheart, you are happy, and I take your
hand and clasp it,
You hear no ghosts go walking in the stillness of
the night ;
And your pure young life, unsoiled by sin, flows in
an even cadence,
Your lovely soul lies open 'neath love's calm and
tranquil light.
If I have a haunted chamber, where remorse and
dread are walking,
Never ceasing with their footfalls that echo
through my brain,
I will keep it closely locked, my sweet, and go there
very seldom,
Nay ! if thus you love me evermore, I need not go
again !

Yet ghosts can "laugh at locksmiths," and when
we sit in silence,
My ghost in long grey garments ever stands my
chair beside,
And she whispers, "Thus I haunt you, thus I dog
you while you're living,
A sin once sinned must live for e'er. I never really
died."

I may shun my haunted chamber ; but the wind that
aye moans through it,
Breathes upon our lives and chills our blood, aye,
even at the feast,
For if we once possess a ghost, 'twill haunt us to
our dying,
And none can lay it to its rest, until our life has
ceased.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART I.

UPON the esplanade at Weymouth—the
old-fashioned esplanade, with the stone
posts and chains, the red-brick, comfortable-
looking houses, with their round bow-
windows, Royal George on his pedestal in
glowing gold, with the lion and unicorn
equally resplendent, casting a gleam of
sunshine in a shady place. Weymouth is
exceedingly shady at this moment. The
sea, murmuring below, is hardly to be
distinguished from the drifting mist and
rain—a soft kindly rain, however, with a
suggestion of light behind that may
presently break through—and there is
a gloom which a breath of air might
change to fair weather. And the state of
the weather is reflected in my mind as I
look out seawards, trying to make out
through the haze each once-familiar head-
land and sea-mark.

Seven years ago, and on just such
another soft and misty day, I was pacing
up and down the esplanade—not alone, as
now, but with a sweet companion. We
were both in grief—she, that I was going
away, and I, that I was compelled to leave
her ; for we had been friends from child-
hood, and had just discovered that we had
grown into lovers. We were in the full
delight of this discovery—a delight that was
rather enhanced than marred by the strong
objection of everybody in authority to the
arrangement. Her father, Hilda's father,
was especially indignant, for, although
a squire of degree—the Chudleighs, of
Combe Chudleigh, having long been held
as among the best in Devon—yet he was
poor, with an extravagant son in the
Guards, who was doing his best to make
away with the family acres ; and old Squire
Chudleigh had looked upon his dark-eyed,
beautiful daughter to make a grand
marriage, and thus keep up the family

dignity, which was now a good deal on the wane.

However, here we were on the esplanade of Weymouth on this wet sloppy day, pacing up and down, while Miss Chudleigh, the squire's eldest sister: a well-endowed old lady, who kept a comfortable house looking out on the esplanade: watched us discreetly from behind the parlour blinds. She had promised her brother that she would never lose sight of Hilda for a moment, and thus she kept her promise. But for one brief moment (the fog being somewhat thick, and we the only living creatures present) our faces met under the grey capote that Hilda wore, and we exchanged a parting kiss, the sweetness of which has lingered on my lips all these long years. It has brought me back, indeed, over seas and continents, to this old-fashioned esplanade at Weymouth. All the time I had been away, good old Miss Chudleigh had kept me informed of everything connected with Hilda—how she had come out, had two seasons in London, had received several excellent offers, and still remained faithful. Now and then came a tender little note from Hilda, written at the expense of her conscience, she said, for her father had forbidden her to write to me. And then, just six months ago, had come a hurried agitated letter, to bid me think no more of her, for circumstances were too strong for her, and with that a letter, too, from Miss Chudleigh, bidding me come back if I cared anything for Hilda, but to come to Weymouth first of all, as she had much to tell that she dared not write. And here I am at Weymouth, to find that poor Miss Chudleigh has been dead for three months, and the house shut up and deserted.

I am staying at the hotel where Miss Chudleigh used to hire her frys and post-horses—she always posted to Combe Chudleigh, which is only forty miles from point to point, but an interminable distance by rail. Hilda and her brother generally came by sea in a little twenty-ton yacht they kept in a charming cove by the house, for they were an almost amphibious family with a good deal of the adventurous west-country blood in their veins, and in that way they were well-known among all the boatmen and fishermen. Well, talking with my landlord I got from him all he knew, which was not very much, about the family. He had understood that Miss Chudleigh had died worth a good deal of money, which had all gone to the squire's

daughter, and in consequence of this death in the family, the wedding which was to come off was postponed for three months or so. On this point my host was hazy; whose wedding it was to be he didn't quite know, though he thought it must be the squire's daughter who was going to be married. Then I made my way to the harbour; with the quaint old town with its little houses and cottages in tiers one above the other looking down upon the port, with two or three steamers loading, and the steam-crane noisily discordant, and a few yachts and fishing-boats lying tranquilly in the stream. And here I found an old salt who remembered the little Foam, the squire's old yacht. She had been sold, and he had heard that the estate of Combe Chudleigh was likely to be sold too; only he had seen some of the family not long ago, he was sure, on board a fine new steam-yacht belonging to some London gentleman—a yacht called the Sea Mew, which had been lying here not long ago. All this was baffling and disappointing, and I made up my mind to start at once for Combe Chudleigh, and know the worst, or the best, as it might happen to be, and beard the old squire in his den.

It was evening when I reached Combe Chudleigh, and saw the grey old mansion set in most lovely verdure of woods and lawns; the house all solemn and still in the glow of the sunset; the grounds sloping down to the secluded bay, and the little creek with its landing-place, where was now no tapering mast to be seen. All seemed solitary and deserted. There was nobody at the lodge; the big gate was thrown wide open; and the shabby old fly I had hired at the station drove through unquestioned and unwelcomed by anybody. What a clamour, too, the bell made as the driver pulled it lustily, waking up some old hound who began to bay in response; but there was no other sound or movement in the house, and it was not till the flyman had made his way to a side door, disregarding the dignity of his fare, and had hammered lustily there for some time, that an old dame made her appearance hastily wiping her hands upon her apron, and with many curtsies informed me that the squire and all the family were away in London, or parts equally remote. The old lady did not recognise me, but I knew her well enough—once the children's nurse and known by that name, and afterwards a loved and trusted dependent, and known

as Mrs. Murch; and whatever she might pretend, quite sure to know all about the squire's affairs, and still more the squire's daughter, if only she could be got to tell.

Could I see the house? Well, the house wasn't shown, demurred Mrs. Murch; still, to a respectable gentleman, who perhaps was a friend of the family— This was a point I evaded, not being quite sure of her sentiments in my regard. But I proved my respectability by pressing half-a-sovereign into her palm, at which she began afresh to curtsy, and then hurried away to open the big doors.

We went slowly through the once familiar rooms, in which everything was now shrouded up in brown holland, but still with a worn and faded appearance of old-fashioned dignity. Presently we came to a door opening out of the corridor, disclosing a lawn and little flower-garden beyond; a door which Mrs. Murch hastily closed with a muttered apology.

"There be nothing there, sir," she said as I came to a stand before the door; "that be only Miss Hilda's room, and I do be thinking how she would like me to show it to a gentleman."

"But I particularly want to see the view into the garden."

"Oh, if it be only the garden you want to see, sir," replied Mrs. Murch, who had been evidently distressed at refusing anything to a gentleman of such a liberal disposition, "I'm sure Miss Hilda would be pleased you should see her garden."

And Mrs. Murch threw open the door, and I was admitted into this paradise.

Certainly it was the most cheerful room in the house, with the pleasant flower-garden beyond its low French-window, and a corner view of the placid bay and the little winding river. The room was just as its mistress had left it, with a litter of books and music, and a glove lying upon the table which I furtively took possession of.

Mrs. Murch began mechanically to dust some of the things with a little feather broom.

"I should like to have things a bit tidier here," she began, almost in soliloquy; "but she can't bear anybody to touch her writings and things."

"Her writings!" I repeated in some surprise, for Hilda, as I had known her, had not been addicted to anything of the kind.

"Why yes, sir; you speak as if some-thing were known to you respecting my

young mistress, and while you declared yourself, sir, not to be a friend of the family."

Mrs. Murch looked at me suspiciously, while I explained that I had heard of Miss Chudleigh from people who had known her as being of a gay and lively disposition.

"And so she was, sir," began Mrs. Murch in a mysterious voice, carefully smoothing down her apron, "as gay and lively a young thing as ever you saw. But then you know, sir—perhaps I ought not to say it, and you might happen to know it too—how poor Miss Hilda met with a disappointment, and she's a good deal changed to what she once was."

The thought of Hilda suffering and unhappy struck me with poignant emotion, almost with remorse. And again there obtruded a feeling of doubt and jealousy. She had given me up; perhaps a newer and fresher affection had taken hold of her, in its turn to be blighted.

"What do you mean by a disappointment? Is she not going to be married?"

"That's true, sir," rejoined Mrs. Murch sententiously; "only there may be a disappointment for all that. When the lover she sets her heart upon proves faithless, a poor girl may well—"

"What's this, nurse," I cried, "about a faithless lover?"

Mrs. Murch turned a penetrating look upon me.

"Nobody has called me nurse for years," she cried, "and what should you know about me being nurse, and giving yourself out as not being a friend of the family? Why, I do believe," she said, taking me by the shoulders, and turning my face to the light, "I do believe that you be young Mr. Lyme himself that there's been all this to-do about."

There was no use in denying my identity after this, and Mrs. Murch presently poured into my ears a long and confused account with more windings and turnings than I should have thought it possible to introduce into human speech, and yet that somehow worked round to the point intended. The sum of all of it was that the squire had become more and more involved between his son's extravagance and his own, and that Combe Chudleigh, the seat of the family from the date of the Crusades, must now be sold. That the squire had been reckoning upon getting his sister's money, all of which had been left to Hilda, but so tied up that it could not be touched to relieve the squire's needs. That an old

admirer of Hilda's had appeared who was ready to buy the estate and leave the squire in possession for life, if Hilda would marry him, and then, on the squire's death, they would take the name of Chudleigh, so that the old succession, which all set such store by, should still be kept up. And what had almost broken Hilda's heart and induced her to assent to this arrangement, had been the report which seemed confirmed by all the circumstances, that her old lover had become, as Mrs. Murch expressed it, as rich as Creases, but that, so far from intending to come home to claim her, intended to remain in India and marry an Indian princess.

"Who knows if only one, sir?" added Mrs. Murch solemnly; "for you might not have stopped at that, having once got into they heathenish ways."

There was just the germ of truth about this story of the princess that made it doubly venomous. My uncle, one of the Lymes of Lyme, of an old Devonshire stock which inherits the adventurous spirit of the Hawkes, and Drakes, and Frobishers, did marry an Indian begum, and assumed the manners and habits of Hindostan. When he died, leaving an immense fortune, a good deal of which he had invested in English securities, there was a prospect of a gigantic lawsuit to settle the succession. I was the next-of-kin according to the English law, but there were adopted children and others who, according to Indian custom, might have a claim. However, the old begum turned out a trump. She proposed first of all that I should marry the chief claimant—a girl then about eight years old—but, finding that this proposal did not tempt me, we arranged an equitable division which satisfied everybody, and robbed the lawyers of their expected prey. My own share made me passably rich—rich enough to buy Combe Chudleigh anyhow. But the chance was gone, it seemed, for Hilda was irrevocably committed to marry Mr. Chancellor, the rich manufacturer, the M.P. and rising statesman, and would, indeed, already have been married but for her aunt's death.

"Now, what you've got to do, sir," said Mrs. Murch solemnly, when so much had been said, "what you've got to do is to go and find Miss Hilda. There's more hangs round about it than you and I know of, but I do know as she'll be a miserable woman all the days of her life if she marries that man. It ain't any use writing, sir; it ain't any use sending. Miss Hilda

isn't one to go back from her word when once she's given it. But if you saw her, and told her everything yourself, perhaps she and you might find a way to alter it."

But where was she then, my sweet Hilda? Where could I find her? It seemed that she had been staying in London for the season, but finding London hot and unendurable, she had started with her father and some other friends for a cruise about the Channel in Mr. Chancellor's yacht. Mr. Chancellor was kept in town by his Parliamentary duties. But where the yacht was at this particular moment it was hard to say. Perhaps it was at Ryde, perhaps at Plymouth, or the Channel Islands, or some French port. But just as I was leaving the hall, uncertain and irresolute, a messenger came up from the post-office in the village with a telegram. My driver stopped for a few moments by my orders to see if anything came of it, and presently Mrs. Murch came running out in the drizzling rain with her apron over her head, and thrust the telegram into my hand. It is of just four words, "Send letters to Weymouth," and it sends me back to Weymouth as fast as I can go, and there my first visit is to the harbour-master. No, the Sea Mew has not come in; she won't come in probably till next tide, and so I may make myself easy for some hours.

But I can't make myself easy. I pace up and down that esplanade at Weymouth which is so redolent of the Georgian era that you may fancy at any moment that stout Farmer George and homely Charlotte may appear upon the scene; still in the fog and small rain, promising every moment to clear and show the brightness beyond, but continually pelting nevertheless, regardless of all good faith. But now I am no longer alone on the pavement. Another man—a young man—shrouded like myself in a long coat, equally impatient, as it seems, and also continually looking seawards, and striving to make out something through the haze, meets me at every turn, and we look at each other with distrust and aversion, as intruders and interlopers; and then I begin to think I know the face, that I have seen it somewhere in earlier days. A look of half-recognition also appears in his eyes. We stop opposite each other by simultaneous impulse.

"Aren't you a Courtney?" I ask. "I thought so. Then we were at Winchester together. I was in the sixth when you joined."

Courtney held out his hand cordially, and yet with respect. He might not have looked up to me much under other circumstances; but the fact that I had been his senior at school at once put him under my influence. A man may lose his reverence for Church and State, for religion, for morality, for many other venerable things, but he rarely forgets the superiority of an old schoolfellow.

"And what are you doing here, old fellow?" I ask, putting my arm through his as we resume our sentry-go in company.

"Doing!" said Courtney with irritation. "I am looking out for a steam-yacht. And I don't believe she means coming in."

"And what ship is that?" I asked with a good deal of curiosity.

"What's the name of her? The Sea Mew," he replied with disgust. "Belongs to that wretched cad, Chancellor."

"Then why do you sail with him if he's such a cad?" I asked with all the wisdom of age.

"Oh, he's not on board," replied Courtney. "Look here, it's in this way. I promised to join my cousin Hilda. You know her, by the way. Of course," he said, striking his forehead theatrically, "I know all about you. You married an Indian princess. And what are they like, and are there any more of them? And have you got a yacht down here? I would have a bigger one than Chancellor."

"Now look here, Courtney," I replied severely; "had I married an Indian princess, I'd have made you speak of her with more respect. But you may contradict that silly story wherever you may hear it."

"Oh, I should keep up the delusion if I were you," said Courtney. "People don't think anything of you if you have done nothing out of the usual line."

Anyhow, I determined to take Courtney into my confidence. I told him how affairs really stood between his cousin and myself, and I was delighted to find that, either from sudden friendship for me, or sudden detestation of Chancellor, he was ready to do anything to serve me. Yes, he would take me on board the Sea Mew. He had a general invitation to bring any nice friends.

It seemed rather a cheeky thing, he remarked, to sail about in the rival's own yacht. But he was sure Hilda would like it better. "Only, don't you see," he added, casting a despairing look over the sea, "it's getting thicker and thicker, and the Sea Mew will never come in in this fog."

Just then there seemed a kind of thickening in the haze at one point, which resolved itself presently into the flapping sail of a fishing-boat, that grounded gently on the sloping beach. A fisherman sprang out, and was making his way towards the town, when he was hailed by young Courtney.

"Hallo, Dick Steel! What are you after?"

"Why, it be young Squire Courtney," said Dick, rubbing his eyes; "and you're the very man that I be looking for. Now then, squire, here be a letter from your sweetheart of delights," and Dick grinned as he handed up a little twisted curl of paper.

"There's a nice affair," grumbled Courtney, handing me over the note which, carelessly as the young rascal treated it, thrilled right through my heart to see. For it was in Hilda's handwriting, hastily pencilled. She was here, within sight, if only the fog would lift!

"DEAR TOMMIE," ran the note,— "It is too thick to run in safely, and we are off to Cherbourg. Join us there. Your loving cousin. Somewhere off the land."

"That's just like a woman," went on Courtney, still grumbling. "If it's too thick for them to come in, how the dickens are we to go out!"

Courtney's notion was to hire a fishing-smack, and run over to Cherbourg in the fog, like a piratical sea-rover, and when reminded that the Great Western steamer would sail that night as usual, he seemed really disappointed. But at ten o'clock that evening the fog was thicker than ever, and it really seemed doubtful whether the steamer would get away. A trading steamer had just come in with a cargo of potatoes from Jersey, and reported the weather still very thick in the Channel. A gang of men, working away by lamplight, were loading up trucks on the little quay; barrels of potatoes, curiously fastened up with the tops of round baskets, were rolling about in all directions. The hoarse cries of the men, the banging about of cargo, the rattle of the steam-crane, and the roar and shriek of the engine waiting for its load, made a strange turmoil in the air; and the lurid lights from the steamers, and the lamps by which the men were working, showing through the fog, lighted up the rough bearded faces of the workmen in a strange portentous way. Presently we could hear the train from London come rattling into the station, and an omnibus-

load of passengers was brought down and put on board—the passengers, that is—and still there was no sign of our boat getting away. The potato-boat had already unloaded and was gone, and we could hear her fog-horn trumpeting away in the distance.

Suddenly, and with quite magical quickness, the scene changed altogether—the drizzle ceased, the mist was drawn away like a curtain, and the moon appeared sailing through a sky full of white, fleecy clouds. The harbour-lights shone out clearly, and in the still waters the houses above, rising tier upon tier, were reflected with wonderful distinctness. Everything was perfectly still except for the rattle of steam from the escape-pipe, and when that ceased and the paddles began to move, all the placid mirror-like surface was broken into a thousand sparkling ripples. But there was no sign of the *Sea Mew*—no steamer's lights were to be seen anywhere in the offing, and the general opinion was that she had reached Cherbourg long ere this.

Early in the morning—a grey promising morning; the sea smooth and overhead a real Channel sky, a grand sweep of clouds of an indefinite tender grey, converging to one point in a unity of design rarely seen except at sea; a dark sail here and there flecking the surface of the gently-undulating waters—I find Courtney on deck, already on familiar terms with the first officer, whom he calls Jem, and with whom he is discussing abstruse points of navigation. The coast-line before us is high and bold, but somewhat gloomy-looking and without the pleasant aspect of the white and yellow cliffs crowned with greensward which seem to smile a welcome, in fair weather like this, as you approach the coast in other parts of the Channel. Soon we pass smoothly and swiftly between two grim forts that guard the entrance to the port—one at the end of the long breakwater and the other rising grandly from a low rocky islet—forts with rows of guns looking over the parapet at us and grinning through the casemates, but mere popguns in the way of artillery compared with the huge monsters of modern ordnance; and then the grim forts shut us in as we enter the outer basin, a squad of fishing-boats and a steamer or two leave plenty of room in the wide harbour; grey tall houses rise above us, and in front hovers the grand rock of La Roule, a craggy mass of primitive rock that is fitly crowned with a huge fort. But there is nothing to be seen of the *Sea*

Mew. The people of the Douane know nothing of her. Courtney's face clouds over at the news, or rather at the want of news, and indeed it is disappointing. But then it is suggested that she may have lain to somewhere in the night, and come in presently. And so we make our way to a café on the quay, and sit there under the awning smoking and keeping a look-out on the harbour. We do not realise that we are in France till we have taken our coffee at a round-topped table in the open-air, while François welcomes us with a graceful sweep of his napkin, and the life of a French town goes by us in the pleasant morning sunshine—the peasants in their short blue blouses with baskets on their arms; soldiers in the familiar red and blue; sailors lounging along; while bells jingle and strange foreign cries are in the air. But in the harbour everything is perfectly quiet; no vessel enters or goes out; the signal-mast is bare of flags; the Douane is closed, as if the officials had made up their minds that everything was over for the day.

For my own part, I half dread to see the *Sea Mew* enter the harbour, for I feel that her coming will be the destruction of all my hopes. Hilda will turn upon me cold and resolute, and send me away from her without a word of parley. Let me have a little respite, in which I may still indulge in the pleasures of hope. But the respite is likely to be a short one, for at this moment the silent port shows signs of life. We hear the gruff roar of a gun from the fort, and presently a smart and elegant steamer floats swan-like into the basin, her blue ensign trailing gracefully just clear of the water. There is a bustle on shore as if something of importance had happened; a boat puts out with a naval officer in the stern-sheets and manned by a smart crew of sailors in full dress, and François runs out energetically flourishing his napkin, and returns presently to announce to all his customers and the world in general that here has arrived the yacht of the Lord Marquis Chancelleur, the Prime Minister of Angleterre. But Courtney is already away calling for a boat to cross the harbour, and I follow in a more sad and dignified way.

MYRTLE.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

FIFTEEN years came and went with all their shifting seasons, and no slightest word straggled back to the city by the sea, to

tell the fate of the fair young girl who turned from the altar one bright April morning with unsmiling eyes and close-drawn lips, and the mockery of her father's blessing upon her, to begin life anew as Arthur Templeton's bride. Was she happy or was she miserable? No one in San Remo knew or cared, save only one, Signor Benoni, still professor of languages and inspector of the public schools. Mr. and Mrs. Ellis had followed their daughter back to England but a month after her marriage; a new pastor came to care for the tiny English flock which, year by year, grew and spread; the church was enlarged and altered beyond recognition; a handsomer villa was taken for the rectory; there were changes and improvements here, there, and everywhere, telling of the swift growth and increasing popularity of storm-sheltered, sun-girt, placid little San Remo, over which the skies spread so softly, and against which the blue waves of the sea beat so dreamily, so drowsily.

There were changes everywhere. Only into the old, old city that lay asleep upon the hill, out of the way of the young life growing freshly up at its feet, only there as into the heart of the faithful Benoni, no change could come. He was a middle-aged man now, and old before his time, with hair turned prematurely grey, and wrinkles of care and weariness slanting across the kindly face with its patient smile and gentle uncomplaining eyes. There was no one in San Remo more universally respected and beloved than he, though he courted no popularity and plodded on his ambitionless quiet way, without other aim than how to complete the labour of the day. His time was very full. He had all the work he needed to enable him to care for his invalid sister, and pay the debts of a worthless brother who hung like a millstone around his neck. People said it was these cares which had aged him in his prime, and robbed him so early of the fire and aspirations that belong to youth, and that would surely have made him into something more than a simple professor in a tiny town by this, had he but had free play for his talents, or had he had a wife to spur him on. But he had never married. It was because of these home-cares, people said; and Signor Benoni only smiled, and did not contradict. His story was locked up in his faithful heart, beyond the reach of curious eyes, and the sprig of myrtle that he gathered fresh every morning for his button-hole,

and that hung there drooping and fading all the busy day through, never told any tales. His attachment to this delicate little flower, which lent itself so ill to his adornment, was only another of the professor's harmless eccentricities, like the habit which led him every day just before sunset, if he chanced to be in a room overlooking the sea, to go to the window and watch for Corsica to rise up ghost-like from the waves, just as if it were not a phenomenon with which he must have been familiar from boyhood. But these little oddities harmed nobody, not even himself; and perhaps they had something to do with the dreamy, trustful look in his eyes that attached people to him insensibly, because, though he never spoke of himself or his wants, he was felt to be in some way in need of any affection they had to give him.

And so fifteen years had come and gone, when one day, as he was leaving one of the principal hotels after a round of lessons, a card was handed to him.

"Professor, the lady was asking about an Italian teacher. She would be glad to see you before you leave. Room twenty-seven."

Benoni turned to obey the summons, glancing down at the card, and then stopped short, gazing at the narrow slip of pasteboard with eyes that seemed to spell out the name letter by letter, over and over again, unable to comprehend. Yet such a simple name it was too! "Mrs. Arthur Templeton," nothing more.

Ah, how suddenly, how easily, how unpremeditatedly great things can happen! It is only the little things that announce themselves with trumpet-peal and bugle-song heralding their coming from afar, like the rocket that rushes up into the ether with a hiss and scream, while the comet that covers half the heavens takes its place without a sound.

A faint flush crept into Benoni's thin cheeks, and faded away as he stood looking down at the card. He felt that he was trembling. The clerk eyed him curiously.

"Do you know the lady already, perhaps, signore? She is a widow. Her father is here with her."

The professor started and stared at the clerk fixedly a moment, and then straightened himself up, hastily putting the card in his pocket.

"Yes," he said simply, "I know her." And immediately went up the stairs.

He could scarcely see as he entered the room where Myrtle waited for him. There

was a cloud before his eyes, as if the ghosts of all the separating years suddenly rose up and stood mistily between them. Then it cleared away, and he saw her standing there alone, Myrtle, his one heart's love; Myrtle, free again as in the days when he first loved her; free, and she had sent for him! He could not speak. He only looked at her. Yes, the very, very same. The years, whatever they had brought her, had but ripened the bloom, had matured but had not changed her—had saddened, perhaps, but had not embittered her. It was the same Myrtle, who now met him with an eager questioning look in her eyes, that seemed to seek an answer in his face before she spoke. Silently they stood so looking at each other; then Myrtle's eyes fell upon the fragile drooping flower in his coat, and a smile and blush, swift and bright as in the old days, illumined her face.

"Oh, my flower!" she cried, springing impulsively forward, just as she might have done in the past. "You are wearing my flower!"

A light flashed into Benoni's eyes.

"Here is your flower," he said, and drew from his pocket-book a little, dried, faded blossom, scarcely recognisable in form or hue, and held it towards her. "You gave it to me, do you remember, that day we saw Corsica together? I have carried it so here these fifteen years. Fifteen years! Myrtle, Myrtle, it has been long!"

She looked at him, smiling the old frank smile.

"The years that are gone—the long dreadful years, we will throw them away as I do this withered flower. We will neither of us remember them more."

"Myrtle," said the Italian hoarsely, grasping her by both hands, "you gave me hope once before, and it was a false hope. Do not deceive me now. I could not bear it a second time, to hope such a hope as this and lose it again. I have been true to you as never man was true before. I have loved you and you only with undivided faithfulness through all these years. The memory of you and my love for you have grown into the very fibres of my heart, and not even death can destroy a love that life and time have spared. Myrtle, by right of such a love as this, may I dare to claim you now?"

"There is but one thing in all life worth having," said Myrtle softly, "but one thing lasting, and perfect, and sure, and that is

love—such love as yours for me, Francesco, and mine for you."

The Italian threw up his hands in a sort of blind ecstasy.

"Oh, Heaven!" he cried, "is it possible such happiness is mine at last? It cannot be! It cannot be!"

"It shall be," said Myrtle. "It must be. We have conquered fate." She threw back her head with the old, proud, familiar gesture, and then came nearer, and laid her white, firm hand gently on his arm. "No, Francesco, not even fate can prevail wholly against so true a love as ours."

All who met Benoni as he went back along the Esplanade that night to his house, turned to look at him again. He seemed completely transfigured. His happiness shone out undisguised in his face, a weight of years seemed suddenly lifted from him; he stood erect, and held his head high, as if to breathe great soul-refreshing draughts of this new and wonderful atmosphere which surrounded him. His eyes shone with a brilliancy and fire in startling contrast to his usual dreamy far-away look. He was as if intoxicated with this strange, impossible happiness that had dropped upon him out of an unlooked-for heaven. He felt almost too weak to bear it. Something seemed to snap in his heart, as if this sudden expansion of joy after the long, long tension of hopelessness had been too great a strain upon his strength. A life-long habit of endurance cannot be given up with impunity all in one rash, reckless moment. Joy is sometimes as dangerous as grief when it attacks the citadel of the heart, and carries it by storm.

Myrtle stood at the window the next morning watching for her betrothed, and singing a little Italian ballad softly to herself. Someone came up behind her and stood beside her, looking out with dull apathetic eyes over the blue Mediterranean, which lay gleaming under the warm, still sunlight as if it had never known a storm. It was her father. Myrtle turned and laid an arm caressingly about his neck, stooping a little to bring her face on a level with his.

"Father," she murmured, "I am so happy. Won't you be glad a little of my happiness?"

The old man shook his head.

"All folly—folly," he muttered. "It won't last, though you think it will. But have your own way, child. It doesn't matter now. Arthur is dead, and your mother is dead, and I am an old man. I shall be dead, too, soon. Your life is your

own. Do what you like with it. It doesn't matter now."

Myrtle sighed, and dropped her arm from his neck.

"Yes, my life is my own now, at last. I gave it up to you fifteen years ago. You had your will with it then. You did with it what you would. And, father, you know—you know the miserable, miserable result of it. Ah!" Her face grew suddenly wan, and old, and haggard, with a rush of bitter memories, and she hid it in her hands. "But that is all done now," she said presently, lifting it again with a smile. "We will not speak of it any more. The dead years shall bury the dead pains. I know that you thought you acted for the best. How can one heart tell the needs of another, judging only by itself? How could you know that whatever love may be to others, it was all in all in my life, and that nothing could atone to me for the loss of it? But now that I am so happy, I can forgive and forget all the past. I am only Myrtle Ellis again to-day, a glad enthusiastic girl of nineteen once more, and my life—my real life—lies still all before me."

"Yes, yes," said the old man impatiently, "and you think it will be all happiness. It's the way of youth. But each must learn for himself, and it doesn't matter now—it doesn't matter now." He kept repeating the words monotonously like a refrain. It touched Myrtle to the quick to see how little power she had to impart somewhat of the fulness of her own happiness to his cheerless, empty heart. She silently put out her hand to him. "Ah yes," he said, feeling her touch. "The letter. I had forgotten to give it to you. I found it downstairs."

Myrtle took it from him mechanically, looking at it with the idle curiosity one accords an unknown handwriting; then with another glance down the long, smooth, sunlit road, stretching itself out before her like a symbol of her future life, she opened the letter and read.

"Yes; it doesn't matter now. Nothing matters now," repeated the old man drearily to himself over and over.

He was weak and old. Myrtle was young and strong. She must manage her own life now. It was time he gave it up to her.

He was startled by a cry, low and sharp as if wrung out of physical agony. Myrtle dropped the letter and grasped him by the arm.

"Come, father; you must come with me. We must go to him at once."

Mr. Ellis looked up at her blankly. Her face was ashen white.

"Eh—what is it?" he asked helplessly.

"Francesco—he is ill. It is his heart. Good Heaven! he is perhaps dying now. Father—father, come!"

"Dying," repeated Mr. Ellis, only half comprehending, and dropping his shaggy grey head on his breast as Myrtle drew him towards the door. "Aye; nothing lasts—nothing. Did I not say so? It all goes."

Benoni lay on a couch, wheeled up to the window, in one of the tiny rooms of his humble little home. He was better now. The paroxysm of pain was past, and he was only very weak and tired—too tired to move, too tired to do more than look up in Myrtle's face with unutterable love, as she knelt down by him and took his hands in hers.

"I knew you would come, Myrtle," he said, "when I could not go to you."

"I have come to stay, Francesco," she whispered. "I will never leave you again, dear—never, never again!"

Benoni's great, glorious, fire-lit eyes rested on her with a look of ineffable peace.

"God is so good," he said. "He has given me the happiness of a lifetime in these last few hours. I have nothing left to wish for."

And so he lay with his hand in hers, smiling up at her, and now and then talking softly—while slowly, slowly his life ebbed away.

All gave place to Myrtle, feeling instinctively her right to be there; stranger to them though she was, this beautiful foreign lady whom he had never once named to them before.

And, true to her word, Myrtle never left him again day or night. Tearless, with her passionate grief crushed back into her heart lest the despair of it break out and harm him, she sat hour after hour by his side, smiling down at him with steady eyes, singing to him the songs he used to love in a voice that never once broke or faltered, and talking to him as only she could talk, with a perfect calm taught by a perfect love.

So she sat hour after hour and day after day, till at last the end came—the end which no tenderest care or skill could avert.

He still lay on the sofa by the window, while she crouched rather than knelt by his side. It was late in the afternoon. The sun was stooping low down to the

sea. There was not a cloud in all the radiant dazzling sky, and faintly, indistinctly, like a dream slowly breaking through the unconsciousness of a sleep-bound soul, the faraway beautiful island grew into magical life out of the blue mists of the horizon.

The dying man lifted himself up with the strange sudden strength of the supreme moment.

"Myrtle!" he cried, "Myrtle!" and drew her into his arms. "Love—wife—look! It is Corsica! We have seen it again—together—at the beginning and at the end of our lives—heaven—heaven—"

And with the word upon his lips, smiling once more into her faithful loving eyes, he fell back, fainting, upon the pillow; and before the last dim line of the shadowy island had faded from the horizon, his spirit had passed beyond her ken to the far-off land of the unseen. Myrtle was left alone!

Ah, not even the most faithful love can ever wholly master fate!

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER I.

THEY were two women in an old-fashioned room of an old-fashioned house at Kew; a room softly carpeted with sweet-smelling Indian matting and Persian rugs; with quaint spindle-legged furniture, and a quaint Chinese paper covered with scrolly red monsters and monstrous gold flowers tangled up together; with a high wooden wainscot and mantelpiece, the latter carved with cherubs carrying wreaths of flowers; and tiny tables heaped with treasures of Sèvres and Nankin china, Hindu idols, and Burmese knick-knacks in bewildering confusion.

"I call it most undignified, unladylike, and unseemly," said the elder woman.

"Mrs. Pentreath!"

"Yes, my dear, and if you were to say 'Mrs. Pentreath' twice as loudly, and look twice as red and indignant, I should only repeat the same words. Indeed, I do not know any others better suited to such foolish and imprudent conduct."

"But I don't even know what you mean," cried the girl, redder than ever at the snub she had received. "What is there in my conduct that you can call by such

names as 'unseemly and unladylike'? What have I done? You have no right to speak to me so because—because—"

"Because you are a motherless girl for whose welfare and reputation I am answerable while you live under my roof; and because your father committed you to my care," said Mrs. Pentreath slowly. "Excuse my interrupting you, Hetty, but I am of opinion that these reasons do give me a right, not only to express my opinion on your conduct generally, but to exert my authority if I find you persisting in a course which is sure to be detrimental to you in every way. Ernest may be silly in some things—I am sorry to say he is—but you are more silly still if you let yourself think that he means to marry you."

"I don't. I never thought anything of the sort. I wouldn't marry him. Mrs. Pentreath, why don't you send me away if you think such things? Indeed, I would far, far rather go than listen to them."

"Go! So that you may induce him to follow you? Yes, Hetty, that would be just of a piece with the running after him at present, the familiarity and forwardness of which I am complaining. Let me tell you I am not the only person who has noticed it. Lady Carisfort spoke to me some time ago about what she rightly considered my foolish and culpable indulgence, and Mr. Hamilton—"

"Mr. Hamilton!" The poppy-red cheeks grew suddenly white, and even Mrs. Pentreath was startled by the strange look, half anguish, half indignation, which flashed from the brown eyes. "You do not mean that. He couldn't—I am sure he never spoke about me, and—and Captain Pentreath!"

Mrs. Pentreath smiled with a sort of chilling composure, which was very aggravating.

"Then you are quite wrong, my dear, for it was only yesterday that he was doing so, and regretting the way in which you were going on; and I am glad to see that you have some regard for your clergyman's opinion, if not for mine. You must remember, however, that George Hamilton and Ernest are cousins, and that young men are in the habit of speaking freely to one another, especially of girls who by their own lightness have—What is it, Hickson—the carriage? Very well, I am coming; and, Hetty, don't be silly. It is no use crying in that violent way as if someone had ill-used you. I assure you that you ought to feel grateful that you

have someone to act a mother's part to you; and, though Ernest is my son, it is not at all in his interests, but in yours, that I have spoken to you to-day."

Mrs. Pentreath said this in a softened tone; perhaps because her conscience told her she had been somewhat harsh; perhaps because the attitude of the culprit, sobbing now beyond control, with her face hidden in her dimpled hands, touched her sense of pity; but she went away for her drive all the same, a stately old lady, with her white hair and fine face, and the furs and velvets which shrouded her still upright figure. And Hetty Mavors was left to cry on by herself.

She made a pretty picture so, despite her woe, with her slender childish figure and soft dark head crouched up against the panelling of the deep old window-seat; behind her a fence of tall ragged chrysanthemums, red and saffron tinted, and filling the air with their bitter-sweet odour; and behind them again a flutter of brown and yellow autumn leaves and the stainless blue of one of those rare days in November when winter seems still far away, and the fair wan effigy of summer lies lightly on the moist ground, unburied save in fallen leaves.

Hetty, however, was far from thinking of herself in an artistic light. Perhaps she was deficient in "culture," or perhaps she was too miserable; anyhow, she never lifted her face, but sobbed on till startled into another position by a footstep at her side and a voice saying:

"They told me I should find you here, so— Why, Hetty! Hetty, my child, what is the matter?"

Hetty lifted her face quickly enough then—not in welcome, however, but with a look of such unmistakable anger flashing through her tears as fairly startled the visitor, a rather plain young man in clerical dress, with a frank, kindly expression which seemed far from warranting the indignant one which greeted him. Yet, though the girl was trembling in every limb, she made a strong effort to control herself, and stood up, saying coldly:

"Mrs. Pentreath is not in, Mr. Hamilton."

"So Hickson told me; but as he added that you were in the drawing-room, I thought I might come in and see you. I had no idea you were in trouble, however. Is it—is it anything I could help you in, or would you rather I went away?" the vicar asked quietly, and with a certain

plain directness and absence of society pretence, which made Hetty's efforts at composure somewhat difficult.

Yet she answered him directly and with the same coldness as before:

"I would rather you went away. People who make trouble can hardly help in it; and as it seems that I have to thank you for mine, I would rather you did not stay to triumph in it."

"Make trouble! Triumph! I don't think I understand you," said George Hamilton. He had become very pale, strikingly so in contrast to the crimson cheeks which confronted him, but he still spoke quietly, and stood his ground, facing the girl with a calm steadiness which was not without its effect. "How have I got you into trouble? I was not aware that I had done so; but if I have, it must have been, as you know perfectly well, so purely accidentally that I hope you are generous enough to feel as sorry for me as I am for you."

The grave, reasonable tone made Hetty's eyes look misty again.

"Oh, it does not matter," she said, trying to speak lightly; then breaking down with ignominious speed: "Only I did not think, I did not, that you—you—"

"That I what? Hetty, my—my dear child, don't cry, but tell me what I have done. Don't you know—Heaven knows you might by this time—that I would sooner cut off my right arm than hurt you by a pin-prick, or see anyone else do it. What is it? Has Pentreath—"

But Hetty, looking up with hot cheeks and flashing eyes, broke in on the question with sharp distinctness.

"Captain Pentreath has said and done nothing—nothing at all. I don't believe he would ever think such things. He knows too well how shameful and untrue they are."

"What things, Hetty?" This young girl certainly required a good deal of patience, but it was not lack of that quality which made George Hamilton's grave face graver, and his voice colder than before.

"What Mrs. Pentreath and you have been saying, that I ran after—" but Hetty was sobbing too violently now for her words to be very intelligible, and the vicar could only catch such broken phrases as "forward," "wanting to marry him," "unladylike," the rest drowned in passionate blushes hot enough to almost scorch the tears which flowed over them. Mr. Hamilton's brown face flushed for sympathy. Manlike, he wasted no words on it, however, but went to the point at once.

"I never said one word of the sort," he said. "What's more, I never thought, dreamt, nor implied it. Has my aunt told you so? I can't believe it; and, if you'll excuse me, I don't believe you do either. You look on me as a friend, I suppose. It isn't much to expect after all these years, but I do expect that. Do you think friends lie about and calumniate one another? Tell me at once what you mean."

Hetty's sobs ceased. She was quelled by an anger greater than her own; subdued too by a certain delicious joy which was springing up in her bruised and wounded little heart. She looked up at him quite deprecatingly.

"It was Mrs. Pentreath said so. She was angry at something—such a little thing. Captain Pentreath asked me to cut him a sprig of gardenia from the conservatory before he went out this morning, and when I went for it he came in after me, and stood talking for a minute or two while he pinned it in. After he was gone your aunt began, and said all this. I couldn't even understand her at first, or why she was so angry; and then she said Lady Carisfort had spoken to her some time ago about my—my conduct, and you too."

"My aunt made a mistake," said the vicar coolly. "What Lady Carisfort may have said of you I don't know, nor do I think it matters much, as she is well known to be the most vicious-tongued old woman in the county; but since it has come to this, and you have been made unhappy, I owe it to myself to tell you what I said."

"Then you did say something!" Hetty's tone had an almost childish accent of disappointment, and her eyes began to look angry again.

"I certainly did. My aunt came to me yesterday and told me—it is her fault and yours, mind you, Miss Mavors, that you ever hear this—told me that she was disturbed in her mind, because she thought that her son was beginning to show a disposition to pay you idle attentions, and that you were encouraging him under the impression that they were serious. She added, however, that she did not blame you as much as her son, because you were very young."

"She is very kind, and I am much obliged to her," said Hetty haughtily.

"And rather spoilt."

"Then it is she who has spoilt me, and why did she? I wish"—beginning to cry—"that she hadn't. I thought she was—was fond of me, as fond as I was of her."

"But that people were beginning to make remarks. Someone had even asked her if her son was going to marry little Miss Mavors, and as, of course, no one could know better than she that he had not the faintest idea of the sort—forgive me, Hetty, and remember I am only quoting her words—she came to me to consult me as to the best means of putting a stop to an affair which was giving her trouble, and might damage your name. She said she did not at all wish to part from you even for a time."

"To send me away, you mean! but I will not give her the trouble. I will go away. I am going at once," Hetty burst in vehemently; then with a sudden change of tone: "And you? What did you say? You are only telling me Mrs. Pentreath's part, not yours."

"I said that I thought she was mistaken," said the vicar, speaking with great distinctness, though with a frown on his brow which implied that he found the task difficult. "For, to begin at the beginning, it was my opinion that her son, instead of commencing to pay you idle attentions now, had done nothing else from the day of his coming here but pay you the most marked ones in his power, and devote himself to you in a way which might warrant any innocent girl in believing herself to be loved by him. Further, that I should like to know her grounds for thinking that Ernest did not do so; and further to remind her that men seldom took even their mothers into their confidence when they first began to think seriously of a woman, and that even if Ernest had been rather given to flirting in past times, it was my opinion that your sweetness and—I mean your manner and charms altogether," put in the vicar, interrupting himself in a rough, impatient manner, "were enough to give any man a fair reason for breaking through all previous dislike to matrimony and—"

"Oh, but that was nonsense, and you ought not to tell it me again. Don't go on with that part," said Hetty hurriedly, but with such a lovely rose-colour in her cheeks, and such a lovely, shy, questioning glance, as would have made anyone think it was just that part she did want told to her. The vicar thought so, and for a moment his pulses beat with marvellous, almost dangerous rapidity; then the remembrance of why she felt such pleasure in his speech came back to him, and he answered her in a colder tone than before:

"Well, that was what I said to my

aunt, and I took the liberty of adding, in conclusion, that if she were right in her opinion of her son, and if he were capable of laying himself out to win the affections of a young girl without any other end than his own amusement, he deserved to be kicked round Kew Green, and I should be very glad to lend a foot for the— But there's no use in repeating that," cried the vicar, cooling down suddenly from the hot anger which merely quoting his words had roused in him, "and I shall make you as angry as I did her. You must try to forgive me, however, for I was merely arguing on a hypothetical case. You are not to take Mrs. Pentreath's opinion of her son as mine. Probably, indeed, you don't need either of them, and are only laughing at our presumption in having any. That's not to the point, however. You accused me of having spoken ill and insultingly of you, and of having got you into trouble. I have told you what I did say, and if, hearing it, you still think you were right to greet me as you did just now, I can only say I am sorry for it, and wish I had said nothing at all."

"But I don't. It was I who was wrong, and—and I beg your pardon, Mr. Hamilton. There! Now please don't hurry away," cried Hetty with the prettiest mingling possible of submission and impatience. "There is something more I want to ask you, if you don't mind."

"Well, what is it? I will tell you anything that concerns myself."

"And myself! Mr. Hamilton, I want to know why you think your cousin really cares for me. His mother does not believe he does. She said the idea was absurd, but you—you differed from her. Why?"

The vicar looked embarrassed. In honest truth, he had not much faith in the depth of his cousin's affection for anybody, but how could he tell the girl so—he of all men?

"I differed from her, certainly," he said with some hesitation; "partly because it would be a tacit impertinence to you to assume that any man would dare to single you out and appropriate you as Pentreath does without caring for you, and partly because—well, because I cannot realise that any man should live in the house with you and not do so."

The vicar's voice had grown so hard that the last words, if intended for a compliment, sounded more like an accusation, Did he too suspect her of intentional fascina-

tion? Poor Hetty's face grew pale and wistful as that of a chidden child.

"Oh, but you only mean in a certain way," she said eagerly; "a pleasant friendly sort of caring that no one need dislike. Of course I know he is more demonstrative than some men, and—and says silly things now and then; but I do assure you he has never said one word which—which anyone could take hold of."

The vicar looked at her in surprise. Evidently she was not so sure of her lover's affection as he had thought, or she would not want so much reassuring on the subject. He felt vexed with her for asking it, and without even a blush on her smooth round cheek too; yet he was too chivalrous not to answer her comfortingly.

"Oh, but you need not think anything of that," he said, smiling. "Men often say least when they care most; and even if Ernest is a bit flighty at times, he knows well enough how to appreciate the blessing of a pure-hearted girl's affection. I dare say my aunt has been a little irritating and incredulous; but these are things that mothers are always the last to realise. Don't you believe me?" for she had grown paler, and there was a distressed look in her face. "Why, I have known a man—if it is any good to you to hear of him—who cared heart and soul for a girl very like yourself, and in much the same circumstances; and who, though he would have gladly risked his life to have called her his wife, never opened his lips on the subject, or told his secret to her or anyone."

"Never?"

He had come to an abrupt stop, and Hetty's voice repeated the word like a startled echo. She was crimson enough now, and there was a new look in her beautiful eyes, now turned from him in sudden shyness.

"Never. There were reasons against it in the beginning, and afterwards it would have been no good."

"But why? How?"

The vicar had stopped again, his voice hoarse with barely smothered pain, and he did not notice the tremble in the girl's voice, her nervously-clasped hands or heaving breast. There was even a touch of impatience in his manner as he answered her.

"Why? Because when he began to care for her she was such a child compared to him, such a mere child in reality, that he would have thought it profanation to speak to her of such matters; and afterwards as

she began to grow up it was to such beauty and sweetness that knowing his own demerits, knowing too how little she had seen of the world, he hesitated equally between the risk of a 'No' which might lose him the friendly confidence which had become the chief happiness of his life, or of a 'Yes' which she might regret through the whole of hers. He told himself he would wait a little longer still, till she knew others and could choose more freely; and while he was waiting another came, and the game was over. The second man went in and won in a week what he had worshipped for years, and there was an end of it."

"And was he content to let it be so? But oh! you mean that he had no choice, that she married the other one before he could interfere?"

"I don't know if she married him or not. What does that matter so long as she loved him? And as he loved her, do you suppose he would want to interfere between her and the happiness she had chosen for herself?"

"Not unless he thought he could make her happier."

Hetty's voice was very low. The vicar's rang against it with deep impetuosity.

"That had nothing to do with it. It was for her to choose. She had known him the longer, and if she preferred the other he was too proud, for all his love, to haggle with her over her preference. Besides, it would have lost all its value for him if it could have been transferred from one man to another in that way. To sue for a touch of the cheek which had blushed under the kiss of another, to clasp a hand and gaze into eyes which had been pressed by other's fingers and smiled on other's vows might have been possible enough to some men. It wasn't to him. The only love he cared for was that first, fresh, un-sullied one which only a girl who has never played at love, or thought of lovers before, has it in her to give; the—— But there! what a fool I am to go on talking to you in this way—nearly as big a fool as he. Only I warn you, don't you think that because a man is silent he is not in earnest, and remember that I consider Pentreath has every reason to be so at present, and I congratulate him heartily on his wisdom and his luck in having such a rare chance of making use of it. Good-bye."

"He is not here to thank you, or I dare say he would," said Hetty; "but before you go let me warn you not to think that

because people laugh and joke they must be in love. It is very kind of you to think Captain Pentreath lucky in having won me; but why you should assume that he has done so, and be as ready to make me over to him as his mother is to do the reverse, I don't know; and I am not obliged to you—not at all."

"Hetty, what do you mean? Is it not true then? Don't you care for Pentreath?"

"What right have you to ask such a question, Mr. Hamilton? And what do you mean by 'caring' for him? As a friend, as someone to talk to and sing with, to enliven his mother and me when we are a little dull? Yes, in that way, very much, as much as he cares for me."

"Hetty, it isn't in that way that Pentreath cares for you."

"Is it not? Then you know more than I do, or than he has told me, and I do not wish to hear anything more of it. I am quite sure of one thing—that I shall not do so from him. He is not so silly as you imagine him, Mr. Hamilton, and would as little dream of falling in love with me as of suspecting me of doing the same by him."

"But, Hetty——"

"No, Mr. Hamilton, I don't want to hear or say any more. You and Mrs. Pentreath have joined to misunderstand and misjudge me, and I have been obliged in my own defence to tell you that you are wrong; but it is not pleasant to me to have to do so, and I did not think you would have required it. I thought you knew—— But there, I won't think anything more about it, and please go away now and leave me. I don't want to be rude; but I am angry and hurt, and—and I would rather not see you any more—not now at any rate. Please go," and then, as he made no motion to do so, but rather came a step nearer with hands outstretched as if to detain her, and with a sudden light and flame in his face making its plainness almost beautiful, she fairly slipped past him and fled, flushed and panting, to hide herself in her own room.

At which time, perhaps, it may be well to pause and tell you something of her story.

Esther Mavors was the daughter of an officer in the coastguard who, thirty years before, had loved and wooed a certain beautiful heiress, one Miss Isabel Bovilly. Lieutenant Mavors was handsome but poor. Miss Bovilly's relations would not hear of the match; and finally, after first

encouraging and then playing with him, Miss Bovilly threw him off and married Mr. Pentreath, a wealthy banker, by whom she had one son—Ernest.

Lieutenant Mavors took his blighted hopes to sea, got into a reckless way of living, threw away more than one chance of promotion, and finally, ten years later, was knocked down by a fever on the West Coast of Africa, nursed back to health by an old Wesleyan missionary, and married, out of gratitude, to his daughter, by whom he had one child, a girl—Hetty.

With the advent of the child, however, came the end of his married life. The young mother died in childbirth, and leaving the infant to be brought up by its maternal relatives, Captain Mavors went to sea again and remained there with brief intervals for another ten years, when the fortunate bestowal of a post in the coast-guard service enabled him to settle down at home and begin life afresh with his little daughter in a pleasant Devonshire watering-place. There too he ended it barely five years later, before the delights of fatherhood and home had even had time to lose their first freshness, and just as a new and unexpected delight had entered into his existence.

Mrs. Pentreath, then a wealthy widow, came to spend a summer at the little Devonshire watering-place. The old lovers met; the acquaintance between them was revived, and all the short-lived pride and resentment on the man's part faded away at the first sight of the still handsome woman who years ago had taught him what passion meant, only to scatter it to waste by her caprice and inconstancy.

Mrs. Pentreath too was touched and softened. It is something to a woman of fifty to find that in one man's eyes she is still as beautiful as at twenty-five. She was all alone too. Her son had just been gazetted to an Indian regiment.

What might have come of the meeting had Captain Mavors lived, there is no knowing; but death interposed, and within three weeks of the meeting with his old love the sailor closed his eyes on the world and her, his dying hand groping to the last for the touch of her fingers, and his dying heart cheered by her promise to be a guardian and protectress to the orphan child he was leaving behind him.

"It breaks my heart to think of her," he

had said at the last. "There'll be no one to take care of her when I'm gone, and she's too young and pretty to take care of herself."

And Mrs. Pentreath answered with genuine warmth and tenderness:

"She is not too young to take care of me. Be easy about her, John. Your child shall never want a friend while I am alive, and when she loses you she shall come to me and make my home hers."

It was a generous offer and the lady kept it generously. True, on reflection—reflection aided by a wise recognition of the girl's dawning beauty and the remembrance of a too susceptible soldier son—she decided to call Hetty from the first her "little companion," and to give her regular duties in that capacity, thus preventing her or others from considering her position in the ambiguous light of adopted daughterhood. But this matter settled, she allowed her natural benevolence full play, and treated the girl with so much kindness and affection that Hetty, having no remembrance of her own mother, was quite ready to transfer to her protectress the devotion due to one. Her pretty little fingers were never weary of mending or making, or her pretty little feet of running errands in Mrs. Pentreath's service. She nursed her when sick, read to her and amused her when well, and made the house bright at all times by the mere fact of her sunshiny presence.

Mrs. Pentreath often said she did not know what she should do without the child, and in truth Hetty had no wish that she should try. Her life at Guelder Lodge was perfectly happy. She was kindly treated, and well cared for; shared in all the comforts and luxuries of her guardian's life; had masters to teach her French, German, and Italian, and by-and-by another one in addition.

This master was Mrs. Pentreath's nephew, and his name was George Hamilton.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER IX. JACK'S CONFESSION.

JENIFER had dashed her mother's forlorn hope in Mr. Boldero's intervention to the ground in a few decisive words.

"It's useless appealing to him, mother dear. I have done it twice. I've implored and reasoned, and even tried to coax him to try and influence Jack into giving this girl up. But he must have some very powerful reason for not doing it. He was kind, and sorry, and sympathetic; but he won't, or can't, say a saving word to my brother."

"And your poor father thought all the world of him, trusted him as if he had been his brother."

"So do I—trust him much more than I do either of my brothers now; but I know it's useless looking upon him as an ally. Whatever happens, he will only stand by and see it happen to the boys; and some-way or other, I can't hate him for it, though I feel very angry, and very, very sorry."

"I think Jack will listen to me," his mother said softly. "When he knows that what he purposes doing will bow my grief-stricken head to the ground, he will be my own boy again; he will listen to me."

"That girl won't let him go. I can see it in her bold defiant eyes and manner every time I meet her, and for some reason Effie encourages her in her sauciness, and laughs at her affectations and airs as if they were rather bewitching."

"Effie can have no suspicion of Jack's infatuation?" old Mrs. Ray said questioningly.

"I feel sure she has, and gives it tacit encouragement. Effie has a motive in

most things that she does. The admiration she professes for Minnie Thurtle's good looks before Jack isn't motiveless," Jenifer said indignantly, as she felt how utterly powerless she was to cope with the policy of that superior young person her sister-in-law.

"I think my Jack will listen to me; my boy won't break my heart," his mother said once more, but she did not say it in tones of full assurance.

They found twice that day, and the first fox gave them a good hard run of forty minutes over a stiff country. When they killed, Mr. and Mrs. Ray and Captain Edgecumb were the only riders out of the large field that had started who were up with the hounds.

"As usual, you have the brush, Mrs. Ray," Captain Edgecumb said, as he came abreast of the brilliant and versatile young matron, for whose smiles he had fought valorously in her maiden days.

"I have, for, as usual, I'm in the right place," she cried out in her clear, jubilant, exultant tones, "and, as usual, you're in the wrong one," she added in a whisper. "Why are you not seeing Jenifer home instead of following to-day?"

"Simply because she wouldn't accept my escort."

Hubert was talking to the huntsman, and the pair who had been "sweethearts" once, were virtually alone. But even a rarefied and purified Mrs. Grundy could not have taken exception to the tone of their conversation.

"Do you know I'm beginning to think you're very stupid, and very ungrateful," she said seriously. "I know you like Jenifer, and I give you every opportunity of getting on with her, and you don't do it."

"You're quite right in saying that I like Miss Ray. I like her better than I do anyone I know."

"And better than you have ever liked anyone you have ever known? I'm sure I'm right in saying that, and I'm not in the least bit offended, for I haven't a spark of sentiment about me; no, not a spark of jealous sentiment," she added self-approvingly.

"Certainly you're as free from any folly of the sort as any woman whom it has been my luck to know," he agreed.

"I am; and therefore you ought to attend to my words of wisdom, and think that they're dictated by a pure spirit of reason, when I say you don't make the most of your opportunities with Jenifer."

"You really are my friend in that quarter, Mrs. Ray?"

"I really am," she said, turning her face fully towards him, in order that he might clearly read its eloquent expression.

"Is it liking for me, or hatred of anyone else?" he asked.

"Well, it's not 'hatred' of anyone else, but in a measure it's dread of someone else. I'm not going to tell you anything about the someone excepting this, that he's a man for whom I would throw over fifty Captain Edgecumbs."

Her pliant figure leant forward as she spoke, and her bright fair face shone upon him, and he remembered the day so well when such a gesture and such a look from her would have sent the blood coursing through his veins. But this day he only looked at her admiringly, and felt very grateful to her for the interest she expressed in his interest in Jenifer Ray.

"Won't you give me a hint as to who is my rival?" he asked.

"Indeed I won't; besides, I'm only suspicious, not sure, that he is your rival; at any rate, he's not a declared one, and in order to further your cause, and keep the field clear for you, I've pretended to take a dislike to him, and won't have him asked to Moor Royal."

"You're a valuable ally, Mrs. Ray; in return for your kindness I'll venture to give you a hint that you may act upon and save the Ray family a good deal of trouble. That young brother-in-law of yours is making a fool of himself with the gamekeeper's daughter. He was in Exeter with her yesterday, driving her about and shopping openly with her. She'll be Mrs. Jack Ray before his people suspect what he is about, if you don't interfere."

"It's not my duty to interfere with his low tastes and matrimonial schemes," she said; "he has a mother and sister to look after him, and if they're so blind as not to see the danger he's in, I'm not going to turn informer and tell them of it."

"You won't like it if he marries the girl. Remember you're one of the family, and anything that overclouds it will overcloud you. Such a sister-in-law settled at your gates won't be desirable."

"If I find it unpleasant, I'll make Hubert sell Moor Royal; I'm not wedded to the place or to the people about it. Jack's marrying in such a way, and disgracing us all, won't be half a bad excuse for wanting to get away," she said, speaking with her customary careless frankness, and as, just then, her husband rode up to rejoin them, the subject of Jack's probable misalliance dropped.

Meanwhile Minnie Thurtle had gone home, and after briefly relating to her mother what had passed up at the home-farmhouse, she began carefully packing up a rather extensive new wardrobe.

"My dresses will be as handsome as any Mrs. Ray has," she observed with much satisfaction to her mother, "and I shall look quite as well in them as she does in hers. There's no nonsense about her; she and I shall get on well enough, and I don't care about the old woman and Jenifer. There's nothing to get from them, as I shall tell Jack if they cut us and he makes a silly of himself about it."

"I shall never feel happy about it till I see you come out of the church with the ring on your finger," Mrs. Thurtle said anxiously. She was naturally proud of her handsome daughter, and highly gratified at the prospect of seeing her "made a lady of." But she had her maternal qualms about the marriage, as well as old Mrs. Ray.

"Perhaps the ring'll never be put on my finger in church," Minnie said a little confusedly.

"You don't mean to say that he and you'd demean yourselves by being married at a registry-office?" Mrs. Thurtle cried in horror; "we've always been church people, and I shouldn't be able to look folks in the face if my daughter went and got married, as if her husband was ashamed of her, at a registry-office. I should scarce look upon you as a wife, Minnie—don't you name such a thing again."

Not being prepared with a comforting answer to these doubts and fears of her mother's, Minnie took refuge in silence,

and a toss of the head. She was not a heartless daughter by any means, and it hurt and depressed her now to feel that her conduct would cause her mother sorrow when all the truth came to be known.

"And the truth shall be known as soon as ever Jack comes back from hunting to-day," she told herself resolutely. "I'm not going to have it said of me that I'm over-bold in going to a bachelor's house. Elsie'll be sorry enough she let her saucy tongue run on as it did to-day when the truth is known."

Her packing occupied her till late in the day, and still Jack did not come to the keeper's lodge to spend the evening as had been his wont of late. Minnie grew anxious, but not alarmed. She felt sure that old Mrs Ray had managed to gain speech with her son, and that a climax was coming.

In truth this was the case. Jack had fallen in with his brother and sister-in-law as they jogged home, and Effie with unusual suavity and cordiality had invited him back to Moor Royal to dinner. He hesitated for a moment or two, and then said:

"I shall be delighted, Effie, if you'll have me in this gear."

"We always dress for dinner, and men who dine with me think it worth their while to do so; but you can please yourself," she said coldly, and Jack felt humbled and reproved, but not at all offended.

"By Jove! I like a woman who knows what's due to her, and will have it," the young fellow thought half-admiringly, half-regretfully, for it came upon him like a blow that Minnie Thurtle would never be able to recall a man to a sense of what was due to her in such a way as this.

"All right, Effie, I'll stop at my own house, and dress, and follow you very soon," he said aloud good-temperedly, and then he rode home, to hear from Elsie, his domestic, a distorted account of what had happened in the morning.

"Oh, Mr. Jack, is it you?" Elsie cried with a little shriek of affected alarm as her master came stamping into the passage, shouting for hot water. "Lor', I'm all of a tremble like. Missus—your ma, least-ways, came in this morning, and here was Miss Minnie Thurtle a-ragin' and going on at me as if I was a convicted thief, and your ma hearing her, and I not able to say a word for fright."

"Go to the deuce, and get me some hot water!" Jack shouted, flying beyond ear-shot of the obnoxious communication.

"The whole business will explode to-night if mother's been down here and has seen Minnie," he said to himself thoughtfully as he dressed. "Well, I'm almost glad of it. Sooner or later it must be known, and I sha'n't feel like a sneak any longer when it is."

Still, though he said this, he felt very much inclined to send an excuse, and stay away from Moor Royal, when he pictured the sorrow that would shade his mother's eyes when she looked at him and knew the truth.

"I have been a fool," he said passionately; "but I will be the only sufferer by my folly. Poor Minnie shall never feel it, even if she does cost me the love of my mother and sister."

Jenifer was standing in the hall when he went in, and he knew by the way in which she came forward and linked her arm within his, and drew him into the library, that the climax was rapidly approaching.

"Dinner's always a little late on hunting days; Effie won't be down yet, so we'll go in here and have a word or two before dinner. Jack, whatever comes, you'll always be my brother, and I shall always love you; you feel that, don't you?"

He bowed his head assentingly, and something like a sob convulsed his breast; but he said nothing, and Jenifer went on:

"Mother went to your house to-day, Jack, and now she knows what I have been afraid of for a long time. Dear Jack, can you make us happy still—with honour?"

"No, I can't, Jenny darling," he blurted out, leaning his head down on his sister's shoulder. "Oh, Jenny, don't break me down completely, till I've been man enough to tell you all the truth. It's too late, dear, for anything to be said or done. I married Minnie in Exeter yesterday, and, I suppose, mother and you'll cut me?"

For answer she laid her hand on his, and led him to his mother's room.

"I knew you would come, my boy; I knew, I knew," the widow said, trying her hardest and bravest to speak calmly and brightly; "and I know you will listen to your mother, and give up this terrible folly that will poison the happiness of us all if you carry it——"

"Wait, mother dear," Jenifer's voice interrupted; "Jack has come to tell you everything, and you will hear it patiently, won't you?"

She looked from her son to her daughter in bewilderment.

"He has come to confess his folly, and to listen to his mother, and take his mother's advice, backed by her tears and prayers," she cried, casting her arms about him, and then, with almost a groan, Jack said:

"Mother, forgive me! I married Minnie yesterday."

He was so excited and agitated as he spoke that he was scarcely conscious that his mother recoiled from him, and cried out in the bitterness of her grief and anger that she "would rather have seen him in his coffin than have heard this."

But Jenifer saw and heard it all, and knew how little it was meant in reality, and was gratefully glad that Jack's mind was too preoccupied to take in the full force of it.

"Dear Jack," she whispered soothingly, "go to the drawing-room now. Leave mother, like a good boy, and you shall see her again presently. Go to Hubert and Effie; have no concealment from them."

As she spoke, the last dinner-bell rang, and Jack went out to meet Hubert and his wife with his heavy secret unknown.

There was no opportunity of telling them, for dinner was served, and they were under the vigilant eyes of the servants. Presently Jenifer came in and took her place opposite to Jack with an apology for her mother's absence from the dinner-table.

"What's the matter with your mother, Hubert?" Mrs. Ray asked pettishly. "If people are ill in my house, I wish they'd say so, and not send down mysterious messages that leave me in the dark as to the real reason why they absent themselves from my dinner-table."

"My mother's at liberty to do as she pleases in her own home," Hubert said in reluctant reproof.

"Scarcely, I think, when her 'home' happens to be in another person's house," Mrs. Ray said coolly.

Then she made things easier for everybody by sending away dish after dish untasted, until Hubert felt almost annoyed with his mother for indulging "in a caprice" which robbed Effie of her appetite.

Jack had been nerving himself for the manly performance of a task that was odious to him during the whole of dinner, and as soon as they were left alone he began cracking filberts industriously, and prepared himself for action.

"Effie," he began rather hoarsely and with his fair boy's face looking strangely white and pain-lined, "you are vexed

with mother for not dining with us to-night, but you should rather be vexed with me."

She turned her face quickly towards him, and the bright smile that flashed out from her big blue eyes and small gleaming teeth encouraged him.

"I have told my mother to-night something that has distressed her dreadfully—something that perhaps she will never forgive me for," he said with a gulp. "I owe it to Hubert and you to tell you also; but I think you'll stand by us and not cast us off. I married Minnie Thurtle in Exeter yesterday, and—as you treat me, so must you treat my wife."

"I distinctly decline to associate with a gamekeeper's daughter on terms of equality," Effie said, rising up with all her ordinary graceful self-possession. "As for you, Jack, I'll treat you still as a bachelor brother if you like to come here sometimes, but I think your wife and I can have so little in common, that it would be absurd for me to attempt to notice her."

Then she made them a pretty sweeping bow and retired to one of her own fastnesses to write a highly-coloured and amusing account of the scene to her sister Flora.

"So Jack's disposed of," she thought complacently as she sealed her letter. "Young idiot! he actually thought that I was going to take up his precious wife because I fooled him to the top of his bent about her. I wish Edgcomb would take the plunge, then I should be rid of the lot of them. I do wonder that old Mrs. Ray is mean-spirited enough to stay on here when she must see that I want her to go."

"Won't you go and say a word to mother, Effie? She's feeling this about Jack awfully," her husband said, coming in to her presently.

She shrugged her pretty, slender shoulders and told him "No; family bothers were things she did not mean to take to herself."

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THE life of this wonderful, but wayward, genius, is amusing and interesting in the highest degree; indeed, his autobiography, with its curious mixture of fact and fiction, is, as Walpole observed, "more amusing than any novel."

The time in which he lived was a curiously brilliant period of Italy's history,

and the worship which rank then paid to genius gained him the intimacy of two Popes, Clement the Seventh, and Paul the Third; the Dukes Alessandro and Cosmo de' Medici, Francis the First, and Charles the Fifth—besides cardinals innumerable—and all the great Italian sculptors and painters of his day, including Michel Angelo and Titian.

"He touched nothing which he did not adorn," might well be said of him, and nothing was done by him that was not only an art gem in conception, but in workmanship as well. Luckily for us, his works have always been so highly prized, that they have been well cared for and tended, and, consequently, most of them have survived until our day. English gold has been able to procure for this country examples of his work that, once obtained, are literally priceless, and, being both in royal and good private collections, they are not likely again to leave these shores.

As there is no other lengthened biography of him than that which he wrote himself, or rather which he dictated to the young son of Michel di Goro della Pieve a Groppino, whilst he went on with his work, we are constrained to follow it, believing it to be true in all its main facts, although there can be no doubt he was led astray, occasionally, by his fervid imagination, his egregious vanity, and his love of the marvellous.

His vanity, however, was his weakest point, and his truthfulness in many cases had to yield to it. Knowing to the full his capabilities and powers, he endeavoured to believe that he could excel in everything, until his imagination became diseased, and he had recourse to what, in plain English, we should call downright lying.

He was the son of Giovanni Cellini and Maria Lisabetta Granacci, who were both natives of Florence, where he was born in the year 1500; but he said his ancestors had great possessions in the valley of Ambras, where they lived until one of the family named Cristofano quarrelled with some of their neighbours. The two disputants were compelled to separate; one was sent to Sienna, and Cristofano, who was Benvenuto's great-grandfather, was banished to Florence, where he settled.

Benvenuto owed his name to his father's dread of having another daughter, and when he heard a boy was born, he looked up to heaven and said, "Lord, I thank thee from the bottom of my heart for this present, which is very dear and welcome."

And when pressed to give the child a name, all he would answer was that he was benvenuto (welcome); so Benvenuto he was christened.

Whether he forgot the incidents of his childhood or not, or simply wanted to make out that in his early days he was marked as a prodigy, it is impossible to say, but he immediately commences his marvellous stories. First, he relates that he, when three years old, caught hold of a large scorpion, which did not harm him, although its bite or sting was deadly, and that he would not let it go, so that his father had, by gentle application of a pair of scissors, to decapitate it and cut off its sting. Next, when he was five years old, and looking at the fire, he was astonished to receive a box on the ear from his father, the cause of which the fond parent explained thus: "My dear child, I don't give you that box for any fault you have committed, but that you may recollect that the little creature which you see in the fire is a salamander; such a one as never was beheld before to my knowledge;" and then he embraced him and gave him money.

A child thus early favoured by the special sight of such a rarity as a salamander in the fire, must necessarily be reserved, in his after life, for some special fate. He probably inherited his artistic taste from his father, who, besides being an engineer and one of the court musicians, carved in ivory. He sadly wanted Benvenuto to give up his whole time to music, and set his heart upon his son becoming a proficient on the flute; but the boy, although musical, preferred drawing, and so it came to pass that he was bound apprentice to a goldsmith of Pinzi di Monte, called Michelagnolo, the father of the Cavaliere Baccio Bandinelli, who perhaps, as a sculptor, in his age approached Michel Angelo more nearly than any other, and who, in after life, became Cellini's pet aversion. But the boy was restless, and, leaving his master, engaged himself to another goldsmith, one Antonio di Sandro.

When he was sixteen, his brother, who then was but fourteen years of age, had a duel, and, in the squabble which afterwards ensued, Benvenuto got mixed up; the consequence being that the Council of Eight banished both of them for six months for a distance of ten miles from the city. Our hero went to Sienna, and there followed his trade with a goldsmith named Francesco Castoro. From thence he went to Bologna, where he stayed a time, and then returned to Florence.

There he abode a short time, until his brother returned in somewhat evil case, and having helped himself to some of Benvenuto's clothes without having first gone through the formality of asking his leave, Benvenuto got somewhat disgusted, left the parental roof, and went to Lucca, from thence to Pisa, but within a year he returned to Florence.

We narrowly escaped having him here in England—for Torregiano, who was employed by Henry the Eighth to make the magnificent tomb of his father, was then in Florence, seeking workmen to come to England. He saw some of Cellini's drawings and work, and warmly pressed him to go with him, but he refused, because Torregiano boasted of having broken Michel Angelo's nose with a blow of his fist. As Buonarroti was Cellini's divinity, whom he devotedly worshipped, this was more than he could bear—and it is owing to this circumstance that England was deprived of the advantages of his talents.

He stayed at Florence until his nineteenth year, when he quite suddenly decamped, with a companion named Tasso, without even mentioning the matter to their parents, and went to Rome. Tasso soon returned to Florence, but Cellini found work, and stayed there for two years, when he, also, got home-sick, and returned to his father. But, he says, the goldsmiths at Florence were jealous of his good work, and he got into quarrels and brawls—indeed his temper was ever leading him into some scrape, one of which was so serious, that he had to fly Florence, and once more seek Rome, where he found Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, an old friend of his father's, had been elected Pope, under the title of Clement the Seventh (1523).

Here, the beauty of his workmanship soon procured him patrons among the aristocracy and the magnates of the Church, and he found that he could earn more money at making jewellery than at goldsmith's work pure and simple.

He soon came under the notice of the Pope, though not through his handicraft. He was asked by a friend, who was one of the Pope's household musicians, to play the flute at the Pope's Ferragosto (which was a Roman Festival, held on the 1st of August), and his performance so delighted his Holiness, that he enquired his name. Finding he was the son of his old Florentine acquaintance, Giovanni Cellini, he immediately appointed him one of his musicians,

and gave him a hundred gold crowns to divide with his new associates. Of course, he could not accept this good fortune like an ordinary mortal, so he had a vision of his father coming to him and bidding him take it under penalty of his curse; and, as if this tale required some sort of confirmation, he asserts that at the very same time, his father had a similar vision.

At this time he was making a silver vase for the Bishop of Salamanca, of very curious workmanship. It took a long time to make, so long, indeed, that the bishop's patience got exhausted, and, when he got it at last, he vowed that he would be as slow in paying for it as it had been long in manufacture. This angered Cellini, and led to a scene which is interesting, as illustrating the manners of the times. One day, in the bishop's absence, a Spanish gentleman was handling the vase, and by his clumsiness managed to injure it, so that it had to be returned to Cellini to be repaired. Once having got it into his possession, he was determined not to part with it. The bishop wanted it, however, to show somebody, and sent a servant who demanded it rudely. To this the answer was that the bishop should have it when he paid for it, and the man, after alternately supplicating and bullying, went away, swearing he would return with a body of Spaniards, and cut him in pieces.

Cellini got out his gun, and prepared for action; and hardly had he done so, when his house was attacked by a band of infuriated Spaniards, nor was it till some Roman gentlemen came to his assistance that the assailants retired. Cellini threatened to lay the whole affair before the Pope, but ultimately armed himself, and, with his servant carrying the disputed vase, he sought the bishop's presence, and, after some demur, he obtained payment.

When the Pope did hear of it, Cellini's conduct met with his warm approval, and commissions from cardinals and grandees flowed in upon him, especially for those medallions which it was then the fashion to wear in the hat. This induced him to study seal-engraving, at which he became a great adept, making many of the cardinals' seals. He also practised enamelling, which was of great use to him in his jewellery.

Then came a plague in Rome, and he amused himself by going into the country shooting. Of course, his skill exceeded everybody else's, if his own statements are

to be accepted as facts, killing pigeons, etc., invariably with a single bullet.

He next turned his attention to damascening on steel and silver, and some of his steel rings inlaid with gold fetched over forty crowns, which was less than half of what a brother artist, Caradosso, obtained for his work.

This was all very well in the piping times of peace, but war was at hand, and all the potentates of Italy got mixed up in the quarrel between Francis the First and Charles the Fifth. Cellini took up arms in defence of Rome, and, according to his own account, performed prodigies of valour. On the night of May 5th, 1527, Charles de Bourbon suddenly arrived before Rome with an army of forty thousand men, and next morning assaulted the city, where he was killed, early in the day, by a musket shot, whilst he was leading on his troops, scaling-ladder in hand. Of course, our hero claimed to have shot him, nor only so, but when Clement betook himself to the castle of St. Angelo for safety, Cellini had command of a portion of the ordnance, where, to the Pope's admiration, he killed large numbers of the enemy, and said he wounded the Prince of Orange.

One sample of his own version of his deeds of prowess may be given :

"I saw a man who was employed in getting the trenches repaired, and who stood with a spear in his hand, dressed in rose colour, and I began to deliberate how I could lay him flat. I took my swivel, which was almost equal to a demi-culverin, turned it round, and charging it with a good quantity of fine and coarse powder mixed, aimed at him exactly. Though he was at so great a distance, that it could not be expected any effort of art should make such pieces carry so far, I fired off the gun, and hit the man in red exactly in the middle. He had arrogantly placed his sword before him in a sort of Spanish bravado, but the ball of my piece hit against his sword, and the man was seen severed in two pieces. The Pope, who did not dream of any such thing, was highly delighted and surprised at what he saw, as well because he thought it impossible that such a piece could carry so far, as that he could not conceive how the man could be cut into two pieces."

Things grew desperate, and, before the capitulation on June 5th, 1527, Clement employed Cellini to take all the jewels of the regalia from their settings, and melt down the gold, which weighed about a

hundred pounds. The jewels, for safety, were sewn into the skirts of the dresses both of the Pontiff and his master of the horse.

After the capitulation, Cellini returned to Florence, where he found his father well ; and, having administered to his necessities, he went to Mantua, where he visited Giulio Romano, who recommended him to the duke, from whom he speedily had commissions. He did not stop long there, however, but returned to Florence, where he found all his family, with the exception of a brother and sister, dead of the plague—that dreadful scourge which from May to November, 1527, killed forty thousand persons in Florence.

Here he stayed some little time, and was visited by Michel Angelo ; but at last the Pope, hearing he was at Florence, begged him to come to Rome, and offered him very advantageous terms. But he coquetted before he consented, and when he did go, he refrained for some time from visiting the Pope.

At last they met, and Clement gave him a commission, which turned out one of his masterpieces, to make him a morse, or clasp, for his pontifical cape.

He afterwards designed and struck some medals and coins, and was appointed stamp-master to the mint, with a liberal salary.

And now follows an episode which shows the general lawlessness of those days. Brawling, street-fighting, and assassination were of everyday occurrence, and swords leaped lightly from their scabbards on slender pretence, when worn by these impulsive Italians.

His brother—who was in Rome, in the service of Alessandro de' Medici—of course got quarrelsome, a fight occurred, and he was shot in the leg. Benvenuto immediately joined in the *melée*, and would have killed the musqueteer who shot his brother, had not the man escaped. The surgeons proposed cutting off the brother's leg—but their patient would not hear of it, and consequently died. Benvenuto sorrowed deeply for him, and brooded over revenge, until he found out the habitation of the unfortunate musqueteer. Him he found standing at his door, and, without more ado, he smote and felled him with a blow from a long dagger ; and, when the poor wretch could not help himself, he stabbed him in the collar-bone and neck with such force that he could not extract the dagger. Having thus assassinated his enemy, he left the dagger in the corpse, and immediately sought Duke Alessandro,

who at once accorded him his protection, and told him to go on with the work he had in hand for his holiness. And all the notice ever taken of this outrage, was that at their next interview, the Pope slightly frowned on Cellini, and said significantly to him: "Now that you have recovered your health, Benvenuto, take care of yourself."

He was now in high favour, kept five journeymen, and was entrusted by the Pope with all his jewels for resetting—but these he narrowly escaped losing, owing to a burglary at his house, which was partially defeated through the sagacity of his dog, who afterwards met the thief in the street, flew at him, and would not be beaten off. There was nothing left for the thief to do but to confess, and this he did, making full restitution of the stolen property; so that Cellini and his dog were satisfied—there always is a halo of romance about everything connected with this wonderful man.

The Pope was highly delighted with his morse, and made Cellini one of his mace-bearers, who preceded the pontiff carrying rods. He also gave him an order to make a chalice, and the design was worthy of the master. Instead of an ordinary stem the cup was upheld by three figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and on the foot were three bosses, on which were represented, in basso-relievo, three stories relating to the figures. And it was over this chalice that he and his friend and protector, the Pope, quarrelled.

No sooner was the design shown to his holiness, and duly admired, than Benvenuto must needs ask for more preferment; this time a place worth over eight hundred crowns yearly. The Pope refused, saying, if he enriched the artist, he would no longer care to work; but at last consented to give him the next good piece of preferment that fell vacant, provided he made haste and finished the chalice. The Pope went to Bologna, and Cellini says he made great progress with his work, but could not get on for want of more gold, which he could not obtain from the papal treasury. Besides which, he says he suffered from bad eyes, so much so that he thought he should lose his sight.

On his return, the Pope sent for him, and was so displeased with him for the little progress that he had made in his work, that he fell in a violent passion, and said:

"As there is truth in God, I assure you, since you value no living soul, that, if

a regard for decency did not prevent me, I would order both you and your work to be thrown this moment out of the window."

Cellini still pleaded his blindness, and in a few days the Pope sent for him, and spoke kindly to him.

But intrigues were going on against him. Through the influence of Cardinal Salviati—who was no friend to Benvenuto—a rival goldsmith, named Tobbia, was introduced to Clement, and in a competition between Cellini and Tobbia, for the mounting of a unicorn's—or narwhal's—horn, which was to be sent as a present to Francis the First, Tobbia gained the day. Then he irritated the Pope by asking for more money for gold for the chalice, which never seemed nearer completion, and then he was dismissed from his situation in the mint. At last the Pope lost all patience, and sent for the chalice, finished or unfinished. Cellini refused to yield it. His argument was, that the Pope had advanced him five hundred crowns, which he would return, but that he had no right whatever to the unfinished cup. Nor could anything stir him from his resolution.

He was taken before the governor of Rome; but neither threats nor cajolings prevailed, and the matter ended in his having his own way, returning the money, and keeping the unfinished chalice. It must, however, have been some comfort to him to find that the pontiff did not appreciate his rival's work.

Presumably, Cellini considered this portion of his life as tame, so he launches out in a cock and bull story of his studying necromancy in company with a Sicilian priest. They employed a boy as a medium, and there were the usual clouds of incense-burning, perfumes, etc., until the medium declared they were surrounded by a million fierce men, besides four armed giants. This even daunted our hero; but at last, although at one time the place was full of devils, they gradually disappeared, until only a few were left, who accompanied them on their way home, playfully leaping and skipping, sometimes running on the roofs of the houses, and sometimes on the ground. This seems to have been his worst encounter with spirits, and he settled down once more to his trade, until his bad temper again got him into trouble.

This time he quarrelled with a Signor Benedetto, who provoked him beyond endurance by telling him that he and his partner Felice were both scoundrels. Cellini's hot blood fired up at this,

and, scooping up a handful of mud out of the street, he threw it at Benedetto. Unfortunately, there was a sharp flint with the dirt, which stunned him, and so cut his head that it bled profusely. Some meddler told the Pope that Benvenuto had just murdered his rival Tobbia, and the Pope, in a passion, ordered the governor of Rome to seize Cellini, and hang him at once. Luckily for him he got instant information, and lost no time in flying from Rome as fast as a horse could gallop, leaving the irate pontiff to find out almost immediately afterwards that Tobbia was alive and well.

He fled to Naples, where the viceroy would fain have kept him, but Cardinal de' Medici having written to him to return to Rome without delay, he did so, and immediately set about a medal for the Pope, commemorating the universal peace between 1530 and 1536. He continued to enjoy Clement's favour until his death in 1534, at which time he had a quarrel with, and killed, a man named Pompeo, so had to seek the protection of some powerful friend, whom he found in Cardinal Cornaro; and the new Pope, Paul the Third—Cardinal Alessandro Farnese—gave him not only a safe conduct, but at once employed him in the mint. But, having aroused the enmity of Signor Pier Luigi Farnese, who hired a disbanded soldier to assassinate him, he thought it time to move, and went to Florence.

Duke Alessandro de' Medici received him very kindly, and would have had him stay, but he went with two friends of his—sculptors—to Venice, where they stopped a short time, and then returned to Florence, where he employed himself at the mint and in making jewellery, until a safe conduct arrived for him from the Pope, with his commands that he should immediately repair to Rome.

On his arrival, the magistrates, who were not aware of his protection, sent some of the city guards to arrest him for the murder of Pompeo, but they retired upon seeing the document, and Cellini had his pardon properly registered. After this he had a violent illness, and nearly died; and he attributes his recovery to drinking plentifully of cold water whilst in a violent fever. But even his convalescence must be attended with some extraordinary occurrence, for he vomited a hairy worm, about a quarter of a cubit long; the hairs were very long, and the worm was shockingly ugly, having spots of different colours,

green, black, and red; in fact, quite an artistic worm, worthy of having emanated from such a genius.

He required his native air of Florence to restore him to health, but found the duke much prejudiced against him, owing to malicious reports; so, after a short stay, he returned to Rome, and very soon after, Alessandro was assassinated by Lorenzo de' Medici, 6th January, 1537, and Cosmo reigned in his stead.

At this time Charles the Fifth paid a visit to Rome, and the Pope thought to make him some extraordinary present. Cellini suggested a gold crucifix in which he could utilise the statuettes and ornaments of his beloved chalice, but Paul decided to give a superbly illuminated missal, and Cellini was to make the cover, which was to be of gold, adorned with jewels worth about six thousand crowns, and he was also deputed to be the bearer of the present to the emperor, who reciprocated the Pope's gift by a diamond which had cost him twelve thousand crowns, which Cellini afterwards set as a ring for Pope Paul. But he complained that he was not paid commensurately for his labour, either in the ring or the book-cover, so he determined to go to France, and finally accomplished the journey, wonderful to relate, without any marvellous adventures, but only the ordinary incidents of travel.

He arrived in Paris, saw, and was graciously received by Francis the First, started with him on his journey to Lyons, where it was arranged that Cellini should stay, and then, unstable as water, because he was taken ill, and his attendant, Ascanio, had the ague, he was disgusted with France, and determined to return to Rome, which he reached in safety, and continued his business peacefully, having eight assistants.

One of these, however, treacherously and falsely told the secretary of his old enemy, Pier Luigi, that Benvenuto was worth at least eighty thousand ducats, the greatest portion of which belonged to the Church, and which he had stolen when in the Castle of St. Angelo during the siege of Rome.

This was a bait too great for the avarice of the Pope, so one fine morning poor Cellini found himself in custody of the city guard, and safely lodged in the Castle of St. Angelo, he being at this time but thirty-seven years of age. After a delay of some days he was examined, and made a good defence, but to no purpose. Pier Luigi had asked his father for Cellini's money, and the Pope had granted his

prayer; and even the remonstrances of King Francis the First were useless—for he was told that Benvenuto was a turbulent, troublesome fellow, and his majesty was advised not to interfere, because he was kept in prison for committing murder and other crimes. The king even begged for his release on the grounds that as he had visited France with the Pope's permission, and with the intention of remaining, he was virtually his subject; but even this reasoning could not prevail, and Cellini must remain in durance.

The constable of St. Angelo was a Florentine, and greatly tempered the severity of Cellini's incarceration by allowing him to walk freely about the castle on parole. But it seems that the constable was subject to annual fits of monomania. One year he fancied himself a pitcher of oil; another year, a frog, and would leap about as such; and this year he was a bat, and, believing in his own powers of volition, he fancied that Cellini's ingenuity might also enable him to fly, and thus escape.

So his parole was taken from him, and he was shut up. This naturally made Benvenuto anxious to escape, and, having torn up his sheets, and made lengths of rope therewith, he managed to steal a pair of pincers. With these latter, he drew the nails which fastened the iron plates to the door, making false heads with wax and iron rust.

Matters being thus prepared, he made his attempt one night, and succeeded in getting outside, but at the cost of a broken leg. In his helpless condition some mastiffs set upon him, and he had a desperate fight with them. A water-carrier gave him a lift, and got him farther away, and then he crawled and dragged himself on hands and knees, trying to reach the house of the Duchess Ottavio, who had formerly been the wife of the murdered Alessandro de' Medici. However, luckily, a servant of Cardinal Cornaro saw him in this plight, and immediately told his master, who at once had him fetched in and his injuries seen to.

The cardinal next went to the Pope to intercede for his protégé, and at first Paul seemed inclined to pardon, for he himself had once broken out of St. Angelo, where he had been imprisoned for forging a papal brief. But Cellini's evil genius, Pier Luigi, was present; his counsels had too much weight, and the unfortunate artist was taken, nominally as a guest of the pontiff, to the papal palace, and after a

little time he was conveyed again to the Castle of St. Angelo.

Here the crazy governor, in order to keep him safely, confined him in a very dark room under the garden, the floor of which was covered with water, and which was, besides, tenanted by tarantulas and other noxious insects.

Deprived of all society, and with no books save a Bible and the Chronicles of Villani, Cellini's reason seems to have partially given way, and he records numerous visions seen, which, it is needless to say, were of the most astounding nature. Indeed the Pope believed him mad, and sent word to the governor of St. Angelo to take no further heed of him, but to mind the salvation of his own soul—for though the governor had recovered his reason, his health was undermined.

With returning sense, he treated his prisoner better, giving him pens, ink, and paper, besides modelling wax and implements, so that his lot was much ameliorated; nay, just before his death, he allowed Cellini almost the same liberty he had enjoyed when first he was imprisoned—a privilege which was confirmed by his successor, Antonio Ugolini.

About this time, Cellini says, an attempt was made to poison him by mixing pounded diamonds with his food, but this was defeated by the avarice of the person employed to make the powder, who kept the real stone and pounded a counterfeit. After this the governor sent him food from his own table, and one of his servants tasted it.

Brighter days were now in store for our hero, for the Cardinal of Ferrara, coming to Rome from the court of France, finding the Pope one day in a good humour, asked, as a boon, in the name of the king his master, the liberation of Cellini, which was graciously accorded, and he was at once released before the news could come to the ears of his enemy, Pier Luigi.

MRS. BEAUMONT'S LOVE STORY.

SHE had said it, and had meant it too—at the time. And now he was gone, perhaps for good. She stood, one slender arm leant upon the mantelpiece, gazing downward into the flames, thinking of the effect of her words. How hateful she must have seemed in his eyes—those honest eyes of his—when she wilfully put aside his earnest remonstrances, and would hear

nothing. There was resentment still in her quivering lip and flushed cheek, but her heart sank as she thought of what awaited her if he would not speak.

"Very well," he had said, clearly and calmly, pride being roused at last; "if you will not listen, Florrie, there is nothing left for me but to go." What business had he to be calm at such a moment? Men always took these things more easily than women, their conceit enabling them to appear masters of the situation even when they ought to look worsted. She remembered he had turned as he reached the door, and added half-tenderly: "Will you?" And her pride had not permitted her to soften then, or look up.

The worst was—was it the worst? she tried to think—that she was going to a ball that night where he would be. Suppose he sulked and would not speak. Would people notice it? At all events she could not speak first. Tom Carrington would have to seek her out for himself, if he wanted her. She would behave exactly as if he was not there until he had made amends. No more dances kept with an initial made by herself—it was cruel to think of it. She would keep two, just in case. Then she resolved to banish him utterly from her thoughts for the present, and leave the unravelling of the knot till the evening. Meanwhile considerations of dress claimed her. So she hurried away out of the pretty, sunlit drawing-room, and was invisible till lunch-time.

In the afternoon there was positively nothing more to be done. The sky had clouded over, and the London streets and squares looked miserable in the dripping rain. It was lucky rain did not stop people going to balls, Florrie Belton thought. Time seemed to lag dreadfully. Perhaps it was the long wet afternoon, for she was not ordinarily eager or excitable about balls and festivities, getting enough of them to take them as they came. But somehow she could not help feeling that this might be a crisis. While her aunt dozed comfortably until the advent of afternoon-tea should call for semi-wakefulness, she went over the scene of the morning in her mind. She decided she had said nothing that she had not meant; nothing that was not perfectly just and true—at least it looked like being true, if nobody took the trouble to explain it. And he never did explain anything properly. He always said "Very well," in a provoking sort of way, eyebrows and shoulders

going up together, as if he were the most hardly-used man in creation. Even when she was right and he was wrong, there was no good in going on with it after that. There is positively no satisfaction in being right, when everyone else gives you dispassionately to understand that they think you wrong.

How dismal London looks in a shower! If someone only would call. The very dogs outside wandered up and down in a melancholy way, peering aimlessly into doorways and down areas. Hush, that was a knock! A visitor's knock, calculated to shake people into amiably expectant attitudes, followed by a genteel ring—a curfew for the suppression of shabby novels, old slippers, and other "uncómpany" things.

It may be remarked of Miss Belton, senior, that she was never surprised. She had only to open her eyes on occasions like the present, and there she was, equal to anything, from a telegram to a peeress. Mr. Henry Beaumont, who smiled his easy way into the room, was a visitor to whom Miss Belton was ever ready to do infinite honour. He was one of that numerous body of well-dressed, well-fed, gentlemanly do-nothings, whose lives are one consistent effort to please themselves. At thirty-five, and what is called a ladies' man, he was for ever to be met with dawdling in the wake of some attractive woman or another. Not because he was susceptible, but because, being a man of taste, he liked to be seen and heard of in the society of what he called "presentable women." Presentable women, for their part, were glad to see him; for was he not good-looking, of good figure, very well off, and not the least bit in the world bald?

Miss Belton, who was about the most entertaining old maid in London when she thought fit, roused herself to her utmost conversational pressure whenever she saw Henry Beaumont. Florrie saw it, and usually contrived to qualify her aunt's attentions by remarks of a casual and practical nature. She diverted herself by dissecting Mr. Beaumont's agreeable commonplaces, and shaking him into something like reality. After fifteen years of saying what we do not mean, it is sometimes refreshing to be called upon to say what we do; and Beaumont liked it. He felt it did him good. It was something to have come across a girl who cared not one jot for what he said, and who persistently threw cold water upon her aunt's civilities, when those civilities seemed to bear any-

thing like a reference to herself. To-day he waded patiently through the elder lady's flow of general conversation, and having elicited the fact that they were going to the B——'s ball, calmly fished for an invitation to dine and escort them, and got it.

So dinner was not the dreary probation Florrie had reckoned upon its being. Beaumont was agreeable and facetious; and when he had gone off to his chambers to dress, she was in a more hopeful mood. After all, there were people in the world who had no wish to snub her.

Why should she be snubbed by one man, when there were plenty of others richer, more agreeable, more amusing, and perhaps handsomer, who were ready to take her word for law, and defer to her on all occasions? And what were those others to her? she asked herself with reactionary inconsistency. Nothing, absolutely nothing. Their attentions bored, when they did not amuse her. She saw them for what they were: men who tried to pique her vanity and gratify their own; men who amused themselves with her as with a pretty child; men who never spoke to her on any subject which could be worth a moment's serious consideration; men who had never thought it worth their masculine while to see whether a woman could grapple with the graver questions of life, or pronounce an opinion on anything outside the lazy, artificial world of fashion and its ignoble pleasures.

When they alighted under the broad awning at the B——'s, people were arriving fast. The big staircase was blocked with arrivals who could neither get up nor down. It was one of those crushes where the hostess parades her entire acquaintance regardless of their comfort. Girls with their wraps still about them were waiting in the draughty hall, tapping their feet to the distant melodies of the Hungarians which occasionally floated down from above. The two ladies followed Beaumont into the tea-room, where they sat down to wait for the subsidence of the crowd. He was very deferential to-night—almost tender, Florrie thought; and looked very well. She could not but call to mind one or two of her friends who would have prized his attention. There was no sign of the man she sought in the tea-room, however; only a few stragglers who had failed in their attempts on the staircase, and had sat down like sensible people to wait patiently. As they passed in, Florrie caught sight of her face in the glass, and

was startled to see a drawn, anxious look upon it. Why should she be anxious about anything with Beaumont's flow of racy witty talk in her ears? But she could not attend. Luckily he did not seem to notice her absence of mind, but went on with his cool criticism of the heated struggling mass, which was visible on the staircase outside. It is much to believe in oneself in this world. Henry Beaumont certainly knew from long experience that he could be entertaining; but he overvalued himself to-night. Man of the world though he was, he did not see it, but calmly and confidently reckoned his chances of success with this girl, who, he had lately acknowledged to himself, was a presentable woman who was likely to make a very presentable wife.

A sudden unaccountable clearance on the stairs came as a relief to Florrie. Once in the dancing-room she looked round quickly for the familiar face among the knot of her acquaintances who pressed forward. She began to think it was not there, till, near the end of her first valse with Beaumont, she caught sight of it through a doorway. A contented face enough ordinarily, it had a shade upon it now which the half light of the landing did not reveal. A showy-looking girl with dark eyes and fair hair was looking up into his face. Florrie thought he looked rather bored, and tried to catch his eye, as she and her partner whirled near them. But it was not to be caught. It wandered provokingly over every conceivable object in her neighbourhood, carefully inspected remote corners and particular persons in the crowd of dancers, but never came in her direction. She longed for the power of the evil eye, of which people were conscious even in the backs of their heads. Whenever she got near, some remark of that flippant-looking girl seemed to call for special attention. Could he be avoiding her? She did not think so; he was evidently looking out for someone. She could read his face well enough to know that. Next time they came round, he was gone, and a portly old gentleman in a capacious white waistcoat stood by the dark-eyed one's side.

Fate, who is often very persistent in denying us what we most especially want, has a trick of throwing it into our laps at the last moment, when we least expect it. At the end of the valse, no sooner was Florrie comfortably settled in a sort of greenhouse recess with Beaumont, than Tom appeared in the opening, conveying a dowager. At first it was evident he did

not recognise them, for they were in semi-obscure; and Florrie prayed that he might not look again. But he did, taking them both in with a glance that seemed to shrivel her up with its quiet scorn. For a moment she lost her presence of mind. Then she bowed, a little too late, for the benefit of his back, as he retired muttering something about the seats being occupied. Beaumont had looked up, seeing the unguarded play in his fair partner's face, and caught sight of the ill-assorted couple in full retreat. A smile played under his well-waxed moustache.

"There goes Carrington," said he, "boring himself with the old women as usual. Always his way when he can't get what he wants."

It was said in a tone of quiet irony and superiority that made Florrie's blood boil. Mentally she contrasted the two men. The assured suavity and gentlemanly drawl of the one before her; the quiet sense of power that wealth and social status had stamped upon his face and bearing—even his gestures. Above all the worldly, trivial, heartless, soulless talk, and the cruel gibing tone which, as a professed knower of men, he employed in connection with many things yet sacred in Florrie's eyes.

Then the other with his manly outspoken way. One could listen to what he said. It was reliable, if occasionally blunt. Not so experienced as Beaumont, he wanted in tact and temper on occasions. "Fads," savouring of a schoolboy's glorified notions, still clung about him; amongst them might be found an exacting conception of what a woman should be. Sincere and upright, retiring and sensitive in contact with those not quite to his taste, genial and completely at his ease only with a few—of whom Florrie knew she was one—such morally was Tom Carrington. By profession he was a subaltern in one of Her Majesty's foot regiments, and what is called poor.

But Miss Belton was not without some spirit. She would not have allowed her dearest friend to see her look downcast because a man misjudged her. When they got down to the refreshment-room, which was crowded with heated, thirsty couples, she took some champagne. It did her good; she felt she could and would enjoy herself now, come what might. And what was to prevent her? She had dances with all the best men there. A knot of them were waiting for her at the top of the stairs when the dancing recommenced. Amongst them

was Carrington, not waiting for her, certainly, for he had got possession of the dark-eyed one's card, and was coolly picking valses here and there upon it. It was an opportunity. Touching his arm lightly as she passed, Florrie asked him archly if he were not going to ask her to dance. It was spoken with perfect naturalness and grace. She had great control of feature; no covert pique; no—well, to a practised ear there might have been a shade of over-intensity in her tone, a sad appeal to his better nature, hidden far down in the depths of a necessarily conventional utterance. But Carrington's ear was not practised. He was a baby in the ways of the sex. He had thought her frivolous in the morning for picking a quarrel with him about what he considered nothing at all, and for refusing to listen to any explanation; and now he regarded this as a fresh piece of levity. She could go and sit with Beaumont in the conservatory, and then beckon him back like a child who has been put in the corner. It was very foolish and ridiculous, no doubt, but men, otherwise of great common-sense, are invariably very foolish and childish when jealousy is once aroused. So there was an awkward pause, which Carrington did not attempt to break, and Florrie, seeing the little effect she had made, swept away with her new partner into the ball-room, despair in her heart and utter indifference on her face. Perhaps, if she had not been so good an actress, she might have fared better; but what is a delicately-minded girl to do when a man, however much she may care for him, remains persistently deaf and blind?

It was very hot. When is a dance otherwise to those engaged in it? The neglected ones shivered in the keen draught that blew from the open windows, but lingered on, having, indeed, little alternative, and dependent for their very exit on remote supping chaperons, or fortuitous male escort, which offered not. Luckless beings! What do they here, who can neither dance well, talk much, still less look handsome and seem merry, which are qualifications in some degree indispensable to social success? Never was any place where we so selfishly seek our own ends and pleasure like the ball-room. Awkwardness and stupidity, elsewhere meeting with ordinary politeness and consideration, here find their true level. Beauty, wit, and assurance are all in all. What, indeed, have we to say to virtue if she squints, or dances some forgotten *deux-temps*, or fears

men like a nun? Pleasure, untrammelled by social duties, here reigns supreme; the beauty dances all the night and dreams of her successes; the poor wallflower returns home, her gloves uncreased, to wonder why women are ever ugly.

The ball, which, in spite of her success, had seemed almost interminable to Florrie, was now drawing to its close. Her aunt, having by this time exhausted even her large capabilities for loud, slow, elderly gossip in the lower regions, begged Beaumont to find her niece. He was nothing loth, and brought her down, looking flushed and pretty, to the hall, where a dawdling crowd of departures were laughing and talking noisily with that absence of constraint that sets in in the small hours. He arranged her wraps with an air of proprietorship which galled her, and did not escape her aunt's sharp vision. But she turned and thanked him with her frank smile, and at the same moment caught sight of Carrington standing very solemn and very upright at the door, his hat on his head and a cigarette in his mouth.

Such was the depth of self-abasement to which she had fallen, such was the humbling of her pride, that she would have given worlds to quit Beaumont's arm and go up to Carrington, even in the presence of everybody, and ask his forgiveness for her wilfulness of the morning. She would have humbled herself to him as to no other man, if only that sickening look of indifference could have been pleaded from his face. She knew he cared for her still, and was he to go from her sight without one word of explanation, all because maidenly modesty and pride forbade any overture on her part?

One long last look of love and reproach passed between these two, and she was out in the night air, among the carriages that thronged the entrance. As they drove off, she saw him come out and walk rapidly down the street.

Carrington, though he found it hard to forgive what he called her frivolousness, had intended that quarrel to be made up. Florrie had resolved it must. But the opportunity never came. The Beltons left London to pay visits, and absence inevitably widened the breach.

Florrie is Mrs. Beaumont now, and a fashionable woman. She quitted girl's estate when she married Henry Beaumont. Whether she has found him selfish, ostentatious, or cynical, we do not know. She makes full use of his wealth as her part of

the contract. Her face, like those of so many beautiful women in London, has a cold, indifferent look; but people envy her. She has a beautiful home, a little child with long fair hair like her mother's, and a husband who, whatever he may be, is proud of his presentable wife.

Very few people know anything about Mrs. Beaumont's love-affair.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART II.

As we approached the yacht people were looking out at us from under the awning on board the yacht, among whom I fancied I recognised the slender graceful form of Hilda Chudleigh; while, on our side, Tom Courtney was making energetic signals of welcome and recognition. In a few moments Hilda and I would meet. I should be received, no doubt, as a mere acquaintance—an old friend who had been lost sight of for years, and whose reappearance would be the subject of a little commonplace surprise. Better to remain unknown than to be received like this. And then the thought occurred: "Why not remain unknown? Five years in India had turned me from a fair young Englishman into a copper-coloured individual of any possible nationality, from a Chinese to a Spaniard. And then I had changed my name as well as my complexion. My uncle, when he left the service of Her Majesty for the more profitable one of the Rajah of M——, whose daughter and successor he afterwards married, had assumed the more easily pronounced name of Lamallam, a name afterwards inscribed in pleasant characters on the golden records of the Three per Cents, and by which name, at the Begum's desire, I had passed while in India. And why should not I still retain it? This point I rapidly explained to young Courtney as we were rowed across the harbour.

"All right," he rejoined, when I had finished my little story. "As long as it is the name you go by, what does it matter? I shall leave it to Hilda to find you out. And now, my friend," to the boatman, as we touched the side of the Sea Mew, "how much?"

The boatman suggested five francs for this little passage—an extortionate race all over the world are the boatmen who hang about ports and ships—but eventually was well satisfied with one franc. And then, in a few moments we stood on the deck of the

yacht—a shaded lounge, very cool and pleasant after the glare of the harbour, with matting screens, and Japanese chairs and lounges, and books and newspapers everywhere strewing the decks.

We were received by a bright-faced, pleasant young fellow, who turned out to be Mr. Chancellor's private secretary—the ornamental secretary that is—the Hon. Wallace Wyvern, a link with the great world into which his chief was trying to gain an entrance. Hence Mr. Wyvern was entertaining Mr. Chancellor's friends on board his yacht, while his two fellow-secretaries were fathoms deep in Blue Books and margined foolscap at Whitehall.

"Delighted to see you, old chap," cried Mr. Wyvern, grasping Tommie warmly by the hand; "and your friend, too, is welcome. And now to present you to our chiefs in command."

And Wyvern tripped lightly before us along the deck, leading the way to a small group of young women, at the sight of whom my heart had begun to beat the rataplan. But, after all, the tall, graceful figure I had seen was not Hilda—she was not upon deck—but proved to be Miss Chancellor, a slight and pretty girl with something of a northern accent, which, with a little nervous awkwardness at times, gave her an individuality not at all unpleasant. Then there was a married aunt of the M.P.'s, the chaperon of the party, a certain Mrs. Bacon, stout and laughter-loving, and an aristocratic-looking Miss Wyvern, haughty but graceful.

"Your cousin Hilda is below," explained Miss Chancellor nervously to Tom Courtney, who had attached himself to her from the first, with an air of feeling himself perfectly happy in her society; "won't you like to go down and see her?"

"No, thank you," replied Tom; "I'll stop here if you'll let me. Hilda can come up if she wants to see me. And now tell me what we are to do and where to go?"

"Well," replied Miss Chancellor in hesitating tones, "I don't quite know. John—her brother, no doubt—"has given us carte blanche to go where we like, but not more than twelve hours distant from England, for he may want to consult Mr. Wyvern at any moment; and then, you see, he is naturally anxious to join us as often as possible."

Here Mrs. Bacon interposed with her habitual happy laugh:

"Oh, that is quite natural. I remember when Charles and I—that is Mr. Bacon,

you know—were courting, and I was ordered by the doctors to the Spas——"

"Yes, you told us that story yesterday, aunt," interrupted Miss Chancellor hastily.

"But these gentlemen haven't heard it," persisted Mrs. Bacon.

I made a friend of Mrs. Bacon from that moment, by listening attentively and respectfully to her story. It was not a very old story after all, for Mrs. Bacon was still young and buxom, and might even now have drawn admirers to the Spas.

But just then I heard a voice, whose thrilling accents could never be mistaken. It was Hilda, who, speaking from the companion-ladder, was calling in sweet but commanding tones:

"Mr. Wyvern, Mr. Wyvern, have the letters come on board?"

"Just this moment come!" cried Mr. Wyvern, handing Hilda a packet of despatches which she looked hastily over, and then, with a disappointed face, retired once more.

"I don't know what news she'd have," cried Mrs. Bacon; "there couldn't be a more devoted lover than John. He sends her a telegram every four hours. And there's sure to be one to rouse us all up in the middle of the night! The last time," pursued Mrs. Bacon with evident pride in the narration, "a Government despatch-boat steamed after us fifty miles with John's message, and was pretty nearly lost with all hands in the fog."

And yet, in spite of all this devotion, it was evident from the aspect of Hilda's face as she reappeared once more, that she was scarcely made happy by it. But, at this present moment, the chief object of her solicitude is her father; tall and rather stooping, with his rosy, well-preserved west-country face and aquiline and clearly-cut features. The steps and the encumberment of the decks puzzle him a little, and he leans heavily on his daughter's arm till he has taken his seat on deck, when he looks benevolently round as he takes his glasses and begins to scrutinise the place and its surroundings.

"Rather different sight," he began, after taking a long look at the forts that shut us in, at the huge rock towering above us, and the sparsely scattered craft about the harbour. "Rather different from Cherbourg in 1858, when I assisted, as the French would say, at the meeting between their Emperor and our Queen, at the inauguration of the new fortifications. I brought my yacht over, and upon my word

I thought we should have been blown out of the water, with the saluting and firing of big guns. Ah, the French are a fickle people, Mrs. Bacon!"

And poor Mrs. Bacon, thus singled out—she evidently rather dreaded the old gentleman and preferred to keep out of the radius of his observations—could only say that she had always heard that the French were a fickle people.

By this time the squire's faded brown eyes had passed over me without any sign of recognition, and then my face came under Hilda's more trying scrutiny. And next moment she called Tom Courtney to her side.

"Yes, Lamallam," I heard Tom say. "French? He may be originally, or Dutch or Hebrew; but a goodish sort of fellow anyhow. Shall I bring him to you?"

Miss Chudleigh made a hasty sign of dissent, and at that moment Mr. Wyvern burst in upon the group on deck with a programme fully arranged.

"We've got to go up the mountain to Fort du Roule, first of all. That's what everybody does, and as it's the only thing to do at Cherbourg, we must make the most of it. There are voitures for those who don't like to walk."

Mrs. Bacon and the squire were the only ones who did not care for walking, and they were packed comfortably in a voiture, which drove off wildly, the coachman making his whip explode like a cracker. But we soon overtook it crawling along at the rate of a mile or so an hour.

"Napoleon couldn't manage it," sang out the chatty old squire from his voiture. "He couldn't walk up, so he had this road made to drive up to the top—cost I don't know how many millions of francs. Ah, he was a great man that. Ave Cæsar Imperator!" cried the squire, doffing his hat.

The coachman looked round and grinned, recognising the Latin perhaps.

"Vive la République!" he cried, and urged his horses to a momentary gallop.

But the path is best for us pedestrians—the winding path, faced here and there with stone, where the goats browse by the side on the banks fresh with ferns and wild flowers. As we rise we unfold the panorama of the town and port, with the green valleys, whose little streams furnish the harbour with a sort of excuse for existence; the sea in its restless tranquility spreading far and wide in streaks of purple and green, with a white sail

here and there, and white clouds resting above in the pure blue sky.

"But, according to Shakespeare," begins Miss Wyvern, whose voice has hardly before been heard; "according to Shakespeare, the murmuring surges should cease to be heard at such a height as this; while in reality we hear them much more plainly than below. Now, how is this?"

Miss Chancellor was far too much out of breath to attempt a reply, while Hilda had thrown herself on the grassy bank, her eyes fixed wistfully on the distant sea-line. Tommie came bravely to the rescue.

"Why, clearly Shakespeare was wrong," he cried; "he often wrote very carelessly. The thing ought to be put right in the next edition, with a note 'Amended by Miss Wyvern.'"

But Miss Wyvern descended upon Tommie with all the force of a Nasmyth steam-hammer.

"Foolish youth," she said compassionately, "to pit your feeble intellect against the genius of Shakespeare. The description you cavil at——"

"No, upon my word," interposed Tommie. "You were cavilling at it, not I."

"The description you cavilled at," resumed Miss Wyvern, not sparing him in the least, "was given to a blind man to make him think he stood on a lofty height while all the time he was on level ground. The illusion may have been complete; but the blind man would naturally listen eagerly for the whisper of the sea below, in which he hoped to end his sorrows. His guide, noticing this rapt attention, explains the reason that no sound reaches the listening ear, falsely, as it happens—but what would you have? the whole is a delusion."

"Well, upon my word," cried Tommie, "it's real nasty of you to lay a pitfall like that for a chap. Just like those cads you meet sometimes, who want you to bet that such a word isn't in the dictionary, while all the time they've got the book in their pocket with the word in it."

The girl laughed; she enjoyed so much her victory over Tommie that she became quite sociable from that moment, her icy crust all thawed away.

We wandered through the fort, where there was nothing particular to see but the view from the ramparts, and then upon the grassy sward, where the soldiers from the fort were having a big wash in a little

pool that exists curiously enough at the very summit of the rock. By this time the voiture and its occupants had arrived at the top, and the old squire, fresh and jaunty, began to describe the various points we saw below us, the great digue or break-water with its strong forts at either end and a stronger still in the middle—a digue that was built, as to the foundations, in part of the hard granite and gneiss rock in which the naval docks and basins were excavated, and partly of hard primitive rock dug from quarries in the side of the cliff beneath us. The boatmen below are always wanting people to hire their boats to visit the digue, but we can see it all from the top of La Roule, with the naval fort and basins, the barracks, hospitals, and workshops, but not a sign of a ship of war except a few dismasted hulks. The fleet is away on its summer cruise or seeking adventures in Madagascar, and there is not even a solitary corvette in the port to give a touch of life to the scene.

As we descended the hill towards the town, Hilda fell behind the rest, and somehow I found myself by her side. She was changed indeed, but I should have known her anywhere. Was it possible that she did not recognise me? Her eyes rested indifferently upon me as if I had been part of the surrounding scenery, and then as I made some trifling remark about the descent, she brightened up and tried to interest herself in the conversation. But she was evidently preoccupied, and her politeness cost her an effort. Why did I not then make myself known, and appeal to the memory of our old love-passages? Something at the moment restrained me. I must have feared my fate too much, and then the opportunity was lost; we had joined the main body of the party. And Mr. Wyvern had joined us now, and evidently thought that as the representative of his chief, he should almost monopolise Hilda's society. And the poor girl seemed to acknowledge the claim, and did her best to be cheerful and bright in his presence. Young Courtney hardly had a chance of speaking to his cousin; perhaps he did not want a chance, for he was, or seemed to be, entirely engrossed in Miss Chancellor's conversation.

The chief pleasure in yachting is generally acknowledged to be the coming ashore, and hence the whole party on board the Sea Mew, with the exception of Mr.

Wyvern and his sister, and the old squire and Hilda, had agreed to dine at the table d'hôte of the chief hotel, and amuse themselves somewhere afterwards. The theatre was closed, but there was a circus in a big desolate place close by, where something like a fair was going on—stalls crammed with parcels of gingerbread, all to be attained by some combination of skill or chance. In all of these Tommie distinguished himself, knocking over dolls, and unfailingly hitting the bull's-eye in the mimic shooting-galleries, and finally carried off the grand prix of the Tombola, a huge ball of silvered glass as big as the head of giant Cormoran.

All this success excited great disapprobation among the stall-keepers. Monsieur was an expert, they said, with one accord, and it was not fair that he should engage in entertainments that were intended for honest bourgeois, their wives, and innocent children. Tommie was inclined to go on and break all the banks, sweeping away their reserve of gingerbread and nuts, and petrified sponge-cakes; but the townspeople took the side of the stall-keepers, and then some sailors came along from an English ship in the harbour, and were inclined to back up their countryman.

A row seemed imminent, but I managed to drag Tommie away out of the confusion, and safely into the circus, where an animated performance was going on. The regular circus routine having been gone through in the presence of a large audience of soldiers and sailors of the navy—the latter exquisitely neat in their blue and white, fine-looking young fellows, each with a rose in his breast—the arena was cleared for the grand military spectacle of the defeat of the Kroumira. The young soldiers trooped off behind the scenes; they had all been admitted gratuitously in order to assist in the military spectacle.

At this interesting moment a carriage arrived to carry the ladies back to the yacht with a message from Mr. Wyvern that all must be on board by eleven, as the Sea Mew might have to sail with the tide. But we were determined to see the end of the performance, and, indeed, put down Mr. Wyvern's announcement as a little piece of extra officiousness.

By-and-by the band struck up the grand march of the Kroumira, and presently a party of the same dashed upon the arena, a party of two at least, brandishing their spears and uttering fierce war-cries. Hardly had they gone when a

French officer appeared at the head of a picquet, and posted a sentry over a heap of old saddles that was supposed to represent a fountain. Exit the picquet, and the sentry begins his march up and down to slow music, which quivers and quavers in notes of warning and grief as those rascally Kroumirs creep up and drive a poniard into the heart of the poor soldier. Then the relief approaches and looks in vain for the sentry, till they almost tumble over his body. The dagger is discovered, and the French officer, raising it to the sky, imprecates vengeance upon the heads of the assassins.

Immediately, with a dexterous application of mats and screens, the arena is converted into the palace of the Bey of Tunis. The Bey appears to be a wicked old fellow with a penchant for bayadères, a troupe of whom appear and dance gracefully before him. All the eligible girls of Cherbourg, we are told, have been pressed into the service, but then the girls of Cherbourg don't appear to be designed by nature for bayadères, and the general effect is skinny and bony. But the Bey himself is perfection, a most respectable old gentleman, who claps his hands when he has had enough of the bayadères with quite Parisian grace. But his face is wrinkled with care. He has a world of trouble on his hands, for the French ambassador—or perhaps he is only a consul—is thundering at the gate. Enters the French ambassador in evening-dress; enters a stout French general in embroidered uniform and képi; enters, in violent excitement, the French capitaine, waving the Kroumir's dagger; enters the Italian chargé-d'affaires with a scarf of green, white, and blue, who prompts the Bey to resistance. But when an ultimatum is presented by the stout and fierce French general, the Bey trembles, turns pale; he falls back on his wily friend in the green tricolor; but he too has lost confidence. He may wring his hands, protest, but all is in vain. The Bey signs his submission, and exeunt the French in a triumphant tumultuous rush, while the bayadères pose themselves in attitudes of grief and submission. At this moment a placard is exhibited which brings down the house—"France will have her frontiers respected."

But still the Kroumirs have to be dealt with, and the arena is presently occupied with battles, marches, bivouacs, with a comic element in the shape of a bibulous

and vivacious private, who is continually on the point of bestowing a kick or a buffet upon his commanding officer, but who recovers his sense of discipline in time to convert the assault into a respectful salute. A pathetic element, too, is provided in the death of a soldier and his horse, the former sharing the last drop from his water-bottle with his faithful charger. The massacre of this gallant pair by a crowd of Kroumirs was the last drop in the cup of their iniquities. From that moment they were slaughtered like flies, a gallant vivandière of course performing prodigies of valour, amid fanfares of trumpets and incessant detonation of crackers, while the band burst forth into a triumphal march, and the audience rose en masse, while the sailors laughed and cheered at the exploits of their brethren in arms.

By the time we had turned out of the circus it was nearly midnight, and yet the town showed no sign of turning in for the night—or what was left of it. Half the population of the town was in the streets; children ran about and danced, while at all the open spaces a concourse of people had gathered, who were formed into a ring, and were dancing round and round, chanting some monotonous refrain, slowly at first, and then faster and faster, till the dance became a mad whirl, and the ring broke up by its own centrifugal force amid universal laughter and applause.

It was the St. Jean d'été, the feast of Midsummer Day, that the worthy Cherbourgeois were celebrating in this primitive fashion. Without a thought that he was participating in heathen rites, whose origin goes back to the early primitive life of mankind, without a serious thought, indeed, in his head, Tom Courtney plunged into the thick of the fun, clasping on one side the hand of a pretty dark-eyed little ouvrière, while on the other he hooked on to a dark-bearded savage-looking young fellow, presumably the girl's sweetheart. The little ouvrière did not seem to dislike the change of partners, and chatted gaily with Tommie during the intervals of the dance. But the young sweetheart was not so well pleased. Tommie's French was imperfect, and perhaps, in his happy ignorance of the language, he may have said more than he intended. Anyhow, the black-bearded young fellow took umbrage, words ensued, and then a slight scuffle, and then, in less time than it

takes to tell it, the sergents de ville were on the scene, and all the parties to the fray were marched off to the guard-house. The black-bearded young fellow, who was very excited, and in a highly dangerous mood, was detained for the night, while Tommie, who took the thing more quietly, was permitted to leave on our promise to appear next morning at the tribunal of correctional police, and we were favoured with the escort of a sergent de ville, nominally for our protection, but in reality, I fancy, to make sure of our not breaking our parole; a sergent who mounted guard patiently on the steps of the hotel, and seemed disposed to stay there all night.

Already, we were told, half-a-dozen urgent messages had come from the yacht, and one of the cabin-boys was awaiting our arrival to say that the *Sea Mew* was on the point of sailing, and that the pilot could wait no longer. There was no time to write, even to explain the situation, and we could only send a message excusing ourselves on the ground of an unexpected engagement on the following morning, and hoping to rejoin the *Sea Mew* at her next port of call.

And presently we heard her beating through the water in the silence of the night—a silence broken also by the distant cries of those who were still keeping up the *St. Jean*—the reflection of her lights pirouetting in the swell she raised in turning. Bells sounded, the engines went on full speed, and presently she shot quietly out of the harbour, and was lost in the indefinite haze beyond.

As for Tom Courtney, he was so contrite that it was impossible to reproach him, and, indeed, except for an excess of youthful spirits there was nothing to blame in his conduct. And this view was taken by the presiding magistrate next morning, who dismissed Tommie with a fine of two francs and a half and costs, which amounted to as much more. His enemy, now calmed and contrite, was mulct in the same amount, and as Tommie insisted on defraying the whole costs of the entertainment, the utmost harmony prevailed, and prisoners, guardians of the peace, and witnesses adjourned to the nearest café, where many bottles of wine were opened and drunk, to the health of everybody concerned, and to the continuance of the entente cordiale.

But, in the meantime, where was the *Sea Mew*?

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO. GIFT.

CHAPTER II.

"GEORGE," said Mrs. Pentreath one day when Hetty had been living with her for nearly a year, "do you know that little girl is frightfully ignorant?"

The young vicar looked surprised.

"What girl? Not Esther—or Hetty, is it, you call her—Mavors? She always seems to me so wonderfully intelligent; and her music——"

"I am not talking about her music. I give her masters for accomplishments, and I must say she takes in what they teach her as readily as a cat does cream; but it's her general education. She knows nothing and has read nothing; can play a sonata by Beethoven, and never heard of Beethoven in her life, and can't read aloud the simplest book to me without asking a hundred questions about allusions and circumstances which every girl of sixteen ought to know by heart. Her poor father seems to have neglected her education shamefully; and at my age I am too old to be turned into a dictionary of reference. Don't you think you could help her a little—show her what books she ought to read, and make her read them? It would be a real charity both to the child and myself, and she is so intelligent that I believe you would find it pleasant."

"I dare say I should—at any rate I'll do it willingly," said Mr. Hamilton, and he had not assumed his post of teacher for many weeks before he did find it very pleasant, so pleasant indeed that before long those three hours in the week which he devoted to cramming Esther's young head with German and English literature, poetry, and philosophy, became the brightest of all the hundred and sixty-eight to him, and shed a rosy light over all the intervening ones.

It was the old story—the story of man and woman brought together as master and pupil, the man coming to teach and learning instead to love, the old story which we have all heard from our cradles; and if Mr. Hamilton managed to keep the secret of it to himself it was simply and solely for the reasons indicated in the story of his "friend." To him Hetty's youth and innocence were a shield stronger than any disapproval of parent or guardian, and he would have felt it a desecration of them to let in the hot breath of love or passion upon their virgin freshness.

In this way the girl grew up happy and breathing an atmosphere of love without analysing it, as a flower breathes sunshine; learning to stand by sick beds at her master's side; working in the parish; teaching in the schools; and revenging herself for her submission in these matters by a certain sweet tyranny over the vicar which was extremely pleasant and natural to both tyrant and victim, though the former at any rate would have felt highly indignant had she seen it wielded by any other woman.

And Mrs. Pentreath looked on, and being a woman of the world, saw more of Mr. Hamilton's secret than he at all guessed, and said nothing. In truth, what she saw did not displease her. George Hamilton was an excellent fellow, a scholar, and a gentleman; but he was her husband's nephew, and the Pentreaths, of course, did not belong to the same exalted sphere as the Bovillys. He might, perhaps, be allowed to do what would be impossible to Ernest, for instance; and though even so it would be a very good match for the child, Hetty was a good little thing, and Mrs. Pentreath would not grudge it to her. Besides, it would not take her far away, which was a consideration.

"I really couldn't do without her now, till Ernest brings me home a real daughter. Ah, if only that dear boy would settle down well!" the mother said to herself, sighing heavily as she re-read for the third time a letter which she had just received from India.

This was in June, and in the said letter there was no mention of any prospect that she would see her son shortly. Indeed, she knew that his regiment had still to get through nearly a year's service before it returned home; and therefore she might for a time dismiss thoughts of his settling down, and give her mind instead to the pretty idyll which she believed to be gliding to its completion under her nose.

"I shouldn't wonder if I were buying the child's trousseau by Christmas. Poor Jack! he ought to be obliged to me," the lady said to herself benignly.

Alas! long before Christmas, before, indeed, the August sun had finished reddening the sheaves of golden wheat, while the great white petals of the magnolia were opening day by day, and languid Londoners lay gasping for breath under the shade of the trees in Kew Gardens, a certain P. and O. steamer dropped quietly into dock in Southampton harbour, and one

hour later a telegram was in Mrs. Pentreath's hands, which upset in an instant all her thoughts of Hetty and the vicar, and replaced them by matter much more important.

For on board of that P. and O. steamer was Captain Pentreath. India is an idle place, and idleness is fruitful of flirtations, and folly of all sorts. Whether the young man's indiscretions had gone beyond folly this time was not known, and need not be asked. All that Mrs. Pentreath learnt was that he had contrived to get his name so mixed up with that of his colonel's wife, that, to prevent worse consequences, he had been urgently recommended to apply for leave, and exchange into a home-going regiment; and as for once in his life he had prudence enough to comply with this counsel, such strong interest was brought to bear on carrying it into effect, that in less than three weeks he had looked his last on Rumohandreespore and the too fascinating bungalow where he had wasted so many perilous hours, and was steaming slowly out of the Hooghly, en route for England.

It was a sad blow to Mrs. Pentreath, and she felt it sorely; but to the young man himself and a certain set among his friends it seemed rather a feather in his cap than otherwise. True, he had come home under a cloud so far as his own regiment and his chances of promotion were concerned, but a cloud with such a romantic lining as the unfortunate passion of a married lady of rank for a young unmarried officer had no glamour of disgrace about it; and when to this were added the culprit's exceeding good looks and chivalrous withdrawal from the field of temptation, the whole affair wore quite an heroic aspect in some eyes; and made even little Hetty Mavors gaze with timid wonder and admiration at the too dangerous Adonis.

Of course she knew nothing of the real facts of the story, nor was likely to do so; neither the vicar nor Mrs. Pentreath thinking such matters fit subject for a young girl's ears, while Ernest himself had grace enough not to allude to the subject at home.

The pretty idyll at the Lodge, however, came to an end all the same. Captain Pentreath was not the man to play second fiddle anywhere, least of all in his own home; and, considering that he had found that residence rather dull on previous occasions, he thought it a wise proceeding of his mother to have secured such a pretty

little girl as Hetty Mavors for his delectation at present. He approved of her greatly indeed, and told his cousin George so with a frankness which the latter found the reverse of flattering. She was so fresh, he said, so piquante, so full of fun, and yet so ridiculously innocent. It was worth something to make her open those big bewitching brown eyes of hers with a look of a pretty surprised baby; and then, what a delicious laugh she had! He raved about her, in fact; all the more, perhaps, for the coldness with which the vicar listened to his raptures, and proved he was in earnest in them by appropriating the girl to his own service from the very day of his return with the careless ease of a young Bashaw.

It was quite a matter of course. There was nothing special in it. Everyone waited on him at Guelder Lodge; everyone ran after him; everything was put aside for him. Hetty was one of the household; it seemed quite natural, therefore, that she should play his accompaniments, sing to him, mend his gloves, drive him to and from the station in his mother's pony-carriage, and fetch and carry for him generally; and, in return, he was very good to her, lounged beside her at the piano and in the garden, brought her bonbons and novels, taught her to ride, and even contrived that she should be included in sundry invitations to evening and garden parties which were given by his mother's grand friends in honour of his return, which seemed to Hetty a very paradise of dissipation.

It was not much use for the vicar to come to the Lodge now. Mrs. Pentreath, who was always wanting him at other times, wanted no one now she had got her son; and, as that young man was always in Hetty's neighbourhood, it was impossible to see one without the other.

In the vicar's eyes the pair seemed inseparable, and the girl as pleased with her new friend as he with her; and so it came to pass that his visits to the Lodge grew rare and more rare; and his words, when there, so few and cold, that Hetty herself noticed the change, and felt hurt and mortified by it, wondering vaguely if he thought it "beneath him" to take as much notice of her before his cousin as he had done before.

A coldness and formality sprang up between them, and so, just when the girl most needed a true friend, she was left instead to the guidance of her own ignorance and inexperience to steer her course

between the shoals of Captain Pentreath's attentions and the rocks of his mother's anger. To-day she had been tossed roughly from one to the other, and so cruelly buffeted in the second encounter, that her tender feelings were all bruised and quivering from the shock. It was a new thing to her to be spoken harshly to at all, and by Mrs. Pentreath, too, who was usually so kind and indulgent to her; but though this was grievous enough, and though it was still more grievous and dreadful that the cause of such speaking should be a man, and that man Mrs. Pentreath's son—even these causes of trouble would not have shamed and agitated her so much as the way in which Mr. Hamilton, her own friend and master, had been brought into the discussion.

True, he had not joined in his aunt's condemnation of her. Mrs. Pentreath had accused him of doing so, but he had denied the fact with indignation; and even in the storm of feeling which sent the girl flying to her room to sob her heart out in peace and solitude, she never dreamt of doubting his word; but in giving it he had shown, and shown quite openly, a readiness to look on her as the property of another person, and to make her over to that person, which hurt her in a way she hardly understood, and would have gone further to crush her bright nature than anything else if it had not been for one or two items which came back to her now in her solitude—the look in his face, for instance, when she burst into tears; those words, "I would cut off my right hand rather than hurt you by a pin-prick;" and, more than all, the story of—his "friend."

His "friend," indeed! Had not eye, and lip, and tone all told her that it was himself, that he was the lover, and she the girl spoken of? And if that were so, what mattered any one's unkindness, any one's folly? What mattered any other ill the world could send her; and why—why had she been such a little fool as to lose her head and her temper, and drive him away as she had done? Why had she run away herself, instead of waiting to hear what else he had to say? Might not the story have had a fresh chapter added to it, if she had been more sensible?

The afternoon sunshine was falling in long golden stripes through Hetty's window, turning to transparent flame the few fluttering crimson leaves which still dangled from the brown tangle of Virginia-creeper without, and touching with a fiery finger

the mass of ivy which garlanded the narrow casement and the girl's brown head bent down upon the sill. By-and-by she lifted it, and looked about her. She was tired of thinking and fretting, and, besides, her cheeks burned, and her eyes were swollen. Fresh air and exercise would take away these outward signs of her trouble at all events, and give her back the composure she needed, before she again met Mrs. Pentreath and her son at dinner. There was plenty of time for a good long walk before that, and the thought was no sooner in her mind than she hastened to carry it into execution, and only waiting to don hat and ulster, and tell the old butler that she was gone for a walk, she left the house, and took her way as rapidly as possible in the direction of the river, the quietest route at this time of the year that she could think of.

It was rather a muddy route to-day. There had been a great deal of rain lately, and the river was swollen so as even to overflow the towing-path in parts, and oblige her to take a wide circuit over soil soft enough to encase her stout little boots in a thick coating of mud, or to take flying leaps from stone to stone before she could resume her onward way. But Hetty was not the sort of girl to mind either a long jump or a little mud; and, for the rest, the sky was blue and bright, the air just sharp enough to be exhilarating, and the sun shone so gaily on shore and stream, on the yellow leaves of the willow and the copper-coloured leaves of the beech, on gnarled trunk and shallow, silvery pool, on the red roofs of dingy old Isleworth on the opposite bank of the river, and the brown sail splashed with orange of a big clumsy barge drifting slowly citywards, that by-and-by the girl's spirit began to brighten too, her step grew briaker, her head more erect. Once or twice she stopped to drink in a mouthful of the fresh cool breeze, or pick a few bright-coloured leaves from the withered hedgerow, or lift a sadly bloated frog out of the roadway, and deposit him on a stone for safety. When, as she was rising from the last-named task, her ear was caught by the rapid trample of a horse's feet in her rear, and stepping quickly on one side to avoid being run over, she heard herself greeted in tones too familiar to her to be pleasant at the present moment.

"I thought so," cried the rider as he checked his horse at the girl's side, and looked down with a gay smile into her

blushing face. "I thought I couldn't be mistaken in a certain little figure, even when seen from a distance, which would have made most other figures indistinguishable, so—— But Miss Mavors—Hetty! what is the matter!"

For Hetty was not only blushing, but there was a look of annoyance and distress in her face, which in conjunction with the traces of tears still visible about her eyes, might well provoke comment, more especially as there was nothing in any way distressing or alarming about the other face bent over her. It was a bright and handsome one, belonging to a young man of under thirty, fair, rather pale, and adorned with a long brown moustache, which, together with his trim soldierly figure, made him sufficiently taking in appearance to win a pleasant glance from any girl not very hard to please. Hetty, however, was vexed with herself at her own embarrassment, and answered a little pettishly:

"Nothing is the matter, Captain Pentreath. I was only startled by finding your horse so close behind me, and—and I never expected to see you here."

"No! Well, I did expect to see you," said the young officer gaily, as he dismounted and, throwing the reins over his arm, walked at her side. "I came home half an hour ago, found the house 'empty, swept, and garnished,' heard that madam was out driving and miss walking—'river-ways' old Hickson said—and so rode off river-ways myself in search of the latter. You see, therefore, mademoiselle, that if you were meditating running away, an idea which your present guilty air suggests to me, you may as well abandon the attempt, and resign yourself to being taken home again in honourable captivity."

Captain Pentreath spoke in a jesting tone, looking laughingly in the girl's eyes, as if expecting to see them laugh back in answer. It was not an unnatural thought. So late as yesterday, indeed, they might, and probably would, have done so, Hetty's eyes having a trick of laughing out at small notice, while she had got too used to Captain Pentreath making her the chief object of his attentions when at home to be either startled or flattered by them. Since this morning, however, everything had become different to her. She had tasted of the tree of knowledge, and bitter as the flavour of it might be to her, she could no longer feel or act as she had done in the happy days of her ignorance. Those two thoughts, so impossible in our guileless

childhood, so common in after life, "What does it mean, and what will other people think it means?" had been forced upon her mind; and being too naive and inexperienced to conceal what was passing in it, she betrayed one of them by the question with which she answered Captain Pentreath's speech.

"But why did you come after me? Did you tell Hickson you would? I hope not—at least, I mean I——"

Captain Pentreath laughed again.

"I did not," he said. "I asked him in what direction the mater had gone. He said he thought it was to see Lady Carisfort. 'Ah, then,' said I, 'if I ride in the same direction, I shall most likely fall in with her,' and I departed. Do not look so glumly at me, Miss Mavors, for I told no fibs. If I had ridden along that road it is very probable that I should have met my lady mother. The only obstacle was that I didn't. I came after you instead."

"Then I wish you hadn't," said Hetty with more promptness than grammar, and with a look which said she meant it.

Captain Pentreath opened his eyes.

"That is rude," he said, "so I don't believe you. I think, on the contrary, that you are very properly grateful to your guardian's son, ergo, her representative, ergo, your guardian also, for taking the trouble to throw the much needed shield of his protection over a very imprudent young woman. You know you ought not to be wandering so far from home, Hetty."

"Indeed, Captain Pentreath, I do not. I am not a fine young lady with footmen to walk after me, and I have been used to going out alone ever since I was ten years old. I like it," said Hetty curtly, but with a lip which quivered nevertheless.

Was not his plea of guardianship the very one on which she had acted in the past, and thought so natural? Yet to-day she could not help fancying that he put it forward rather in jest than earnest, and with a mocking look in his blue eyes, which made her wonder if there had not been some ground for Mrs. Pentreath's anger after all; and whether the matter-of-course simplicity with which she had accepted the young officer's flatteries and attentions, and had entered into the spirit of easy familiarity which he had established between them from the beginning, had not something in it to-day perilously like flirtation.

Captain Pentreath shook his head at her with affected solemnity.

"Then I am sorry to hear it," he said, "for it is an improper liking and ought to be checked. You are not ten years old now, observe, and you are at least ten years prettier than you must have been at that tender age, therefore— But, Hetty, you are looking quite grave! What's the matter? Have I offended you?"

"Only by talking nonsense, Captain Pentreath, and by calling me by my christian-name. I heard your mother tell you once that it was not usual, and—and you know you have no right to do so."

"I have as good a right as my parson-cousin, at any rate; and I noticed the day after my arrival that he called you by your christian-name, for I thought what a dear little one it was, and how well it suited the owner."

Hetty's face became very pink, but whether at the first part of his sentence or the second, Pentreath could not determine. She only answered the former.

"Mr. Hamilton has known me since I was quite a little girl, and taught me nearly everything I know. That is quite a different case."

"By Jove! so it seems, and I envy him accordingly. I wish I could teach you anything, or that you would teach me if that would do as well. Will you? I'll be a very docile pupil."

"I doubt it, Captain Pentreath—at any rate I'd rather not try."

"And I wish you would. Do try me, Hetty. You couldn't give me any greater pleasure than telling me to do something for you. Don't you know it?" and Captain Pentreath drew a little nearer to the girl's side, bending his handsome head till the fair moustache almost brushed the dark curls about her temples.

Someone coming along at the other side of the leafless quick-set hedge which bordered the towing-path saw the couple at the moment, and stopped short, as if startled; but Hetty had turned her pretty glowing face with sudden animation to her companion, and unconscious of a witness, said quite eagerly:

"Do you really mean that? If you did it would make me very happy."

"I mean everything I say to you. Try me, that is all," said Captain Pentreath fervently.

Hetty looked up, a saucy smile in her eyes meeting the admiring one bent on her.

"Then will you please get on your horse again and ride on in the direction in which you were going. I told you I came

out by myself because I wanted to be alone, and I would rather go back so. I would indeed."

It was not the reply Captain Pentreath had expected, and he looked visibly annoyed as he exclaimed:

"Why, Hetty, what's up? Have I done anything to vex you?" then remembering the smile in her eyes: "Ah, but I see you don't mean it. You are only teasing me, you provoking little witch, as if you didn't know that no man in his senses would go in one direction when you are going in another."

"But I know nothing of the sort, and I want one man to do it. Captain Pentreath, I am not joking, indeed. I do mean it."

"Then, Hetty, I must have offended you. What have I done?"

"Nothing at all. You have not offended me."

"Then why want to drive me from you just because we chance to be taking our exercise along the same road, as we have done a score of times before?"

Hetty's face was crimson. Had they been out together so often? She had not thought of it at the time, but now she had a vague remembrance of something cold and displeased in Mrs. Pentreath's manner when she came in rather late one day from a walk accompanied by Captain Pentreath. She answered briskly enough, however:

"Do you call it chance when, as you told me just now, you came this way on purpose to find me?"

"And to bring you home! It is getting late, Hetty, for you to be out."

"I know it, and I am going home now; but please let me go alone. Please don't come with me. Indeed I have a reason for asking you."

That the girl was in earnest now the most sceptical person could not have doubted. Her pretty face was quite pale again, and her eyes wore a beseeching expression which no generous man could have resisted.

Captain Pentreath, however, was not famed for generosity where women were concerned. He kept at her side as she turned, and only asked:

"What is the reason, Hetty? Don't be silly and mysterious. Tell me."

"I cannot, Captain Pentreath. Please do as I ask you."

"What, when you won't do anything I

ask! That isn't fair. But I see what it is quite well, Hetty—my mother has been talking some confounded rubbish to you."

"You ought not to speak of your mother in that way, Captain Pentreath."

"Well, but isn't it true? Hasn't she?"

"I will not tell you. I don't want to speak of your mother at all. Do you forget that I am her companion, and owe all I have to her kindness and generosity?"

"No, by Heavens! nor that she owes all the pleasantness her house has to your company. Egad, she wouldn't keep me long here without it. Don't you know that?"

Hetty made no answer.

"Because you may as well do so. It is the truth, and so if she is going to bully you and make you disagreeable to me——"

"I don't want to be disagreeable to you, Captain Pentreath. I only——" But Hetty's lip was quivering. She began to realise how helpless she was, and her eyes filled with tears. Even Captain Pentreath was touched by the sight of her distress.

"You only want to drive me from you," he said pathetically. "Well, Hetty, you know your power, and however it pains me to obey you I will not pain you by the contrary. You must make it up to me some other time, and I can promise you one thing—if the matter is at the bottom of this, she sha'n't congratulate herself on the result of it."

And then he did mount his horse and ride away, while Hetty pursued her homeward route with quickened steps. She had nearly reached the Lodge gates when she saw another gentleman, a familiar figure in a low felt hat and Roman collar, coming up the dusky road under the horse-chestnut trees as if to meet her. It was George Hamilton, and involuntarily her steps quickened, and she put out one little hand as if to greet him sooner. To her great surprise, however, he did not stop or speak, but looking at her full with a kind of hard, unsmiling severity, lifted his hat, and, turning abruptly away, crossed the road to the opposite side.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. FENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER X. A PAINFUL PART.

"MOTHER, you're not as happy here now as you would be in a little house of your own, are you?" Jenifer said, coming in and casting her arms round her mother's neck that night as soon as she could escape after dinner.

"Happy! That I can never be anywhere again, Jenny; my day is done."

"No, no, you sha'n't say such things—such futile, untrue things. Mother darling, you're our own mother still, and you have your work to do for us though we have disappointed you," Jenifer cried out, weeping as bitterly as if she and not Jack had married beneath her, and degraded the family.

"Jenifer," Mrs. Ray said solemnly, "what does this mean—that you're going to marry, and offer me a home with you and your husband? Jenny, I won't have you throw yourself away for my sake! I want but little here below, and shall not want that little long. You shall not sacrifice yourself to Mr. Boldero, good, excellent man as he is, for my sake."

"Mother!" Jenifer cried out, "are we all going mad because of this trouble about Jack? Mr. Boldero! I should as soon have thought of you as of him. Why, mother, he's not 'a good, excellent man' only in my eyes, he's ever so much more and more like what a man ought to be than—than any other man I know. He would as soon think of the harness-house cat for a wife as he would think of me; don't speak of him in that way to me. I can't bear it."

Old Mrs. Ray thought very desperately for several minutes. In her pocket she

had a letter from this Mr. Boldero, asking her consent to his wooing her daughter. The letter had reached her just an hour or two ago, just an hour before Jack had come to her with his bitter confession. And she had put it aside as unimportant—as comparatively unimportant, at least, because her heart and mind were full of the imminent peril of her son Jack.

But now she was compelled to think of it.

"Jenny, my child," she began very gently, "forgive my forgetfulness of you. Something that concerns you nearly and dearly has come to my knowledge to-day, but with the thought of this disgrace which Jack has brought upon us hanging over me, I could think of nothing, say nothing; but now I will tell you," and with this she fumbled in her pocket, and brought Mr. Boldero's letter out of it.

Jenny read it, and understood it at once. There it was, an offer, a plain and distinct offer of marriage from the most honourable and fastidious gentleman whom it had ever been her lot to meet.

And this offer of marriage was made to her, Jenifer Ray, a girl who was just disgraced by the folly of her brother—a folly of which Mr. Boldero knew nothing, of which he would take no cognisance; but which would bitterly aggrieve and disgust him when he came to know it.

"He shall never smart through me; he's as the stars above me," the girl said to herself in the one brief minute in which she held the letter in her hand, trying to read it, and failing by reason of the tears of pity for herself that were half blinding her. And this not because of any strong sentiment of love for Mr. Boldero, for, in these days of which I am writing, Jenifer Ray had hold of her own heart still. And though she thought of Mr. Boldero as of a

man whom any woman might love, she did not know that she loved him herself.

On the contrary she rather inclined to think that there was something about Captain Edgcomb's demeanour towards her which merited considerable consideration from her. He liked her; of that she was sure. He attracted her by the manner in which he showed his liking. And it may be presumed that she did not regard him as a star above her, for she did not feel that if she finally married him he would be in any way disgraced by Jack's misalliance.

So after holding his letter in her hand for a minute after she had read it, she handed it back to her mother with these words:

"It's one of the things that might have been, if everything had been different, mother; as it is— Well, I wish with all my heart that Mr. Boldero had never thought of me in that way."

"If you could bring yourself to think of him; he is older than you are, I admit, but—"

"Mother, don't, don't speak of him in that way; it's not that he is 'older' than I am that I—I want you to give him back his letter and say 'No' for me to his offer. I could have adored him," the girl continued impulsively, "but he has been prudent about his course concerning my brothers, and I'm afraid of him."

"If you were his wife you'd have no cause to fear anything that your brothers may do, or have done," old Mrs. Ray went on, as eagerly as if she had not been perfectly indifferent to the prospect of Jenifer's marrying Mr. Boldero a few minutes before. In fact it was balm in Gilead to her to feel that if her dearly-loved, cherished, tenderly cared-for daughter willed, she, Jenifer, at least would be out of reach of all the evil consequences, the bitternesses, the sordid considerations, and many mortifications which might accrue from Jack's miserable marriage.

"I won't marry any man in order to escape my share of a family trouble, mother dear," Jenifer said stoutly.

And on this her mother pleaded Mr. Boldero's case over again, not bringing any fresh arguments to bear on the subject; but urging the girl to accept the offer as a happy and safe release from all the home dangers and difficulties.

And at last her arguments prevailed to a certain extent. At last Jenifer began to remind herself that not only would she herself be lifted out of the domestic mire

which was stifling them now, but that her mother also would be once more honourably placed, and treated with the deference and consideration that were her due. It was galling to the girl to a horrible degree to see her mother set aside as she had been during these latter days at Moor Royal. And Jenifer's prophetic soul told her that this would grow. Effie was not likely to grow less selfish, or extravagant, or contemptuously indifferent to everything that did not conduce to her own pleasure or aggrandisement. Hubert was not likely to become less yielding to his wife's lightest whim. Altogether the outlook for the widow and her daughter, if they remained at Moor Royal, was a deplorable one, a desperately ignominious and distressing one. It did move Jenifer strongly this reflection that if she accepted Mr. Boldero's offer, the outlook for her mother in his house would be as bright as this one at Moor Royal was dark. Moreover she did like and admire the man who could release her mother and herself from the bondage of life in Effie's house. She did like him better than any other man she knew, excepting, perhaps, Captain Edgcomb, and him she liked in quite a different way—as a fascinating, amusing, distinctly agreeable and accomplished society man. At this juncture she had no romantic or impassioned feeling about either of them. But she knew that Mr. Boldero would become very dear and very essential to her if she saw much more of him, and she believed that, if she became Mrs. Boldero, she would be one of the happiest women, one of the most loved and loving wives in the world.

All these considerations weighed the balance heavily in favour of her accepting him. But in the other scale she put the shame and disgrace of Jack's marriage. Had she any right to act for her own happiness, and by so acting to link a man whose name was held in such high account by all men with this shame and disgrace? At any rate she would not accept the offer which Mr. Boldero had made in ignorance of Jack's culminating folly, till she had given him an opportunity of retracting it. He must have gone straight home from the "meet," and written to her mother with the memory of the unavailing prayer she had made to him for her brother fresh in his mind. When he knew how fully all her worst fears for Jack were realised, would he still want her to be his wife?

"I ought to have shown it to you when I got it first, Jenny, but Jack's wicked folly had put everything else out of my head. Now, whatever your answer is going to be, it ought to go to him to-night, and I am afraid there is not another post," old Mrs. Ray said dejectedly, for she dreaded anything like delay now that Jenifer seemed half disposed to act wisely.

"Your letter can't go till to-morrow now," Jenifer gasped with a sense of relief. "I shall have time to think and to pray, and to-morrow, whatever I have been taught to know is best, you shall write to Mr. Boldero. But at the same time you must tell him all there is to tell about Jack."

"Yes, indeed, we'll do nothing under-hand, hard as it will be for me to tell his father's friend that my son has married the daughter of one of his father's servants."

"We must help Jack never to think of her now in that way," Jenifer said resolutely in answer to the piteous bitterness which made itself manifest both in her mother's words and tones. "She's his wife now. While we only feared she might become his wife it was different, but now——"

"May I come in?" Jack's voice, broken by sobs, asked at the door.

"Oh, not to-night—not to-night!" poor old Mrs. Ray whispered. "Jenny, tell him. It would kill me to see him to-night—my own boy! And to think of his going away from me to such a wife!"

So Jenifer went out, and with her arms round poor, unhappy, miserably awakened Jack's neck, broke his mother's decision to him as gently as she could.

"Be strong, and bear your punishment like a man, Jack," she murmured. "In time we shall all be happy again, please God. Meantime don't get to think hardly of our mother even if she does seem a little hard to you now; it has come upon her so suddenly."

"You never gave her a hint then? Jenny, you are a brick! Oh, that I'd listened to—— I mean you won't desert me altogether, will you? Hubert and his wife will treat me like a pariah now, though Mrs. Effie was always leading me on to think more and more of Minnie's good looks. There, I'll say no more. I'm a coward and a cur to try and cast the blame, or the responsibility rather, of my choice on anyone else. Good - night,

Jenny dear; this house will never see me again, I suppos."

It was a sad going away from the old home for the poor misguided boy, whose own wilful infatuation had marred his prospects in life. His mother lifted up her voice and wept, as she listened to his receding footsteps along the corridor. But she would not recall him to say one pitying tender word. The thought of the disgrace and sorrow he had brought upon them all was too new to her for her to take him back to her heart, though her heart was bleeding for him.

"Well, Jenny, this is a pretty business of Master Jack's! 'Pon my word, I think I shall sell the place, and get away beyond the reach of the rumour of it," Hubert said impatiently when Jenifer went back to the drawing-room to say good-night.

"Running away from the rumour won't do any good to either you or Jack," Jenifer said curtly, for Hubert's absorbing selfishness jarred harshly on her this night.

"It's just like the charitable Jenifer to uphold evil-doers," Mrs. Ray said with her faintest smiling sneer. "Now I can't pretend to want to do good to Jack or to wish to see anyone else do good to him; he has behaved like a fool, and I hope he'll have the fool's reward. But I do like to see good done to myself, and the best good Hubert can do me is to take me away out of reach of ever hearing anything of his extremely obnoxious brother and sister-in-law. To do that he must sell Moor Royal, and so I hope Moor Royal will come to the hammer without delay."

"Hubert, you won't?" Jenifer cried.

"When a fellow's worried as I have been to-night he hardly knows what he'll do," Mr. Ray replied.

"Moor Royal has been ours for so many generations," Jenifer said sorrowfully.

"I don't feel inclined to have my health and spirits sacrificed for any sickly family feeling," Effie cried buoyantly. "I mean my life to be as bright as society and money can make it, and neither will do much to brighten it down here now that Jack has degraded us as he has. So Moor Royal will go as soon as a purchaser can be found for it, and in the meantime, Hugh, I shall go and stay with Flora."

Then they went on discussing their plans of pleasure, and speaking of possible purchasers of the property, as unconcernedly as if Jenifer had not been present.

"I'll marry Mr. Boldero, and put mother on a throne again, and love him better than a man was ever loved before for enabling me to do it," the daughter thought with a swelling heart as she went back to her mother's room.

The following day, long before Mr. Boldero received an answer from his letter to old Mrs. Ray, he had a visit from Hubert Ray.

Briefly, and not at all bitterly, the elder brother told the tale of the younger one's delinquencies to the family lawyer. Then he added :

"This crowning act of idiocy on Jack's part has naturally upset my wife terribly."

"How about your mother and sister?" Mr. Boldero interposed quickly.

"Oh, my mother is a good deal cut up, of course, partly because Jack was always her pet, and partly because it may affect Jenifer's prospects of marriage. Now I don't distress myself about that for a moment, because I happen to know that Edgcomb will marry her to-morrow if she'll have him, and Effie and I both think she is ready to do so."

Mr. Boldero rang for coals, and when the little interruption caused by their being put on the fire was over, it was he who took up the ball of conversation.

"Jack has had plenty of advice against this crowning act of madness. I know his sister stood like an angel of mercy in his path, and warned him against following. And Mrs. Ray and you can't have been ignorant of his being in jeopardy. You have surely tried to save your brother?"

"To tell the truth," Hubert said in some embarrassment, "my wife always urged me to let Jack alone. She had an idea he was so pig-headed that opposition would only urge him on. Poor girl! she would have done anything to stop it—anything. In fact she's so distressed about it, that nothing will induce her to live at Moor Royal any longer. She couldn't have any of her own people down to stay with her after this; she's awfully sensitive, in fact, and I may as well tell you at once, that I've come to speak to you about selling Moor Royal."

"There's one clause in your father's will which you seem to have forgotten, and that is, that for three years after coming into possession of the property you are bound to reside at Moor Royal. You can neither let or sell it."

"I wish to Heaven the three years were

up then," Hubert exclaimed angrily. "Why in the world did my father treat me as if I had been a capricious boy, instead of a man well able to look after my own interests? It may ruin my domestic happiness now if I am not able to take my wife away from Moor Royal."

"Not if she's a sensible woman, Hubert, and I should think that she is that," Mr. Boldero said outspokenly, but there was not that amount of blind confidence in Effie's discretion which her husband liked to see displayed.

"Sensible! I should rather say she was sensible, but she's also very determined; she's made up her mind to get away from Moor Royal at once, and if I can't sell or let till the three years are up, it means an expensive round of visits, that's all, and at the end of the three years the sale of the property. There'll be nothing to hinder me then."

"Your father always had a dread of your parting with the old place."

"Meantime, as I can't sell it, I'll cut down timber," Hubert said recklessly.

"It's all very well, Boldero, but a man ought not to be hampered and fettered by another man's whim. The sale of Moor Royal would be the making of me, and by Jove! it shall be sold the day the three years are up."

"You forget that your father's latest wishes are still unknown to you," Mr. Boldero reminded his client.

"Ah, the sealed letter which you hold! They can be of no importance, they can only concern trifles compared to the Moor Royal property, and that's indisputably mine."

"And yours may it always remain is the sincere wish of my heart," Mr. Boldero said heartily, as his guest got up to go.

"Can't echo the sentiment, my dear sir," Mr. Ray laughed; "if you had a wife, and she hated her home, you'd be very glad to get her away from it; but I'm thwarted by a mere caprice in doing this, and as I said just now, my domestic happiness may suffer from it."

His guest departed, and Mr. Boldero sat alone thinking mournfully that all the sorrowful prognostications about his two sons which had darkened the squire's last days, were being fast fulfilled.

"He always had the notion that Hubert would wreck his bark against the rock of extravagance, and that Jack would fall into low company and dissipated ways through his over-weaning fondness for

sport; yet his love for Moor Royal was so much stronger than his love for anything else on earth, that he has protected it as jealously as if it had been a cherished child. And through no act or deed of hers, and without my aid, Jenifer will be a rich woman, and able to endow this man Edgecumb, whom she loves, with as good a property as there is in the neighbourhood."

Then he went on to accuse himself of having indulged in self-confident vanity in having supposed for an hour that fair young Jenifer Ray might have preferred him, the sober middle-aged lawyer, to the handsome young soldier, who (according to her brother Hubert) was her heart's real choice.

He felt manfully and generously that as things were going now, and with his knowledge of how these things would act and re-act upon the futures of Jenifer and her brothers, he could resign all thoughts of her far more readily than he could have done had she been likely to remain dependent Jenifer Ray at Moor Royal, dependent on the capricious bounty of her sister-in-law. Had this latter been the only fate before her, he would have used his utmost eloquence, and brought his most urgent claims to bear upon her, convinced as he was that he had the power in him to make her a happy and contented woman. But now—now it would be well for him to resign her to what she would think the brighter fate, if she loved Edgecumb.

The three years would soon pass away, and the contents of the sealed letter would be made known to Hubert Ray and whomsoever else it concerned.

And then? Why then possibly Jenifer would be another man's happy wife, and it would never be known what fortune, hope, and love the family-lawyer had let slide through his grasp in renouncing her as he meant to renounce her now, even if she thought herself able and willing to complete the sacrifice he had proposed to her mother the previous day.

No one else should know of his offer with the exception of her mother, to whom he had made it, of that he was resolved. Not that he was one of those poor creatures who are ashamed to have it known that they have wanted women for their wives who have not become such, but because he would not have it known that whatever fortune might fall to Jenifer in the future he might have had a share in. To proclaim, or in any way to consent to the

advertisement of his own magnanimity was not a custom of his. So now, though all the love of his heart was given to Jenifer Ray, and he had never desired anything so ardently in his life, as he did now desire to marry her, he determined that he would refuse her acceptance should she accept him, and that no one should ever know that he might have had her and hers.

Old Mrs. Ray's letter reached him in due time. Jenifer was grateful and honoured—this last word was old Mrs. Ray's interpolation, and had not been dictated by Jenifer—but before she could answer him she must see him and tell him something that had happened which might alter his views materially. Would he, therefore, come to Moor Royal that afternoon at four o'clock. He rode up to Moor Royal, knowing that before he left it he would have flung away his heart's best hopes and happiness.

His knowledge of the contents of that sealed letter was costing him dear indeed.

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

NATURALLY, after Cellini's release from prison, his first works were for his patron the cardinal, until the time came for the latter to return to France, and then they all set out together. After the usual quarrelling, which was unavoidable wherever Cellini was concerned, they reached Florence, and then Ferrara, where the artist abode for some time, doing work for the duke of that place, until the French king began to grumble at his non-appearance, and he pursued his journey, leaving, of course, behind him, the memory of divers quarrels.

At length he did reach Fontainebleau, and had an audience with the king, who gave him a most gracious reception; but when it came to a question of setting to work, and the settlement of a salary, Cellini would not accept the terms of his benefactor, the cardinal, but broke up his establishment, and started on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Messengers were despatched after him, overtook him, and brought him back, owing to their using threats of imprisonment, of which he had had quite enough to last him his life, and which was the most potent argument that could possibly be employed in his case. The question of emolument was soon settled; he was to have the same salary as Francis had

assigned to Leonardo da Vinci (seven hundred crowns annually); to be paid, besides, for all work done for the king, and to receive a present of five hundred crowns to defray the expense of his journey.

His first commission from the king was a magnificent one, but from its vast scale it could scarcely be carried out by an artist who was then forty years of age. It was no less than to make twelve candlesticks in silver, the height of Francis himself, of six gods and six goddesses, and the artist was assigned the Tour de Nesle as a residence.

Cellini at once set to work on his models, and arranged about the payment of his two assistants, but he could not get possession of his residence. It had been assigned previously to the provost of Paris, Jean d'Estourville, who, however, made no use of it, and would not allow Cellini to occupy it, in spite of repeated orders. So Benvenuto complained to the king, who abruptly asked him, "Who he was, and what was his name?" Surprised at this reception, he did not at first reply, but afterwards stammered out that his name was Cellini; on which the king told him that if he was the same Cellini who had been described to him, he had better act like himself, he had the king's free permission. On this hint he set to work, and very soon was in residence at his new abode.

He then made full-sized models of Jupiter, Vulcan, and Mars, and got three hundred pounds of silver wherewith to commence his work. Meantime he finished a silver-gilt cup and basin—which he had begun for the Cardinal of Ferrara immediately on his release from prison—and they were of such beautiful workmanship, that, as soon as he had given them to his patron, the latter presented them to Francis, who in return gave the cardinal an abbey worth seven thousand crowns a year. The king, besides, wanted to make the artist a handsome present, but the cardinal prevented him, saying he would settle a pension of at least three hundred crowns yearly on him, out of the proceeds of his abbey; but this he never did.

Cellini was now in great favour; he really worked hard, and his Jupiter and other gods progressed rapidly. The king took a personal interest in them, visiting the artist's atelier, and gave him an order to make a gold salt-cellar, as companion to his cup and basin. He had a model ready—one he had made in Rome at the request

of the Cardinal of Ferrara—and with this the king was so highly delighted, that he ordered his treasurer to give Benvenuto one thousand old gold crowns, good weight, to be used in its manufacture. He duly received them, but he says that the treasurer, on one pretence or other, delayed payment till night, and then instigated four bravos to rob him. It is needless to say that such odds were nothing to Cellini, and that he reached home in safety with his precious burden.

The king, indeed, seemed unable to show sufficiently his regard for the artist. He gave him letters of naturalisation, and made him Lord of the Tour de Neale. He visited him in company with Madame d'Estampes, and it was at her instigation that Cellini received orders to do something wherewith to ornament and beautify Fontainebleau. For this he designed some magnificent gates, but he made an enemy of the favourite through not consulting her in the matter. He endeavoured to mollify her by presenting her with a beautiful cup, but she would not see him, so he went off in a tiff, and gave the cup to the Cardinal of Lorraine—which, of course, further embittered his fair enemy. To make matters worse, he turned out, neck and crop, a man who had taken up his residence, without permission, in a portion of the Tour de Nesle, and who happened to be a protégé of madame's. This, of course, was never forgiven, and it was war to the knife on the lady's part.

She set up a rival artist in opposition, Primaticcio; was always dimming in the king's ears, day and night, his superiority over Cellini, and succeeded, at last, in persuading Francis to let Primaticcio execute Cellini's designs for the gates at Fontainebleau. Cellini heard of this, and at once called on his rival; and having tried, without effect, moral suasion, to induce him to relinquish his proposed task, threatened to kill him, as he would a mad dog, when and wherever he met him. This course of reasoning succeeded where gentle means failed, and Primaticcio begged rather to be considered in the light of a brother.

Meanwhile he was hard at work on the king's salt-cellar, and when his majesty returned to Paris, he presented it. As it was of remarkable workmanship, a detailed account of it will be interesting. It was of pure gold, and represented the earth and the sea, the latter being a figure of Neptune, holding a trident in one hand, and in the other a

ship, which was to hold the salt. Under this were four sea-horses with their tails interlaced, besides a variety of fishes and other marine animals, whilst the water, with its undulating waves, was enamelled green. The earth was a beautiful nude female figure, holding a cornucopia in her right hand, whilst in her left she carried an Ionic temple, which served as a pepper-box. Under her were terrestrial animals and rocks partly enamelled, and partly natural gold. This was fixed on a base of black ebony, on which were four figures in mezzo-relievo of day and night, and of morning and evening. It is needless to say that Francis was delighted with it, and Primaticcio slunk off to Rome, under the pretext of studying the Laocoon, and other ancient works of art there.

Cellini was now forty-three years of age, and in the zenith of his fame and working powers. He enjoyed the favour of Francis to an extraordinary extent, and the king, on his visits to the artist's studio, was astounded at the magnitude of his conceptions, and the excellence of his execution. On one occasion he ordered seven thousand gold crowns to be paid him, but the Cardinal of Ferrara prevented its payment, and satisfied the king with his reason for so doing, that if Benvenuto was made rich, he would probably buy an estate in Italy, and would leave whenever the whim seized him. Possibly the same reasoning prevailed when, a short time afterwards, Francis promised him the first vacant abbey whose revenue should amount to two thousand crowns a year—but Cellini never received it.

Madame d'Estampes's hostility, however, was not yet allayed, for, as she observed, "I govern the whole kingdom, and yet such an insignificant fellow sets my power at defiance;" so she persuaded the king to grant to a perfumer, one of her creatures, the tennis-court of the Tour de Nesle. He took possession in spite of protest; but Cellini so harassed him by assaults every day with stones, pikes, and muskets (firing only blank cartridge), that no one dared stir from the place. This method was too slow, and one day our hero stormed the place, drove out the interloper, and threw his goods out of window. He then went straight to the king, told his story, was laughed at, forgiven, and had fresh letters given him, securing him still more in his possession.

For this the king was amply repaid by the strenuous exertions of the artist,

and the Jupiter, the first and only one of that nobly-devised set of candelabra, was finished; and in spite of Madame d'Estampes's intrigues, was shown to Francis at its best advantage. He was in raptures with it, and talked largely of rewarding its creator, but nothing came of it but one thousand crowns, which were partly for previous disbursements.

War broke out between Francis and the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and the king not only consulted Cellini as to the defences of Paris, but gave him a commission to do all he thought necessary to ensure the city's safety, but he resigned his task, when his old foe, Madame d'Estampes, prevailed on the king to send for Girolamo Bellarmati. Her enmity still pursued Benvenuto, and she so worked upon the king that one day he swore he would never show the artist any more favour. An officious friend carried this speech to Cellini, and he instantly formed a resolution to quit the kingdom. Before he could do so, however, he had many alternate hopes and fears. Sometimes Francis would load him with praises, at another he would scold and reprimand him severely, and it was, at last, only through the instrumentality of his old friend, the Cardinal of Ferrara, that he at length succeeded in quitting Paris. His departure, though nominally a pleasure-trip, in order to visit his sister and her daughters, was, in reality, a flight; for he left his furniture and other goods behind him, to the value of fifteen thousand crowns. He endeavoured to carry away with him two magnificent silver vases, but he was pursued and compelled to surrender them.

He seems to have had, for him, a quiet and peaceable journey, the only excitement he records being a terrific hailstorm, the hailstones beginning of the size of ounce bullets, and ending by being as big as lemons; nay, afterwards they found some which a man could hardly grasp in his two hands.

However, his party suffered no harm with the exception of some bruises; which under the circumstances was not to be wondered at; but, as they journeyed onwards, they found the trees all broken down, and all the cattle, with many shepherds, killed. They reached Florence without further mishap, and there Cellini found his sister and her six daughters all well.

Cosmo de' Medici, the Duke of Tuscany, received him with the greatest kindness; sympathised with him, and promised him

almost unlimited wealth, if he would but work for him, and it was settled that his first task should be a statue, either in marble or bronze, for the square before the ancient palace of the Republic, the Palazzo Vecchio. Cellini was forty-five years old when he made the model of his famous Perseus, which is now at Florence, in the Loggia dei Lanzi.

He settled upon a house, which Cosmo at once purchased and presented to him, but the irritable artist must, of course, at the very outset, quarrel with the duke's servants, and, consequently, some delay occurred before he could begin his model. But everything was at last arranged, even down to his salary, and he entered formally into the Medicean service.

Still, even in his beloved native town he was not happy, for Baccio Bandinelli, the celebrated sculptor, was either jealous of him, or he of Bandinelli, and they were always at feud. He kept good friends with his patron, made a colossal model of his head, executed some jewellery for the duchess, and worked hard at his Perseus; but he was always at daggers drawn with some of the ducal suite, and just now it was with the steward, who, he says, suborned people to charge him with a horrible crime.

There seems to have been no attempt at a prosecution; but Cellini felt it decidedly advisable to quit Florence for some time. So next morning he departed, without telling anyone but his sister, and went towards Venice. From Ferrara he wrote to the duke, saying that though he had left Florence without taking leave of him, he would return without being sent for. At Venice, he visited both Titian and Sansovino, and also Lorenzo de' Medici, who earnestly advised him to return to France, instead of going back to Florence. But Cellini, having written the duke his version of the cause which drove him from his native place, and judging that the outcry against him had somewhat subsided, returned as suddenly as he had left, and unceremoniously visited Cosmo, who, although at first he seemed displeased, soon entered into good-humoured conversation with him, asked about his visit to Venice, and ended by bidding him mind his work, and finish the statue of Perseus.

This statue, or, more properly speaking, group, however, did not progress very rapidly, for Cellini was not liked, and he was thwarted wherever it was practicable, while both the duke and duchess would

fain have kept him at work designing and making jewellery for them; in fact he was obliged to bribe the duchess with little presents of vases, etc., to try and gain her influence to obtain more help on his great work, and especially to counteract the machinations of his arch-enemy, Bandinelli.

It was of small avail, for the duke, displeased with the slow progress of the work, had, some eighteen months since, stopped supplying money, and Cellini had to find his men's wages out of his own pocket. So, by way of consolation, he thought he would murder Bandinelli; but when he met him, other ideas prevailed, and he spurned him, thinking what a much more glorious vengeance it would be to finish his work, and thus confound his enemies, and Bandinelli afterwards offered him a fine block of marble, wherewith to make a statue.

This, however, did not make them friends, for both being once in the duke's presence, Cellini told the duke plainly that Bandinelli was a compound of everything that was bad, and had always been so; and then he went on to criticise most unmercifully his rival's statuary, and to overwhelm it with ridicule. At the same time, however, he made him stick to his promise, and insisted on the delivery of the block of marble, out of which he carved a group of Apollo and Hyacinthus.

This delighted the duke, and he begged him to leave the Perseus for a while, and devote himself to sculpture; and Benvenuto did so, carving a Narcissus out of a block of Greek marble.

The duke had some doubts as to Cellini's ability to cast a large statue in bronze, but the artist assured him of his powers, promising that it should be perfect in every respect except one foot, which he averred could not be cast well, and would require to be replaced by a new one.

The casting was a series of accidents. His shop took fire, and it was feared the roof would fall in; then from another side came such a tempest of rain and wind, that it cooled the furnace. Add to all this, that Cellini was taken suddenly ill of a violent intermittent fever, and every one will perceive that things were almost as bad as they could be.

Ill in bed, news came to him that his work was spoilt, so he got up and went to the workshop, where he found the metal cooled, owing to deficient firing. This he at once remedied, and, with the addition of

some pewter, the metal soon began to melt.

Hark! a loud report, a blinding glare of light, and when men had come to their senses, they found that the cover of the furnace had burst and flown off, so that the bronze began to run. Quick! tap the metal; but it does not flow very quickly, it must be made more fluid. A number of pewter platters and dishes were procured, and into the furnace they went, some two hundred of them. Then the metal ran kindly, and the mould was filled, and nothing more could be done but wait with patience for its cooling.

The mental strain relieved, Benvenuto returned thanks to Heaven for the successful issue, then forgot all about his fever, and found he had a great appetite; so he sat down with his workmen and enjoyed his meal, drank "success to the casting," and then to bed, to arise quite cured, and capable of eating a capon for his dinner.

Two days afterwards came another anxious time. Had the casting been successful? Piece by piece it was uncovered. Yes, all went well until the foot was reached, which was to be imperfect. What a disappointment! the heel came out fair and round, and all Cellini's learned lecture to the duke went for naught. Yet, still, on uncovering it, came a little cry of joy, for were not the toes wanting, as also part of the foot? Who now could say he did not thoroughly understand his business? And so his patron and the duchess fully admitted when they saw the work.

After this a little rest was permissible, and a journey to Rome was the result. Here he saw Michel Angelo, whom he in vain induced to take service with Cosmo de' Medici. But St. Peter's was to be built, and nothing could persuade its creator to leave it. Malice had been busy during Cellini's absence, and on his return he found the duke very cold towards him; but although he managed to overcome this, an incident was about to happen which was to make the duchess, henceforth, his implacable enemy.

She wanted the duke to buy a string of pearls for her for six thousand crowns, and begged Cellini to praise them to the duke. He did so, and the prince was wavering as to the purchase, when he asked the jeweller's honest opinion of their value. Cellini could not but answer this appeal in a straightforward manner, and replied that they were not worth above two thousand crowns, at the same time pointing out to

the duke how much his consort desired them, and how she had asked him to aid her in obtaining them. So when the duchess once more asked for them, she was refused, and was told that Benvenuto's opinion was that the money would be thrown away. The duchess was but a woman, she gave him one look, shook her head threateningly at him, left the room, and never forgave him. She got her pearls though. A courtier, more supple and pliant than Cellini, begged the duke to buy them for his wife. He chose a happy moment, stood a few blows and cuffs, and then the indulgent husband yielded, and the pearls were his wife's property.

The duchess could not now bear the sight of Cellini, and the breach between them was widened by his refusal to give her, to adorn her room, the figures of Jupiter, Mercury, Minerva, and Danae, which he had made to go with his Perseus. Her influence made itself felt, and even the duke sensibly cooled towards our hero, and at last he found access to the palace very difficult.

But the crowning honour of his life was at hand. His Perseus was to be shown to the people and judged by their verdict. Proud, indeed, must have been the artist when he viewed the crowds which, from before daybreak, poured forth to see and admire his work. There was no adverse criticism there—no petty or factious jealousy. The people heartily and honestly admired the creation of their fellow-citizen, and felt a truly fraternal pride in owning him as one of themselves. The duke himself, concealed at a window, listened to the remarks of his people, and was so pleased, that he sent his favourite, Sforza, to congratulate Benvenuto, and tell him that he meant to signally reward him. His pride must have been gratified to the very utmost. "During the whole day the people showed me to each other as a sort of prodigy;" and two gentlemen, who were envoys from the Viceroy of Sicily, made him most liberal offers, on behalf of their prince, if only he would go with them. Verses, Latin odes, and Greek poems were written by the hundred, and all, with any literary pretensions, vied with each other in producing some eulogium on Cellini.

At length, sated with praise, he longed for a little rest, and obtained leave from his princely patron to make a short pilgrimage to Vallambrosa, Camaldoli, the baths of Santa Maria, and back again. At

the baths he met with an old man, a physician, who was, besides, a student in alchemy. This old man conceived a great friendship for Cellini, and told him that there were mines both of gold and silver in the neighbourhood; and furthermore, gave him a piece of practical information, to the effect that there was a pass, near Camaldoli, so open, that an enemy could not only easily invade the Florentine territory by its means, but also could surprise the castle of Poppi without difficulty. Being furnished by his old friend with a sketch-map he immediately returned to Florence, and lost no time in presenting himself before the duke, and acquainting him with the reason of his speedy return.

The duke was well pleased with this service, and promised, of course, great things; but the favour of princes is proverbially fickle, and when, in the course of a day or two, he sought an interview for the purpose of being rewarded for his Perseus, he was met by a message from the duke, through his secretary, desiring him to name his own price. This roused Cellini's ire, and he refused to put a price upon his work, until, stung by repeated reiterations of the demand, he said that ten thousand crowns was less than it was worth.

Cosmo was evidently a good hand at a bargain, and was quite angry at being asked such a sum, saying that cities, or royal palaces, could be built for such a sum; to which the artist retorted, with his usual modesty, that any number of men could be found capable of building cities and palaces, but not another, in all the world, who could make such a statue of Perseus. His rival, Bandinelli, was called in to appraise it, and, whether he took its real value, or had some doubts of the consequences of the fire-eating Cellini's wrath in the event of his depreciating it, he assessed it at sixteen thousand crowns. This was more than the duke could stand; and, after much haggling, it was settled that the artist should be rewarded with a sum of three thousand five hundred gold crowns, to be paid in monthly sums of one hundred gold crowns. This soon fell to fifty, then to twenty-five, and sometimes was never paid at all, so that Benvenuto, writing in 1566, says there were still five hundred crowns due to him on that account.

Still Cosmo was anxious to keep Cellini at work. He could thoroughly appreciate the artist's efforts, but he

objected to pay the bill. Numerous plans for work were raised, and models made; but they fell through, either through the artist refusing to adorn another's work, or through the prince choosing the worst models. The court, too, was full of intrigues, as the story of a block of marble will show. A fine block, intended for a statue of Neptune, had arrived, and the duchess contrived that Bandinelli should have the promise of it. Of course Cellini could not stand this, so he pleaded his cause with the duke, with the result that it was arranged that he and his rival should send in models, and that the victor in the competition should execute the statue. Benvenuto says he produced the best; but, knowing the court well, he waited on the duchess with a present of some jewellery, and promised, if she would only be neutral in the contest, to make for her the finest work of his life, a life-sized crucified Christ, of the whitest marble, on a cross of pure black. Cellini says Bandinelli died of sheer chagrin; and the duchess declared that as he, if he had lived, should have had the stone, at any rate by his death his rival should not have it, so the marble was given to Bartolommeo Ammanati, who finished the statue in 1563.

The feud between Bandinelli and Cellini rose to such a height as even to interfere with their sepulchral arrangements. The latter in disgust with the duchess had promised his Christ to the church of Santa Maria Novella, provided the monks would give him the ground under it, on which to erect his tomb. They said they had no power to grant his request, so, in a pet, he offered it on the same terms to the church of the Santissima Anunziata, and it was eagerly accepted. But Bandinelli had nearly finished a "Pietà," our Lord supported by Nicodemus—a portrait of himself, and he went straight to the duchess and begged the chapel for his own tomb. By her influence, with some difficulty, he obtained his wish, and there he erected an altar-tomb, which is still in existence; and having, when it was finished, removed thither his father's remains, he was taken suddenly ill, as aforesaid, and died within eight days.

The next noteworthy incident in Cellini's chequered career was that he bought a farm near Vicchio, about seven miles from Florence, for the term of his natural life (in other words, an annuity), of one Piermaria Sbietta. He paid his property a visit, and was received with every demonstration of

affection by Sbietta, his wife, and his brother Filippo, a profligate priest. Several persons warned him of impending danger from one or other of them, but their kindness seems to have disarmed his suspicions, and he stayed to supper, intending to sleep at Trespiano that night. When he resumed his journey, however, he was taken violently ill with burning pains in the region of his stomach, and next morning felt as if on fire. Then he concluded that he had been poisoned, and, after passing in review the things of which he had partaken at supper, he felt convinced that corrosive sublimate had been administered to him in some very highly seasoned but palatable sauce, which he had so much relished that he had been helped to two spoonfuls. At Cellini's age—he was then sixty—this proved nearly fatal, especially as the physicians of that day were profoundly ignorant. He hovered between life and death for six months, and did not thoroughly recover and attend once more to his business for a whole year.

His illness was productive of another event in his life, for, whilst lying sick, he made a vow, should he recover, to marry a woman who had nursed him with great care. He fulfilled his vow, and by his wife, Madonna Piera, he had five children.

When able again to work, he sought the duke, who was at Leghorn, was kindly received, told to return to Florence, and occupation should be found for him. But this does not seem to be the case, so he completely finished the marble crucifix, which he intended for his tomb, and showed it to the duke and duchess, both of whom were highly delighted with it. Cosmo hankered after it, and ultimately obtained it, in 1565, for fifteen hundred crowns, when he had it removed and placed in the Palazzo Pitti. In 1577 it was sent as a present to Philip the Second of Spain, who had it carried on men's shoulders from Barcelona, and deposited in the Coro Alto of the Escorial, where it may now be seen, inscribed: "Benventus Zelinus, Civis Florent: facie bat 1562."

Not being fully employed he got fidgety, and a friend of his, Signor Baccio del Bene, having arrived in Florence on a mission from Catherine de' Medici, they had a conversation, in which it was mentioned that the queen dowager wanted to finish the sepulchral monument of her deceased husband, Henry the Second, and that Daniello Ricciarelli da Volterra, who had

the work in hand, was too old to execute it properly, so that there was an excellent opportunity for Cellini to return to France, and once more take possession of his Tour de Nesle.

He asked Baccio to mention this to the duke, as, personally, he was willing to go, but the duke would not listen to Benvenuto going away, and selfishly kept him, without giving him employment—at least as far as we know, for here Cellini's autobiography ends, in the year 1562.

In 1561, however, Cosmo presented him with a house near San Croce, in the Via Rosajo, for him and his legitimate heirs male for ever, and in the grant, which is very flattering, is the following: "Possessing the house and its appurtenances, with a garden for his own use, we expect the return for the favours shown him will appear in those masterpieces of art, both of casts and sculpture, which may entitle him to our further regard."

Very little is further known about him, but we know that on the 16th of March, 1563 he was deputed, together with Bartolommeo Ammanati, to attend the funeral of his old friend and master, Michel Angelo Buonarrotti.

On the 15th of February, 1570, Cellini himself died, and was buried with great pomp in the chapter-house of the Santissima Annunziata, in the presence of the whole academy.

Vasari painted his portrait, in which he is represented with his back towards the spectator, whom he regards, with his beard on his shoulder. It is the face of a man of middle age, with features of no remarkable cast, short curling hair, and crisp beard, the moustache slightly upturned, bushy eyebrows, and two warts on the right side of his nose.

AT EVENTIDE.

STRETCH out thine hand to me across the waste;
Ah, dear lost friend, see how between us rolls
An arid plain, where wander weeping souls,
That seek for all the shadows they have chased,
While sadly wandering, torn by dreads and fears,
Amid the mazes of life's weary years.

Stretch out thine hand, nor heed all that which lies
Between my living form and thy dead heart.
Help me to play alone my listless part,
Wherein I see naught of those clear bright skies
We watched together, standing hand in hand,
To see the sunset deck the darkling land.

That time has come again. I stand alone.
The hills no more may glad my waking sight
Save when between the darkness and the light,
I close mine eyes and think; then each grey stone,
Each gentle hollow, each fair light and shade
Are mine, imprinted where time cannot fade.

Then why not come and sit beside the fire,
Make thyself known! I would not ask for more,
Would not e'en question of that darksome shore,
Where I have lost thee, nor would I aspire
To gaze within thine eyes. Let me but clasp
Thine hand in mine! I could not fear thy grasp.

Dear, thou art dead, yet wilt though not return?
I do not fear thee, for I know thou'rt dead.
Canst thou not feel this? Leave thy quiet bed,
And watch with me the drift-wood redly burn,
Just as thou didst of old. 'Tis eventide,
What keeps thee from thy old friend's fireside?

I will not question more; methinks thou'rt here,
Yearning to whisper of thy presence sweet.
I will be still, perchance I'll hear thy feet
Pause at my threshold, or thy whisper near.
I will be still, for death is dumb, is dumb!
Thou canst not speak, so I will feel thee come.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART III.

IF fortune, as the saying goes, sometimes comes to people while they sleep, she is pretty sure to make off again without taking the trouble to wake them. Thus I felt it to be, anyhow, when on returning to our hotel after our interview with the magistrate, we found that, although the *Sea Mew* had sailed the night before, yet that Hilda and her father had not gone with her, but had actually slept in the same hotel for the night, and had started this morning in a chaise and pair for parts unknown.

It was provoking to think that I had again missed the opportunity of seeing Hilda, and of making myself known to her. It was provoking, too, to find that both Hilda and the squire had heard of our little adventure of the night before, and had remained to hear the result, driving away as soon as we had been released from arrest.

Hilda had written one of her pithy little notes to Tom, congratulating him on getting out of his scrape, and bidding him beware of making friends with people of whose antecedents he knew nothing. As for her father and herself, they were about to visit an old friend of the squire's, who was believed to be living in the neighbourhood. But as their route was uncertain there was no use in following them. Tom and his friend had better rejoin the *Sea Mew* as soon as possible, and try and keep out of mischief. There was something gravely sarcastic about the note that sounded to me like an implied reproach. Was it possible that Hilda had after all recognised me, and had seen through the thin disguise and half despised me for having assumed it? All the more I was resolved to follow them,

and have a thorough explanation with Hilda; and the slight obscurity that veiled their movements only made me more eager to find them.

This obscurity was presently somewhat relieved by the return of the carriage which had taken them away, for the driver reported that he had taken them to a place about seven leagues from here, where our friends had hired another conveyance. And so having no seven-league boots, we ordered a carriage to be brought round, secure of the first stage in our journey.

But before the carriage could be brought round a voiture appeared, driven at a splitting pace from the station, in which voiture there sat a little man in spectacles, with a short black beard and vivacious features; though he hardly so much sat either as stood, jumped, danced, gesticulated; everybody flying about at his word as if he were the commander of the port. At last, as if his mainspring had suddenly broken, he sank down upon the cushions with a gesture of despair; and then we saw for the first time that he had a companion in the carriage, a very pretty woman in a pretty costume, arranged with blue serge and blue and white braid to represent approximately a seafaring dress. And then before we quite understood what was the matter, we were somehow dragged into the business by a chain of eager boatmen and touts who exclaimed in a chorus of shouts and cries: "This way, Monsieur le Directeur, this way; behold those two messieurs there who know all about your affair."

"But she has gone, she has sailed!" repeated Monsieur le Directeur, folding his arms gloomily. "All is finished! My friend," addressing the cab-driver, "let us return to Paris."

"But no!" cried Madame la Directrice, rousing herself in turn. "But no, Alphonse, how absurd thou art. Return to Paris! And what shall I wear when I get back to Paris, when I am here completely equipped for the sea. Let us address ourselves to these messieurs." And she bestowed such an engaging smile upon Tom Courtney that his susceptible heart was won in a moment. "We are looking for the *Sea Mew*," she said, addressing us in excellent English, "a vessel that belongs to the friend of my husband, the distinguished Meesta Chancellor."

"And so are we," replied Tom in his most dulcet accents. "We, too, belong to

the Sea Mew, and I hope we shall be *compagnons de voyage*."

Madame bowed graciously, and hoped so too, explaining the matter to her husband, who suddenly became radiant again.

"Ha, ha!" cried the director, "here is our affair then well arranged. Messieurs, I have left my bureau of Public Instruction, at the earnest request of my very good friend Chancelleur, that I may make your voyage entertaining, and also, let us hope, a little instructive. Well, I have my programme perfectly arranged, and it was irritating to find it in danger of being rudely cut in two. But since you, messieurs, are here to receive us, all is well, very well. We shall begin at once, having breakfasted. Cherbourg need not long detain us, its history is written in blue books and the budget of the State. But we have a district close by, intensely interesting to all you English who are a little akin to the Normans. You, perhaps," addressing Courtney, "you, perhaps, are a little Norman. Your name, monsieur, which I did not distinctly catch? Courtney!" triumphantly. "See, precisely what I said—Courtnez, short nose, just as we have Courthose, or short pantalon."

"Mon cher," remonstrated madame, frowning at him, "do not entertain our friends with these *bêtises*."

"*Bêtises!*" cried the director, "it is not *bêtise*, it is philologie. You should, sar," again addressing Courtney, "be of a *verri distingué* family. Only the great chiefs have the names according to the physique. To be a 'De' is nothin', and any one little *seigneur* is a 'De'—but a Courtnez, ah, that is grand!"

"I'm very glad to hear it," said Tom, laughing; but at the same time rubbing his nose as if to assure himself that this organ was not unduly limited in dimensions. "And my friend here, Lamallam, what is he?"

"Ah, that I know nothing," rejoined the director, shaking his head suspiciously; "that is not French, that is not English, that is not Dutch—perhaps it is *Hindostanee*."

Tom Courtney gave me a nudge.

"Our friend is a conjuror," he murmured.

He seemed quite fascinated with the director; we should have dubbed him professor, but that is a title which does not assume large proportions in France—any little boy's tutor is a professor. Well, Tom

was so fascinated with the director, jointly, perhaps, with the director's wife, that he persisted in counter-ordering our carriage for the seven leagues, and in staying to breakfast at the hotel with our new friends. The director made a glorious breakfast, talking all the while, in a running commentary on the viands before us; he sketched the natural history of the lobster, showed us the connecting link between the shrimp and the spider, gave us a brief account of the process of making cream in Normandy, apropos of the *sauce à la crème*. Only as there were thirty or forty more of his compatriots at table all talking and gesticulating at high pressure, with the incessant rattle of plates and dishes all mingling in one mighty roar, it happened that not all his instructive remarks reached our ears. Madame la Directrice too seemed to enjoy her breakfast. She had the satisfaction of feeling that she was the best-looking and the best-dressed woman at the table. The wife of the "port admiral," as we dubbed the officer who had the most gold lace about his coat, grew pale with envy and jealousy at the sight of her rival's fresh Parisian toilet; while the officers with one accord pronounced the new comer as of all things the most "chic." And, by the way, the gallant officers themselves were a puzzle and wonder to us strangers. What were all these captains and lieutenants doing, and the brisk and smart seamen, too, who thronged the streets, while all the time there was not a single ship in a condition to go to sea. But then that was explained by the presence of naval barracks, where men are trained in seamanship without the disagreeable necessity of going afloat. An excellent notion this last, said the director sympathetically, for he hated the sea himself—except from the shore; while madame, on the contrary—The director gave a shrug expressive of the sacrifices he was making for the pleasures of his fair and amiable partner, and to accomplish his mission for his very good friend Chancellor.

All this would have been amusing enough if I had not been so anxious to get sight of Hilda once more. But then, as Courtney urged, of what use was it to start on a vague uncertain chase, when in the course of twenty-four hours or so we should be sure to meet on board the Sea Mew? And in the meantime our director had us in his power. He was not an exacting taskmaster; he allowed us plenty of opportunities for rest and refreshment,

and for enjoying the society of his lively and charming wife. But in the meantime the programme must be carried out. In us he beheld the representatives of the passengers of the Sea Mew, and in our persons must his vows to his friend Chancellor be accomplished. And so, breakfast once over, a carriage was ordered, and we were driven off along the coast towards Cape La Hague.

"I am going to show you," began our director, "the earliest stronghold of your race in Normandy—the first settlement, probably, of the barbarous Scandinavians on the shores of civilised Neustria."

As we started, the weather was rather threatening, great banks of clouds drifting up from the sea, with occasional driving showers; but in spite of the weather, when we reached the little bay called the Anse St. Anne—where there is a little fishing village under the protection of the big fort that crowns the point—in spite of the weather, I say, the whole of the male population of the village was on the move. Their fishing-boats were anchored a little way out at sea—short bluff craft bobbing up and down on the swell like so many fishing-floats; and each man as he left his hut to start with the tide for the fishing-banks carried on his back a sort of coracle, rudely constructed, and of the frailest materials—an egg-box in one case—a little wooden scoop, in fact, which the fisherman dexterously set afloat and scrambled into, and then paddled out to his boat. A primitive race these fishermen, among whom still linger many of the superstitions that once were universal in the district. There is "le moine de Saire," for instance, the evil genius of these parts and the terror of seamen. In the roadstead of Cherbourg he calls out, "Sauvez la vie!" and draws the seamen who come to his help into the waves. Upon the rocks, he cries, "Par ici! par là!" in order to mislead them; and these are evil pranks in which he indulges to this day. But he no longer sits upon the Bridge of Saire to play at cards with the belated traveller and to throw the player into the water as the penalty for losing the game. People had long been too wide-awake for him, and when the railway was made he abandoned the bridge in disgust.

Madame la Directrice is well versed in all this folk-lore, and she can tell us of the goblins that haunt the coasts hereabouts,

which the country people call huards, or hurleurs; and of Chicheface or, more correctly, Chichevache, a fantastic beast who devours good wives. Her lamentable thinness—for Chichevache, is evidently, being interpreted, "miserable cow"—anyhow, the lamentable thinness of this beast is evidence of the scarcity of that particular article of diet. Another monster, called Bigorne, eats up husbands who are under the dominion of their wives, and his circumstances seem to be more comfortable. Our fair friend is delighted to find that the same monsters were known in England, as witness Chaucer, who warns ladies to avoid the example of patient Griselda, "Lest Chichevache you swowle in her entraille," and Lydgate, who, as Professor Morley shows us, devotes a whole poem to the two mythic beasts.

By this time we have reached Beaumont Hague on the western side of the peninsula, with a lonely chateau in a wood, close by which our director points out with triumph a raised embankment of green-sward, which he assures us is the Hague Dyke, an entrenchment that cuts off the whole neck of land ending in Cape La Hague; a work that some ascribe to the first Norman settlers in the land, who here may have formed a stronghold and place of retreat, whence they might sally out to plunder and devastate at will. Eight villages are cut off from the rest of the department by this entrenchment, villages which contain a population more purely Scandinavian perhaps than any other part of France—a people tall and strong, with fair-haired women of full and bountiful forms, a people whose mouths have hardly adapted themselves in all these centuries to the tripping language of the French, so that in the neighbourhood the district is sometimes known as the Pays de Chenna, from the peculiar way in which the French "cela" is pronounced. It is a little England, indeed, beyond the silver streak, and Tom Courtney feels a wild desire to embrace some of these tall, good-looking girls, and exclaim: "We are brethren and sisters!" But it is hardly likely that the claim to relationship will be welcomed and acknowledged, for, sooth to say, the English are not over-popular in Normandy—especially unpopular, too, among the seafaring population, a little envious of our flag that, as far as commerce goes, has almost driven theirs from the seas.

And so we take leave of La Hague. Hague, as our director points out, in the

sense of an enclosed space—rapidly running over the words belonging to the same root—"haie," "hedge," "ha-ha," and even "hay"—and we drive off, accompanied by a sharp rattling shower of rain and an equally heavy shower of philologic lore from our director, Tom remarking that all this learning acted upon him in the same way as a sermon, and gave him a wonderful appetite for dinner.

When we reached the town we found despatches waiting for us, which gave us a fresh object in life. First of all was a letter from Hilda brought by a servant in a wonderful shiny hat, driving a dog-cart, with a fine fast-trotting mare. And this proved to be from Hilda for Tom, with a short account of her adventures. They had found the chateau of the Count de St. Pol, only to learn that the old squire's friend was dead, and that his son ruled in his stead—a young man, handsome, brilliant, and very rich. He had welcomed them with all the effusion of his race; but as he kept up only a bachelor establishment, Hilda and her father had taken up their quarters at the hotel at Valognes—"a dear old place, which you must come and see, Tom." Another despatch too—by telegraph this one—came from the Sea Mew, dated Ryde. She had run across to pick up her owner, who was going to join her there, and back to the coast of France—port of rendezvous, St. Vaast.

We sent for the railway "Indicateur." Last train to Valognes at a quarter past six. Dinner must be postponed till we reach that place. Tom grumbled and muttered something about never travelling with people who were running after girls.

The same question presented itself both to Tom and myself on reading these despatches. Had the recall of the Sea Mew to pick up its owner anything to do with Hilda's hasty departure from the yacht with her father? Was it possible that she shrank from the assiduous attentions of her betrothed, wished to put off their meeting as long as possible? Perhaps it was rather a high-handed proceeding which a girl of spirit might resent, this ordering back the whole party to meet its host—a thing not chivalrous at all, but rather savouring of the self-importance of an arrogant man. However that might be, Tom reminded me that hitherto Hilda had not shown any repugnance to Mr. Chancellor, and that having made up her mind to accept him she must have been prepared for a certain high-handedness which was

part of his character. And, again, Chancellor's visit to France was in pursuance of a scheme of direct advantage for the Chudleigh family. For the son of the house, Redmond, the ex-guardsmen and roué, was now, Tom informed me, lying hidden in some French town, mixed up in certain questionable bill transactions, upon which his creditors had threatened criminal proceedings, and Chancellor had undertaken to negotiate matters, hoping to avert any exposure, and to ship off Master Redmond to some obscure colony—say as governor or commander-in-chief. Now, undoubtedly, John Chancellor was very much in love, and it would be a bitter disappointment to him to find that Hilda was not on board to meet him. And why should she have inflicted this disappointment on one who was doing his best to serve her?

Tom and I talked the matter over as we waited for the time of departure, winding round and round the subject without coming to any conclusion. But while we sat in the shade in the courtyard of the hotel, smoking and talking over our woes, the director being busy with a note-book and his programme, and his wife having gone to array herself for a walk, a young and bright-looking girl approached, and in pretty broken English requested our advice and aid. She was Justine, the femme de chambre of the English mademoiselle, and her mistress had left her here with her boxes, promising to send for her when the destination of the party was settled; but she had heard nothing, and was so dull and desolate in this place that existence was no longer endurable. If we would help her to find her mistress, we should earn her prayers for our welfare and her everlasting gratitude.

"If I could travel with a femme de chambre, how gladly would I," exclaimed Tom. "But as that would not be thought correct, I don't see what can be done. But don't cry, my child," seeing that the girl's eyes were fast filling with tears. "You may rely upon us to see you all right." And here it occurred to us that Justine might attach herself to Madame la Directrice, who was travelling without a maid; we were all sure to meet on board the Sea Mew, and in the meantime Justine could make herself useful to her compatriots. Justine eagerly seized the opportunity—an orderly little creature, a satellite who felt herself lost without a central planet—and presently we saw and heard her in full career of

activity, darting here and there for things for madame, and singing :

" A Saint Malo sont arrivés,
Sur le bord de la rivière,
Trois balemens chargés de blés,
Sur l'i sur l'o sur le bord de l'eau,
Dans l'eau,
Sur le bord de la rivière."

"A nice little girl that," quoth Tom, rising and throwing away the end of his cigar; "I mean to have a talk to her, and find out what's the matter with Hilda." Tom must have found an opportunity for carrying out his purpose, for presently he reappeared, and seated himself beside me. "A clever little thing, too, that girl," he began; "she put me up to the situation in a moment. Her mistress, she said, was quite satisfied and happy—at least, if not quite happy, anyhow quite content, till last night when the post came in with two dépêches for mademoiselle, one, no doubt, from her fiancé, which she read quite calmly, half smiling to herself, and the second—ah, the second—which she opened quite indifferently. It was only from the vieille châtelaine at the château of monsieur, her papa. "Yes, the second," went on Tom, imitating the little femme de chambre's gestures, and waving of hands; "the second produced a most lamentable effect on mademoiselle. She turned pale, was about to faint, and then gave way to an indescribable agitation, wringing her hands, and even weeping, in a way à navrer le cœur. Now, what's navrer le cœur?" asked Tom, interrupting his narrative. "I want to get up all those little phrases; they are so useful in travelling. Navrer le cœur, what does it mean, now?"

"Perhaps you'll know before you are much older," I replied gloomily, for, indeed, the little story I had just heard had made me feel something of a heart-break. The "vieille châtelaine" could be no other than Mrs. Murch, and the news that had so much affected Hilda could hardly be other than an account of my visit to Combe Chudleigh, and of what I had said and done. But that Hilda felt that I had come too late, and that we were hopelessly and irrevocably parted, was only too plain from the manner in which she had received the news. Not a gleam of joy or of hope, but only the grief and sorrow with which she took leave for ever of all the sweet promise of earlier days.

But if I could only see her—speak to her in my own name, urge my own rights of first and only love. I became in a moment feverishly anxious to depart.

To a man anxious to get away, it was rather vexing, that as Tom and I were settling our bills we should be seized upon by the director. "Are we to travel on to-night then, my friends?" And then I suggested that as we were going to a small town of limited resources, that his wife and he would be much more comfortable in their present quarters. "Not at all, my friends," rejoined the director; "no trifling considerations of comfort shall interfere with my devotion to the friends of my excellent Chancelleur. Till we are on board that ship with the extraordinary name, I will not lose sight of you, my friends, for a moment. You, my brave Courtnez, conduct my wife to the omnibus, and we others will follow on foot."

And I presently beheld Tom pleasantly sandwiched between Justine and her mistress, while the director held me by the arm as he discoursed upon the origin of the name of Cherbourg, whether Caesarburgh, as some pretend, a derivation the director was inclined to scout, or more probably after some Saxon chieftain Cyric or Cedric.

But soon we were speeding, at the deliberate speed of a French express train, along a pleasant English-looking valley, with a stream showing here and there a gleam of light, and snug villas perched among the trees; through a woodland-country, the trees all aglow with the rays of the declining sun, with little fields between, shining in vivid green; the storm all cleared away, and the day finishing in peace and splendour; then among roses which cluster about every cottage, hang about the station-walls, and clamber around the wheels of old deserted luggage-trucks—a land of roses and rich meadows, with green hedges and happy, comfortable-looking cows standing to be milked, and milked into vases of polished brass of quite noble classic form: a country of village spires and thatched roofs, with a pretty bit of river here and there shining from under a bridge. It is the river Douve—a less brawling stream than our English Dove, but with a charm of its own, in its rich and pleasant valley. And yonder on the hill our director points out a spire among the trees, which should be a place of pilgrimage for the Scots. It is Brix, the original home of the Bruces before they knew either Northumbria or Scotland. And then we are left at Valognes, while the train speeds on into the green, smiling country.

The inevitable little omnibus waiting at the station is already nearly filled with *commis-voyageurs*, and there is only room for Justine and the boxes, which are packed outside, so we walk down into the quiet town where the shadows are creeping up the walls while the tall roofs of the big *châteaux* are still in full sunshine. A pleasant social life they must have led these provincial *seigneurs* before the Revolution, shut out from most of the cares of the world behind these big florid gateways within the shaded courtyards, and the gardens full of sunshine. The gardens are still there, with their pear-trees loaded with fruit trained in formal neatness over the *espaliers*, with the apple-trees and plum-trees, that may have been grafted by the dainty hands of dukes and marquises of the *ancien régime*; and the courtyards are still there and the florid gateways, these last with a narrow doorway, perhaps, cut out of the great expanse, and a little grating whence some white-coifed sister may look out upon the world outside, as quiet almost as the cloistered world within. These big houses of the old noblesse are nearly all convents now, or seminaries, or retreats. Except that in one or two of them, perhaps, some honest bourgeois lives, like a mouse in the corner of a granary, in a room or two cut off from the grand salon, with the legs of a fat carved cupid on one side of the partition, and his torso on the other; while the carved mantelpiece holds the dish for tobacco and the modest pipe of the *propriétaire*. He will replace the purchase-money in a few years with the produce of the grand garden, that seems continually soaked in sunshine all through the long summer days. But of the courtly old families who lived here through so many centuries in their homely state, what trace is there now? Who knows or cares whether our friend De St. Pol, for instance, is the offshoot of some almost royal line, or the son of some speculator or contractor, who the other day might have carried a pedlar's basket?

In a wide grass-covered Place we come to a halt—the Place surrounded by formal rows of well-clipped limes, with seats under the trees, but not a soul to be seen, and the silence only broken by the ringing of the big solemn bells of the church, whose graceful dome and quaint spire crown the house-tops, and the tinkling of little bells of convents from anywhere among the trees. Hereabouts was the keep of the old citadel, that stood out against Kings

of England and Kings of France in turn, with hardly a stone left upon another now to tell the tale, but where the turf gives back a solemn echo from the cells and dungeons below.

Our director leads the way across the grassy Place, and enters the *porte-cochère* of a rambling old hotel. A couple of old-fashioned diligences block the view of the entrance, and sundry waggons piled high with hay. A girl is driving some turkeys into a dilapidated stable, and cocks and hens are marching to roost in a long procession. But by the doorway, in a little nook shaded with shrubs and creepers, there is a group of which I recognise the principal members—the old squire, regarding the scene with dignified complaisance, while at a table sits Hilda, sketching the old gateway, the tower, with its conical roof just touched by golden sunlight, the shadows that hang about the mullioned windows. The grey time-worn front of the church behind is still bathed in light; there is a solemn kind of pathos about this last little bit still left of the old castle of Valognes.

"But, mademoiselle, you have succeeded admirably," cried an enthusiastic voice from the group. "You have expressed the very sentiment of the scene, and in such a charming manner that I shall treasure this sketch as one of my most precious possessions."

The speaker was a young handsome fellow, small and slight, but well-built, who hung over Hilda as she worked with quite unnecessary solicitude.

"But he is charming, that young man," said Madame la Directrice to her husband sotto voce. "Do you happen to know him, mon ami?"

"Know him?—yes," exclaimed the director. "This is one of the best of my friends—the young M. de St. Pol."

LETTERS TO A COUNTRY DOCTOR.

FOR the last three or four years I have been making a collection of the curious or quaint letters sent to me by my poorer patients, and though, from the nature of the contents, I cannot make public all that is written, I will, with your permission, give some extracts from them, which will tend to afford some information as to the orthography and modes of expression in common use by some of the rural inhabitants of Hertfordshire. The extracts are copied

literally from the originals, and are absolutely correct, except as regards the names, which are, for obvious reasons, disguised.

The knowledge of anatomy exhibited in the following is very poor.

"My cough is som beter, but when i cough it causes awful pain on the left side of the stomock below the hip. i have aploide a letseed poultes."

A deeper insight into anatomical details is shown by the person who wrote:

"I feel very full at the chest where the digestive organs lie, especially after meals."

Another writes most emphatically: "if you pleser sir would you be so kind has to send me hay bottel of meadson, for hi have got such hay pain hay cross my stickamat."

The next extract is very quaint.

"To Mr. Blank, Surgent. please sir i write beeing unable to come myselef feeling so tirde and ill. i cannot rest anywere such coffeing and soreiness and benumfells and trembleing with much weeking."

The patient evidently meant to say that she had feelings of numbness with much weakness. More explicit was the poor woman who wrote:

"I have such bad crying stericks wich causes me such pains in my chest and heart makes me feel very weak."

The next example shows that the person who wrote it had conquered the difficulties of orthography, but had a very confused idea of the use of the pronouns.

"Mrs. Johnson's head is a little better; when I put my arm out straight there is such a tingling in my thumb, but her medicine makes me feel sick."

A poor man came to the surgery one day, and, fearing he would be unable to see me personally to explain his symptoms, had written the following letter which he handed to me, as I happened to be disengaged:

"Sir you gave me a bottle of medecine about tree weeks ago for my cold at the chest and the small of the back. My cold was begingeing to come out of me nicely, but I could not see you the next time. I feel a little stuff up at the chest as if a little flem wants looseing; sir, my kind thanks to you for a nother bottle."

The following patient had evidently tried to cure himself before applying to his medical man; he writes:

"Will you be kind enough to send me something to ease a very sad pain in my inside, for I have beign suffering since yisterday at noon. I have had brandy and wiskey and several things but nothing dont give me any relefe."

The latter part of the next letter reminds one of the famous lines in Macbeth: "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly."

"Mrs. Stone wanted your opinion as to whether anything could be done for him by sending him away anywhere, she would be glad if anything could be done, to have it done, if you thought it could be done."

Very affecting is the following epistle, received from a poor woman whose husband was in extremis:

"SIR,—My poor dear husband is so much worse, his poor harm is in such dreadful pain and so swollen. Coud you doo anything to ease him, and his tongue is coated dreadful, and I cannot get any food down him. I am broke for Linement and medeson, do cindly come as soon as posable from yours Respectfully.

"J. WATERS."

As is also the following: "He was taken with a sinking and guddy feel, and we thought he would of died for a hour or two."

It is very gratifying to a medical man to hear that a patient is better, and that he attributes the good result to his doctor's skill, hence I transcribe the following:

"If you please would be so kind as to send me some more medsin, as the other suit me so will, and my coft is a little better, but I have the retmatic so bad in my head."

Another grateful patient—a poor working man—writes a most genuine and touching letter.

"I have got my little girl to write me a few lines to you, to tell you I am very much obliged to you for what you have done for me . . . and now I must conclude with kind love to you, yours affectionate,

"AMOS BAKER."

The word medicine seems a puzzler to many poor people, and it is spelt very variously in my correspondence, e.g., meddeson, medesin, meaddsen, medeson, medsin, medsen, medinse, medecian, medecin, medecine, meadson. Some get over the difficulty by asking for something, somethink, or somethind for their ailments. The word appetite is rarely attempted, but when it is it involves a complete failure, as in the ensuing letter:

"Pleas to send me som moor medecin. I ham geting better, but my Back his very weak and Hapytite very bad."

As specimens of quaint spelling the two following extracts are amusing:

"Sir pleas Will you Be so Koind As to

send Me A Bottoll of Meaddsen, the Bottoll Was left yeasteaday."

"Sir I should bee verey much a blige to you if you could come and see My husbon at wonce for i should like to have your advce for his head is so verey bad and he swelen so as he cannot see out of one of eye."

Almost as interesting is this extract :

"My back was taken bad a week ago I had a Plaster from the Cemist that don't seem to do me any good I have got it on know. I Was took on yesterday morning when i begun to work that's like a snap come the bottom my back I fell down and that took the use away from me for some mintes."

I could give many more extracts, but I fear I shall tire my readers, and, therefore, will only quote a remark made by a recently made widow. When I asked her how her husband died, she replied, "He went off as easy as a glove."

In conclusion, I will refer to a few of the strange terminations to the letters I have had. One person signs herself "yours respectively," another "I remain with your assistance," another "your ammbleservant," another "your afflicted and poor servant," and another "yours respectfully."

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are "mauvais quarts d'heures" in all lives, and it was a specially "mauvais quart d'heure" which began for Hetty Mavors about this time. In the first place, the vicar ceased to come to the house at all, so that she had no explanation either of his words in the drawing-room that day, or of his strangely altered demeanour so shortly afterwards. In the next, the breach between her and Mrs. Pentreath would not heal. It should have done so, seeing that Hetty was even nervously anxious to keep within the limits assigned to her when once she was aware of them, and that Mrs. Pentreath, having said her say, and being conscious that she had said it over harshly, was disposed to let the matter drop, and trust to the good principles of her young companion for there being no necessity for its renewal. But unless one is very great or very humble it is difficult to go back from a position one has once assumed. Mrs. Pentreath was too

proud to weaken the force of her rebuke by owning it had been too severe; and Hetty had been too much wounded by her patroness's injustice to make any advances on her own part. So a certain constraint and coldness sprang up between these two ladies who had been so fond of one another; and the younger suffered most from it, seeing that the other had her son to fall back upon, while she had—nobody!

Certainly no one could accuse Hetty of seeking consolation from Captain Pentreath, or of "running after" that young officer any more. On the contrary, she avoided him as much as possible, left off chatting with him or volunteering any of those little friendly offices and errands which she had taken on herself in all innocence for his service, kept as much as possible at her guardian's side when he was present, and even substituted a huge and interminable piece of embroidery in place of the songs and duets with which she and the young officer had been wont to make the evenings tuneful. She only went to the piano now when his mother asked her; never otherwise.

It was excellently meant, but it was overdone, as such efforts are apt to be, and not from any wilfulness on Hetty's part, but simply from girlish simplicity and ignorance. Mrs. Pentreath, of course, could have done it much better in her young days, and could have retired from a flirtation with as much grace as she had shown in entering on it; but then Mrs. Pentreath had been a little woman of the world from her very cradle, and forgetting that Hetty was the very reverse, she felt almost angry with the girl at times for her awkwardness and consciousness; and even wondered whether this exaggerated coldness and distance was but a blind to conceal a more clandestine intimacy between the young people than had previously existed.

In truth, however, poor Hetty had a very difficult part to play, and the person who was the cause of her having to play it was the very one to make it more difficult still to her. From a sense of delicacy for which Mrs. Pentreath did not give her credit, she had sturdily refused to give the young officer any explanation of her change of conduct; but Captain Pentreath was not to be blinded. Even if his mother had not given him more than one hint that his attentions to her young companion were displeasing to her, his own vanity would have forbidden him to believe that any girl could voluntarily withdraw herself

from them; and, therefore, while preserving a certain amount of caution before "the old lady," he chose to assume that Hetty and he were fellow-victims to her tyranny, and to embarrass the girl unspeakably by a system of sighs and glances, whispered words, and covert expressions of sympathy, which, if not actual love-making, were sufficiently like it to make the poor child desperately uncomfortable.

If she had only known how to rebuff him, and in such manner that she might not seem to attach more meaning to his conduct than he intended to express by it! But, alas! it was just this that seemed impossible to her. These things which appear so easy to us in after-life, are often very Juggernauts in the path of youth; and of all difficult things to refuse a man before he has offered to her is the most difficult to a young and modest girl; more especially when, as in this case, the man has no intention of offering himself; and, in the desire to enjoy what is to him a very pretty flirtation with a very pretty girl, keeps carefully on the safe side of any expression of which she could take hold.

Hetty could have cried at times for a friend to confide in and ask assistance from in her difficulties; but Mrs. Pentreath, who might have been such a one in the past, was of course the last person to whom she could appeal at present, and as for that other, he never came near her now. Since the day of that passionate interview in the parlour when he had said so much and yet so little, she had not once spoken to him; and the poor child grew pale and wistful-looking in the loneliness to which this falling away of her old allies seemed to have finally condemned her.

Captain Pentreath, too, was beginning to get tired of her persistent shyness and avoidance, and took advantage of her wan looks to introduce a little plan of his own for breaking them down.

There was, as I think I have said, an eight o'clock service at St. Gudule's on weekdays. Hetty had been in the habit of attending it in all weathers, her little feet tripping to church as briskly through the winter snow as over the summer grass; and Mrs. Pentreath approved of the practice. She thought it well for young girls to be religious in their habits, and said so. But one day it came to her knowledge that Ernest had begun to accompany Miss Mavors on these early excursions, and forthwith the latter found her church-going

at an end. She had no idea of the real reason of its prohibition, or that it had, in fact, been the means of first opening Mrs. Pentreath's eyes to the idea that her son might be finding the girl more attractive than was desirable. She never said so, of course; she had far too much tact and breeding to suggest such an idea; but it was put to Hetty that when there was a third person in the house it would be a convenience to her patroness to have her at home in the morning; and the girl complied immediately and as a matter of course. Equally as a matter of course Captain Pentreath confirmed his mother in her suspicions by discontinuing his church-going when she did, and there the matter rested greatly to Hetty's regret, and not a little to that of the vicar, who missed her sweet face from its accustomed corner in the church, and guessed quite wrongly as to the reason why.

But one day Hetty found the embargo taken off as quietly as it had been put on.

Captain Pentreath had been grumbling at breakfast at being awakened in the morning by the eight o'clock bell from St. Gudule's.

"What did Hamilton mean," he asked impatiently, "by ringing a beastly bell at that hour in November, when people in their senses would never dream of getting up to wade through fog and mud to a dreary service? For his part, as there wasn't any sun in England to warm the air in winter, he required to stay in bed till the fires had had time to do it instead; and if Hamilton could find anyone idiotic enough to prefer going to his old church instead, his victims oughtn't to want a bell to call them to the torture."

"Fie, Ernest, for shame! I believe George has a very fair congregation, and I am sure the bell never disturbs me," said Mrs. Pentreath in the indulgent way in which she always rebuked her son; but about an hour later, when Hetty and she were alone, she said to the girl:

"I don't think you are as rosy as you used to be, Hetty. You used to have such a good colour every day last winter when you came in to breakfast from the early service. I'm afraid it's too cold for you to go at present; but if not, and if you like it, I have nothing particular for you to do, you know, my dear, which need keep you at home."

Hetty's face went rosy enough on the instant to satisfy anyone.

"Too cold!" she repeated almost in-

dignantly ; "it was never too cold for her to go, and there was nothing she liked better."

Her eyes quite shone with gladness at the thought of the permitted pleasure, and she thanked Mrs. Pentreath so eagerly that the elder lady almost began to question the wisdom of her concession, and to wonder if she had unwittingly played into the hands of two young people who cared so much for each other's society as to stoop to scheme for it.

Perhaps as regarded one of them she was not very far out.

Captain Pentreath had no opportunity of seeing Hetty alone during the day ; but when he came down dressed for dinner in the evening he found her in the drawing-room before him. She was standing on the rug before the fireplace, stretching out her hands to the blaze to warm them. No one else was there. Even the gas was not yet turned up ; and as the firelight leaping up cast a warm glow over the soft, semi-transparent folds of her simple frock of Madras muslin, touched to a deeper crimson the knots of ruby-coloured ribbon at her breast and elbows, and flushing her sweet face with rosy warmth, fell back, leaving a brighter sparkle in the bright dark eyes which turned enquiringly to the door, Ernest thought he had never seen her look so young, and fair, and winsome. His own eyes kindled with genuine admiration, and as he came towards her he exclaimed :

"What a radiant vision for a weary man's eyes ! I only wish it were Christmas, and that there was mistletoe about ! But it is cruel of you to look so blooming to-night, Hetty, when only yesterday I was impressing on my mother how awfully ill every one thought you were looking. Did she say anything to you about it, and about taking more exercise ? I went so far as to suggest that was what you wanted."

"I, ill ! No. What do you mean ? Mrs. Pentreath said nothing to me," answered Hetty, blushing rather from embarrassment than pleasure at his compliments ; "except," she added immediately, "that she said I might go to the early service again ; but——"

Captain Pentreath burst out laughing.

"She did ! Brava, mother ! I didn't think you would swallow my matutinal hook so easily, or that I had baited it with the right worm for you. To think that she did stop your going just because she found out I was accompanying you ! I wonder now who told her."

"Captain Pentreath, she never did. What makes you fancy such a thing ?" cried Hetty, shocked and crimsoning ; but she was silenced.

"What ? Why the fact that I am not a fool. You heard what I said this morning about my weakness for late rising in winter. What do you think when you see the way in which she acts on it and before the day is out ? I saw through it from the first ; but it wasn't worth while saying anything while we could get our walks (what happy ones we have had, Hetty !) at other times ; but now pray, pray——"

What Captain Pentreath was praying for, however, remained unknown ; for at that moment the door opened, and before Hetty, in her confusion and indignation, could even open her lips to remonstrate, they were sealed by the appearance of Mrs. Pentreath, who entered the room ruffling the train of her long black silk dress behind her ; and taking in with a calmly critical glance, which embraced and measured both together, the startled attitude of the girl with her hot, flushed face and sparkling eyes, and Captain Pentreath's elaborate absorption in the newspaper, behind which he was almost hidden as he reclined in the armchair into which he had hastily flung himself.

Not one word of comment did she utter ; but there was something in that keen, momentary glance and in the set of her lips and eyebrows which spoke more eloquently than a lengthy speech to Hetty's aroused sensitiveness, and in one second confirmed the truth of Captain Pentreath's revelation as to the cause of the abrogation and re-granting of her liberty.

The girl's whole soul was in a tumult of disgust, wounded feeling, and impatience. There is always something intensely galling to a frank, high-spirited nature to find that it has been mistrusted and suspected at a time when it is conscious of nothing but the truest and most innocent intentions ; and the idea that Mrs. Pentreath had been silently disapproving of and guarding against her so far back as those summer months when she (Hetty) thought that there was nothing but love and confidence between them stung and mortified her to a degree which almost made her forget her previous annoyance at Captain Pentreath's sympathetic confidences, which, from the clandestine way in which they were bestowed on her, she was beginning to feel both disagreeable and compromising.

But by morning time all these shadows had happily disappeared. In middle age, indeed, we take our cares to bed with us, turn them over with our pillows, and wake from restless slumbers to find them couched at our side and looking bigger and more ghastly in the morning light. But youth has a blessed facility for letting things unpleasant slip lightly by, and burying the day's troubles in the night's sleep; so when Hetty woke next morning it was to nothing but a sense of pleasure in resuming the habit which had begun by being a duty and had become one of the chief sources of happiness in the day.

To be sure, one little twinge of conscience did trouble her, suggested by the query as to whether it was only the quiet morning service which seemed so attractive to her, or whether, in looking forward to it, she was not also craving for a sight of the friend whose counsels in and out of his sacred office she had so sorely missed; but even if Hetty had been more of the modern introspective character than she was, she could hardly have regarded this little weakness as a deadly sin. Of course, regarded impartially, the Rev. George Hamilton was only a man like his cousin Ernest Pentreath; but women have a way of their own for discriminating on these things, and to Hetty he was quite unlike any other man, Captain Pentreath least of all. Besides, it was only in his ministerial character that she was looking forward to seeing him. It was not likely that he would even notice her presence in the church, so little had he seemed to miss it.

So Hetty thought, and yet, just as she was leaving church after the brief service, and hesitating a second before facing a small cold rain which had just begun to speckle the grey stones, and add a raw dampness to the chill of the November air, a voice behind her said:

"Have you no umbrella? Surely you didn't come out without one in this weather?"

Hetty turned round, her whole face one flush of shy startled joy which a man must have been blind indeed not to read and feel flattered by; yet her answer was tame and commonplace enough:

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Hamilton, I forgot it; but it doesn't matter. I don't mind a little rain."

"You may learn to do so if you go out in it unnecessarily, and before breakfast too. Nothing is so foolish."

But though the vicar tried to speak coldly, it was a difficult task with that lovely wistful face looking upwards into his; and then Hetty had given him her hand, and there was something in the soft clinging touch of the little fingers which melted him still more. He could not help adding:

"I thought you had given up coming to the weekday service altogether. You have not done so for a long time."

"No," said Hetty. How glad she was he had given her an opportunity of explaining, and yet she blushed dreadfully over the process. "I could not help it. Mrs. Pentreath kept me at home. She said she wanted me of a morning."

"Mrs. Pentreath!" repeated the vicar sceptically, but indeed, Hetty's blushes were misleading. "I thought she never got up till after you got back; but I don't at all doubt"—this very coldly—"that you were wanted, and I did not mean to reproach you."

"Ah, but I was not wanted really," with a quickness born of the chill distrust in Mr. Hamilton's tone. That he should suspect her was too much. "Mrs. Pentreath said so, but it was—I don't mind telling you, because you know all about it already—because of her son. He came with me three or four times—do you remember?—and when she found it out she stopped my coming. I was very, very sorry, but I could not help it."

"And Ernest was sorry too, I dare say," said the vicar, "but, after all, as he can see plenty of you at home, he ought to have been content with that."

"His contentment had nothing to do with it," said Hetty warmly. "I did not come to church for him, as Mrs. Pentreath might have known."

"But he came to church for you, as she also knew, by his staying away directly you did. I don't think she should have interfered with your liberty in consequence; but considering her views on certain subjects you can hardly blame her for doing so. Many mothers would have done the same."

"And you think I should have said nothing about it? You would have liked me to stay away from church of my own accord if Captain Pentreath chose to go with me? I did not expect you to say that," cried Hetty, much hurt, and with moistening eyes. But George Hamilton was not looking at them, and his voice sounded harder than ever.

"Nor do I say it. I should be very sorry to offer any opinion as to the relations between you and my cousin. They have nothing to do with me, as I told you on the one occasion on which we spoke of them."

"And I told you then that there were no relations between us—absolutely none," cried Hetty more hotly than before. "He began by being kind and friendly to me, and I used to talk and laugh with him. I liked him. I don't mind saying so; but that was all, every bit of it; and since Mrs. Pentreath was vexed by it, even that is at an end. He would like to be kinder still to me, I believe, but I will not let him. I never walk with him. I hardly ever speak to him. I keep out of his way. I am rude—positively rude. Even Mrs. Pentreath acknowledges it, and you—don't you believe it that you look at me so! Is it possible that you disbelieve me, that you think there is anything between us even now?"

"Yes, I do think so. I do disbelieve you. Heaven help me!" cried the vicar harshly. "I would give my right hand not to do so, but how can I avoid it? What can I think of the girl who talks to me like this—the girl whose nature I thought was as pure and spotless as the flowers on the altar within there, and who, nevertheless, I saw with my own eyes, and not an hour after the scene in which she professed so much grief and indignation at her guardian's unjust accusations, walking side by side with the object of those accusations in a lonely lane at sundown; he telling her that he would lay down his life to please her, and she—she assuring him of the happiness his words gave her? There, I did not mean to make you blush, Miss Mavors, and I ought rightly to apologise for having overheard even so much of a tête-à-tête which was not intended for me; but neither of you spoke very low; and as I passed you, coming back from seeing old Betts, along the fields by the towing-path there, I could hardly avoid both seeing and hearing—for a minute."

"The pity was, Mr. Hamilton, that you did not do both for longer," retorted Hetty.

Truly her colour was brilliant, as the vicar said, and she panted a little as she spoke, but her eyes met his dauntlessly, and there was a half angry, half scornful smile on her pretty red lips which made the vicar's heart beat more quickly in

apite of himself. Even a lover's jealousy could not construe the expression into that of a girl convicted in an unseemly love-affair.

"It seems to me," she went on, "that people who overhear things always manage to stop short just when their hearing what is being said would be of any use. I did tell Captain Pentreath that if he was in earnest in what he said it would make me very happy and— What else? Go on, Mr. Hamilton."

"How can I tell what else?" said the vicar, somewhat confused in his turn, but speaking quickly and abruptly as usual, "I am not an eavesdropper or a spy. Do you think I stopped to listen?"

"I wish you had," said Hetty, "for then you would have heard me ask him to go away and leave me. He said he would do anything to please me, and that was the only thing I wanted. I had gone out by myself because my head ached from crying, and I wanted a little fresh air. Captain Pentreath was in town. We had no idea that he was even coming back to dinner, and when he overtook me on the towing-path, and said he had come there to find me, I was so vexed I could have cried. I did all I could to drive him away. I was sulky, almost rude; but he would not go; and then he began to talk nonsense, and I begged him to leave me. He was very unwilling, for of course he knew he had done nothing to vex me, and thought someone had been making mischief between us, and that made him angry and inclined to say foolish things, which he wouldn't have done otherwise. When he saw that I was really in earnest, however, and wanted him to leave me, he did so, and I came home by myself. You know that, for I met you—(how well I remember it!)—and you—cut me! Oh yes, not rudely or vulgarly; you bowed, of course, but you cut me all the same, and you know it. You have been very unjust to me, Mr. Hamilton, as unjust and unkind as Mrs. Pentreath. But after all it does not matter. I have no claim on either of you; and if I have no one else to take care of me, I—I can—can take care of myself quite well."

Now, it is a very good thing for young women to have proud, independent spirits of their own, and to make proud, independent speeches for the destruction and humiliation of other people; but if they want to be taken at their word they should not have tiny round faces which turn from red to white, and pale and quiver like a

baby's at the smallest provocation, nor great liquid brown eyes that flash and sparkle like a little stream under a wintry sun; nor a voice that falters and droops like broken music, and, above all, they must not cry—not if they have bonnet-strings at any rate.

George Hamilton saw one big pearly drop splash down and stain the crimson ribbons tied in a cosy bow under the little round chin of the girl he loved as she stood there, flushed, defiant, and prettier than ever, a slender, fur-clad figure on the cold grey stones under the cold grey sky, and with the leafless elm-boughs tossing over her head; and, despite all his previous convictions, all his efforts at hardening himself against what he considered a weak and hopeless passion, he gave way at once.

"Don't, Hetty, don't say that, my child, my love!" he entreated, taking both her hands, and drawing her almost forcibly within the shelter of the porch which she had quitted. "You have a claim on me, the greatest a woman can have on any man, for I love you. I have loved you ever since you first came here, and it nearly broke my heart to think that I had not only lost you, but that you could deceive me. Dear Hetty, forgive me, be just to me. What else could a jealous man think, knowing how Ernest admired you, and how successful he is with women generally? And, oh, my darling, tell me now, for pity's sake, do you care for him at all, or have I any hope?"

Early service at St. Gudule's began at eight o'clock and lasted about half an hour, so Hetty was usually back long before the lazily-luxurious ten o'clock meal which was called breakfast at Guelder Lodge, and comprised more courses and dainties than often go to a middle-class dinner. On the present occasion she was considerably later than usual, and thought herself still more so when she espied, as she came up the drive, the stately figure of Mrs. Pen-treath, who usually was not down till the last moment before breakfast, seated in an armchair before the dining-room window, with her gold-mounted eyeglasses on her nose, and reading her letters with as tranquil an air as though to be up and dressed thus early was quite a normal occurrence with her. Hetty, however, was

quite startled by the sight, and congratulated herself on having forbidden the vicar to come home with her, as, in the joy and content of his unlooked-for happiness, he was exceedingly anxious to do. Nothing, indeed, would he have liked better than to have been allowed to march in to breakfast, with his small sweetheart on his arm, and then and there announce his engagement, and ask his aunt's congratulations—her approval he took as a matter of course—on the same. Unfortunately—very unfortunately, as it happened—however, Hetty would not hear of such a thing. Her guardian's previous suspicions had wounded the child's pride and modesty to the quick, and the mere thought that it might be said that, foiled in securing one lover, she had gone to church to catch another, was enough to send the sensitive blood burning to her cheeks, and though she could not refuse the vicar the few words he asked for, especially when those words were the seal of her happiness as well as his, she was in such a tremble of agitation after she had uttered them, and so eager to escape immediately, that Mr. Hamilton felt it would be cruel and ungenerous to detain her, and consoled himself with the reminder that as it was her visiting day in the district they would be sure to meet in the course of the afternoon, and when she had grown a little calmer and less shy of him in his new capacity.

Of late he had gone out of his way to avoid such meetings, and had succeeded at the cost of as much pain to himself as to his fair young colleague and parishioner; but to-day there would be no more necessity for such self-sacrifice; and when they parted with a long fervent hand-clasp on his side, and one shyly tender glance from Hetty's dark eyes ere she ran across the street and disappeared in the chill November mist, the Rev. George Hamilton was as happy a man as could well be found.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XL "OH, BUT I'M HOPEFUL"

A GOOD deal of the glamour which her good looks had cast over him had passed away before Jack had been married to Minnie a week. Not being an intellectual or very highly cultivated man himself, he did not find the want of cultured intellect in her. But he did miss the thousand little nameless ways, and habits, and gestures to which his life-long association with gentlewomen had habituated him.

She was very good-looking—very handsome, in fact, in quite what her own class were wont to describe as a "ladylike" or "genteel" way. She dressed well, neither having a too gaudy or too sombre taste in colours. Additionally, she put on her clothes properly, as was natural and fitting in a young woman who had served a brief apprenticeship in a milliner's establishment in Exeter. Still, when he remembered his sister and sister-in-law, the way in which his wife made the tea in the morning even irritated him.

It was not that she was careless or untidy in her manner of presiding at her own board. It was not that she had anything served in a slovenly or ill-ordered way. But there was an undercurrent of anxiety running through her mind all the time about the correct carrying-out of certain details in which she had only been recently instructed, which nearly made Jack weep.

Mrs. Jack Ray had made peace with the warlike Elsie on the day after that little scene at the home-farm which has been described. She had gone down to her "own home" in all the glory of married state which she could command. All her

boxes, marked with her full married name, had been sent down in one of her husband's waggons, and she had followed in Jack's dogcart, driven by Jack. Bringing up the rear of the procession came her father and mother, carrying some trifling belongings of Minnie's which could not be conveniently screwed into any of her boxes, and though Mrs. Thurtle still groaned in secret over that marriage at the registry-office, which was such a slur on the good Church teaching her daughter had always received, still her motherly pride in "Mrs. John Ray" was so sincere and intense that Elsie was convinced against her will—convinced that her old play and school fellow had done so well for herself that it behoved her (Elsie) to do well for her mistress, and further convinced that she, with her knowledge of "the ways of gentlemen's houses," might make herself a most valuable aid to Mrs. John Ray.

So, when the bride held out the olive-branch of a conciliatory "Good-morning, Elsie," Elsie accepted it with mental reservations.

For several days after the installation of his wife in her own home, Jack Ray hoped against hope that his mother, who had never given him a harsh word since his babyhood, would relent, and forgive him. But in doing this he did not take into consideration the character of his mother, and the conditions by which she was surrounded.

Her local life had made her local-minded. Local opinion was the one by which she and hers would be judged, would stand or fall. It seemed to her now that the Rays, of whom she had always been inordinately proud since the day the owner of Moor Royal proposed to her, and the Thurtles, who were only averagely respectable servants of the Rays, would henceforth

be inextricably mixed up in the county mind.

And in addition to this thought, which was in itself a painfully overwhelming one, old Mrs. Ray had a keenly vivid perception of the truth that this downward step of Jack's would give Hubert's wife the chance she wanted of riding roughshod over them. Effie was quick, brilliant, attractive, delusive as a will-o'-the-wisp; but Effie was not pitiful. In whatever spirit she might take Jack's dereliction from the right way, old Mrs. Ray felt that it would be in a spirit that would be derogatory to the Rays, and that Effie's fine little feet would trample them all down without compunction.

It was Jack who had flung them down in the mire in this way—Jack, who had always had the advantage of home-training and associations! Her heart was hardened more and more against her son as she reflected thus, and Jenifer had no pleasant tidings for him.

Everything, the whole order of life at Moor Royal, seemed overstrained. When Mr. Boldero went in on that, to him, eventful day, he found old Mrs. Ray almost unable to comprehend the real object of his visit, so full was she of lamentation for Jack and of wrath against those who had led Jack to this sudden destruction.

"I can never forgive him. I would rather have seen my darling boy in his coffin than know him to be the living prey of a woman who could ruin him in cold blood, as this woman he has married has done. Mr. Boldero, I am a bitterly tried mother; I have lost both my sons in life. Hubert is tired of me, and Jack is separated from me by a dreadful gulf. If it were not for my daughter, I should be a desolate woman."

"Having your daughter, I look upon you as the most richly-gifted and fortunate woman of my acquaintance. Be patient, Mrs. Ray; there are bright days in store for your daughter and you."

"You mean, through you, my generous friend, as you were my husband's trusted friend," she said more softly. "Mr. Boldero, glad as I am to give my girl to you, I—"

"I must ask you to say no more of this," he interrupted. "It's the brightest hope I have had in my life, this one I've indulged of winning Jenifer for my wife. But I must relinquish it now, at least for a time."

"Relinquish it!" This was confirmation strong of all her dreariest fears. Jenifer was "relinquished" by a man who had only sought her the day before, on account of her brother's marriage.

"I will not even ask you for your reason, Mr. Boldero. I accept your decision, and on the part of my daughter and myself, thank you for coming to it so speedily."

She spoke with unruffled courtesy. At least, she told herself, he should not see that his insult had the power to move her.

"Mrs. Ray, for some months I must be contented to appear to you as one of the most despicable creatures who ever defaced this earth. When those months are over I shall be justified in Jenifer's eyes at least."

"Miss Ray will not set herself up as either your accuser or judge, rest satisfied of that. I am sorry your letter of yesterday should have compelled me to trouble you to come here to-day, but I won't detain you any longer."

She meant to dismiss him with solemn dignity, but her plan was upset. Jenifer came in, fearing the interview had taken a wrong turn between her mother and Mr. Boldero, and really thinking of him as the family lawyer, and not at all as her own lover. Jack's business was of paramount importance in her estimation. If Mr. Boldero said kind words of him now, even now her mother would be persuaded to see, and love, and forgive her son.

"Oh, come ye in peace here, or come ye in war?" she began, trying to make her quotation lightly. "I'm sure it's in peace," she added hurriedly; "now that Jack has lost all his other friends, you'll stand by him, won't you?"

She had come forward confidently, and was holding out her hand to him, when old Mrs. Ray interposed.

"Jenny dear, Mr. Boldero is as shocked and disgusted at Jack's conduct as any other right-minded person might be. It does not surprise me that he is no longer desirous of allying himself with so painfully disgraced a family."

"Which means that he doesn't want to marry me any longer," Jenifer remarked with perfect composure. "But however shocked and disgusted you are," she added, turning to him confidently, "you will persuade my mother to be kind to the poor boy, won't you?"

"That, or anything else in the world that I can do that you ask me, Jenifer."

Trust me for a short time longer, and then—— Jenny, I dare not even hint to you what I shall do then. If I stir an inch out of the rugged path my feet must travel along, for a time, I commit a breach of confidence and trust."

The girl shook her head sadly, sorrowfully.

"I'm beginning to understand that you're not a free agent."

"I shall be in time, thank Heaven," he interrupted.

"Before that time comes we may all be in our graves, Mr. Boldero," old Mrs. Ray remarked with a natural severity. But Jenifer drew herself up to her full fair height, declaring that such forebodings were the effect of want of fresh air, and that her mother would look at a few temporary troubles with brighter eyes if she would only come out for a walk.

"With all my heart I hope soon to see you and your sons and daughters-in-law happy and at peace with one another," Mr. Boldero said to the widow as he was taking his leave.

"Perhaps a few words of advice from you to my sons when their poor father died would have spared us all much misery," she retorted bitterly; "it's useless your expressing such hopes now."

"For a time I must submit to be misconstrued," he said quietly, but his heart was hot within him as he felt how impotent he was at present to throw off the fetters which a dead man's mistaken good intentions had bound about his feet.

Old Mrs. Ray's farewell to the man whom she had for a few hours hoped to have for a son-in-law was icy. It seemed to her for the first time in Jenifer's life, that Jenifer was acting in an undignified way in being frank and cordial towards this man who had solicited her one minute only to reject her the next. But Jenifer had very clear vision. She knew that no man could reject her—or renounce her rather—unless it was at the bidding of some power within him stronger than life or love. And such a power she felt honour to be with Mr. Boldero.

Probably it will be said that had she been in love with him—as much in love as she ought to have been to have justified her readiness to marry him—she could not have reasoned thus. The fact is Jenifer did not reason about it at all. Just as she knew in the dead of night that the sun would surely rise in the morning, so did she know that a real reason for acting

as he did would reveal itself in due time. It did not occur to her to feel aggrieved at his having withdrawn his offer of marriage for the present. She knew the sun would shine again, and did not even feel impatient for his beams.

No; undoubtedly there was nothing at all resembling love in this phase of feeling. But it was real, genuine, strong, reliant friendship; perhaps a more durable article, though not so attractive at first sight.

So to her mother's intense chagrin Jenifer made herself "cheap," as old Mrs. Ray called it, and insisted on walking as far as the lodge-gates with Mr. Boldero.

"Effie has given me an unmistakable hint to move from Moor Royal this morning," she said to him as they got away from the house; "she is going to stay with her sister for some time, and she means to shut up Moor Royal. She says Hubert can't afford to keep the place up, and there are some cruel legal restrictions on his selling it; so her only alternative is to shut up the house and go."

"You are being awfully tried, poor girl; you will be royally rewarded."

"Do you think I shall be?" she asked earnestly. "Have you any notion of the idea that has come into my brain, put there by Effie in the first place, I really believe? If I could get my mother to go up to London, I think I could do something with my knowledge and love of music and singing."

"By teaching?"

"Well, my ambition goes beyond that. You know how often I've sung at concerts about here, and what a success I've always had."

"My dear girl, dismiss the notion of going on the concert boards from your mind at once; in the first place the difficulties you'd have to face in getting on would be crushing, and in the second place, if you got on, you would only be looked upon as an amateur, and treated accordingly."

"I don't imagine for an instant that I should succeed if I went on now, but I mean to give myself good training; I mean to study hard for a year with one of the best teachers of singing in London. You see, Mr. Boldero, I have been preparing to meet the fact of my mother and myself no longer having a home here; and as I must help to make the home of the future, don't—pray don't discourage me from trying to do it in the only way I can." Then she

went on to tell him that she had been in correspondence for some days with Madame Voglio, a lady who had been a queen of song a few years ago, and who now was accredited with marvellous powers of imparting instruction in vocalisation, as well as of getting her pupils "paid engagements" at the expiration of their term of pupilage with her.

"You certainly seem to have elaborated your scheme with a great deal of discretion and forethought—"

"And you will say nothing against it?"

"I won't promise that, Jenifer. I am not pledged, thank Heaven, to refrain from advising you; and I do advise you strongly, my dear, my dearest girl, against courting disappointment, pain, and mortification, as you are contemplating doing."

"You say this—you who have flattered me about my singing as you have!"

"I have never flattered you. Every word of admiration that has fallen from my lips has come from my heart. I say again as I have said to you and to your father, that your fresh, sweet, true voice, and finished style, have a charm for me beyond the charm of any other woman's voice and style—in a drawing-room, or on a small stage, when you are facing an audience of friends and acquaintances predisposed to admire and applaud you to the echo."

"I shall try and forget that I have an audience of strangers, or try to remember that they'll judge me strictly on my merits; and, if I have done well before, I shall do better then."

"I have only a slight knowledge of the life you propose to enter upon, but I know enough of it to tell you this. You will be hedged in by envy, jealousy, and strongly-biased critical feeling. You will not take the place of a rich, highly-stationed lady who may howl her worst in public with impunity, because it is merely her 'whim' to do so. She will get applause when you will get a hiss. You will be known to have taken to the concert-boards more from need than choice; you will have around you as fellow-pupils, probably, girls endowed with musical and vocal talent as highly as, or more highly than yourself, whose talent has been professionally trained for years. And you will not be protected from their jealousy by any instinctive well-bred feeling of toleration in them. Jenifer, I dislike the thought of this career for you more than I can say."

"You sha'n't dishearten me, Mr. Boldero. I'll disarm jealousy, and turn a deaf ear to alighting words. My hardest work will be with my mother. I'm afraid she'll think that I might as well become a circus-rider at once."

"Have you counted the cost of this year's study at all?"

"How unpractical you think me! Of course I have counted it; counted it and provided for it. My father was always very generous to me" (she entirely forgot as she spoke how entirely unprovided for her father's will had left her), "and I have nearly a hundred pounds by me. I am going to sell some jewellery that I don't value, though luckily it's valuable. And for two hundred pounds Madame Voglio is going to take me as her pupil, and give me special lessons for twelve months. Then, she says, through her I shall surely get an appearance at once, and paid engagements soon after. Say my prospect is good; do say something encouraging."

"Heaven bless you, Jenifer!" was all he could say. Then he mounted his horse, which he had been leading all this time, and said good-bye to her at the lodge-gate.

"Jenny," her mother said to her when she went back after this long consultation with Mr. Boldero, "I don't know how Hubert will take it; but I feel that I must leave Moor Royal. I shall never dare to go beyond the grounds for fear of meeting that woman Jack has married. I shall stifle here. Do you think Hubert will object?"

"Hubert and Effie are going to leave Moor Royal themselves," Jenifer said; and then, with a beating heart, she bared her little plot to her mother.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

CHESHIRE. PART II.

QUITE a border town is Malpas, the hills of Wales growing distinct and near at hand. Thus was the lord of Malpas in early days the right-hand man of the Earl of Chester, for a strong man and a ready was needed here when a swarm of nimble Welsh any day might come skirmishing over the plain. And so the lord of Malpas had three castles in charge, a strong trilateral to hold against the invader—Malpas for one, guarding the main road to the south; Shocklach, near a ford on the river Dee; and Oldcastle, on the banks of a tributary stream. Of the

three castles the remains are but scanty, but still their sites can be made out, lying within the compass of a few miles from each other, showing the dangers of the pass they guarded, and hence, perhaps, the Norman scribes named the little town Malus Passus, signifying, in monkish Latin, the bad pass.

From Malpas runs a range of pleasant sandstone hills northwards to Tarporley, a pleasant little hunting-town on a gentle slope, the Welsh hills still in view, and the broad and fertile vale of Chester. But before coming to Tarporley an abrupt sandstone rock strikes the eye, rising in solitary grandeur nearly four hundred feet sheer from the plain, and upon this rock is the venerable and imposing ruin of Beeston Castle.

Another strong castle was this of the Earls of Chester, built by the same good Ranulph who was rescued from the Welsh by the fiddlers. The line of the Earls of Chester, descendants of Hugh Lupus, came to an end in the reign of Henry the Third, and the crown came in for its castles and lordships, and thus Beeston Castle was held for the king in the barons' war; after which it hardly comes into notice till its dismantlement by the Parliament in the Civil Wars, as a possible rallying-point for disaffected Royalists. Not a very eventful history for such a fine old castle. But popular estimation gives it a grand rôle as yet unplayed in human affairs. "Beeston Castle shall save all England on a day" is an old saying, which must have come down from the time when the Welsh were still dangerous neighbours; for from what other quarter the danger is to come, from which Beeston can save us, it is difficult to see.

A little farther north lies Delamere Forest, with the old British trackway running through it—a branch of Watling Street starting from Chester and pointing towards Manchester—and many old earthworks on the line to tell of sieges and battles of which all other memory has perished; as at Kelsbarrow and on Eddisbury Hill, where Ethelfleda of Mercia had a dwelling, it is said, and which was a stronghold, no doubt, of even more primitive times. The forest was once a royal chase and well stocked with deer, with hereditary keepers, and hereditary poachers, no doubt, but is now mostly enclosed and cultivated. Farther on is Vale Royal, now the seat of Lord Delamere, with a few traces in the foundations of the once royal abbey.

According to tradition Prince Edward

was returning from the Holy Land, after escaping the poisoned dagger of the Old Man of the Mountains, when his ship was overtaken by a dreadful storm and nearly cast away. In his extremity the prince vowed, if he should be spared, to dedicate to Heaven a monastery with a hundred monks; after which the storm suddenly cleared away, and the ship came safe to port. Edward had known adversity in his youth, and had been for some time a prisoner at Hereford in the hands of the insurgent barons—with apologies to the brave Earl of Leicester for calling him insurgent—but anyhow a prisoner, and kindly treated by the neighbouring monks of the Cistercian Abbey Dore. And so he chose a hundred monks from Dore to fill his new foundation, the first stone of which was laid with great pomp by Edward himself, by this time King of England, in 1277. But the monks must often have wished themselves back in peaceful Dore again; for tenants and neighbours seem alike to have held the new community in detestation, as interlopers exacting rigidly tithes and dues where formerly there had been a pleasant laxity in this respect. We read of a monk collecting tithe having his horse killed under him by a flight of arrows; another monk was slain by the savage foresters, and his head kicked about as a football.

And now for the Wyches, the salt towns known as such time out of mind, with their brine-springs and underground caves of rock-salt. Northwich, first of all, with its little port on the river Weaver, where vessels of two hundred tons or so resort to load up with salt. Here the brine pits worked for so many ages, and the mines of rock-salt worked since 1670, have caused such underground cavities, that the surface has everywhere subsided, the old town threatening to disappear altogether some fine day, and leave a salt lake in its place. The county round about is studded with low roomy buildings with tall chimneys, where great salt pans are at work boiling and evaporating. From Northwich and Winsford a fleet of some four hundred flats are constantly afloat, carrying salt to Liverpool, whence it is exported to America and India. Then there are Middlewich, higher up the river, a quaint old town, with many thatched houses, and Nantwich, that in topographical propriety, should be called Southwich. But Nantwich being in such close proximity to the Welsh, and resorted to by them for ages, is supposed to have assumed the Welsh prefix, Nant or valley,

although the Welsh never knew it as Nant anything as far as we know, but called the place the white salt pit town, Yr Heledd Wen, as they named Northwich the black salt pit town. The Welsh must have coveted Nantwich, having no other supply of salt, and made many rushes upon it; and Henry the Third, at war with the Welsh, once ordered the pits to be closed, to starve them, as it were, into submission. Hugh Lupus built a strong castle here against the Welsh, but there is not a trace of it left. The brine pits have ceased to be worked, although the original spring still runs as salt as ever, bubbling up close to the river brink. But the country all along this valley of the Weaver is one great salt field, the dried-up bed, perhaps, of some Dead Sea.

We must not forget the little river Peover that joins the Weaver at Northwich, with the villages on its banks—Upper and Lower Peover. In the church of the latter is a massive oaken chest, hollowed out of a solid block, and if a Cheshire lass can raise the lid of this with one arm while she looks in she is fit for a Cheshire farmer's wife, reminding one of the libellous rhyme current among the neighbouring and perhaps envious Lancashire folk:

Cheshire bred,
Strong i' th' arm and weak i' th' head.

No thought of salt is here or of miners, but all quite rural and feudal, with great parks and country seats dotting the country in all directions. There is Alderley Park, held by a branch of the Stanleys, and Alderley Edge, a curious break—a fault in the sandstone—with a precipitous face, from which is visible a noble prospect far and wide, with the smoke of Manchester and its satellite towns in the distance, and all about pleasant villas of the Manchester merchants.

Returning to Northwich and Watling Street again we come to Knutsford, surrounded by parks and ancient halls, and in itself a centre of quiet provincial life of interest to all the world through the graphic pen of Mrs. Gaskell. Knutsford is Crauford indeed, whose history was first told in the first series of Household Words.

A pleasant homely town is Knutsford, "the name coming from Canutus—upon what occasion I find not; indeed, a fine market and pleasantly situate," writes the historian of Vale Royal, although a modern authority has thrown doubts upon this etymology, and suggested Neatsford. But Canutus is our man, and we will have

nothing to do with the neat-herd, and it is pleasant to find Mrs. Gaskell seeking confirmation as to Canute and his ford from pundits of the Danish king's own tongue. But the direct origin of the little literary centre is an old Presbyterian settlement in the town, one of whose early ministers was stout John Turner, whom we hear of at Preston in 1715, arming his flock against the Chevalier's army and taking prisoner a Highland scout, and who afterwards settled at Knutsford, and was probably an ancestor of our author. But her studies of character are confined in no narrow groove, and it is pleasant to come across, in Mr. Green's Knutsford, some of the original models from which she drew. Here is the great lady of the parish, for instance, Lady Jane Stanley, the sister of that Earl of Derby who married Miss Farren, the actress—Lady Jane who walked about Knutsford in great dignity, carrying a gold-headed cane, which she was known to lay about the sturdy shoulders of a farmer who presumed to take the wall of her. A spinster so devoted to the virgin state was this Lady Jane, that it quite shocked her to see a couple walking arm-in-arm, so that leaving in her will money to pave the streets of Knutsford, she stipulated, it is said, that the pavement should be only one flag broad, in order that it might be impossible to walk à la Darby and Joan.

In early days, too, our author must have heard the stories of Higgins the highwayman, which were, indeed, repeated, with little embellishment, in *The Squire's Story* in an early Christmas number of *Household Words*.

The career of this dashing robber is indeed remarkable. We first hear of him in the west, robbing a farmer coming home from market, and being transported to the American plantations. There he escapes from custody, breaks into a house at Boston, and so, provided with funds, gets on ship-board, and back to his native land. Then with renewed confidence and daring he takes to the road, and is so successful in his pursuits, that he is enabled to set up house-keeping at Knutsford—quite the gentleman, with sporting dogs and thoroughbred hunters. He marries the daughter of a respectable family, and is much looked up to by the neighbourhood, and pays his way with strict punctuality. But some night when all the world is abed, he saddles one of his thoroughbreds, muffles up its hoofs in worsted stockings, rides silently out of the paved courtyard, and

through the sleeping town; then dashes off to some rendezvous, fifty or a hundred miles away. Presently a terrible affair happens at Bristol: an old lady is found one morning murdered, and her house ransacked. She is known to have had a considerable hoard of coin in Spanish dollars and doubloons; perhaps the old lady herself had been the child of a bold buccaneer, and the dollars had been got by evil deeds upon the Spanish main. Higgins is the first to bring the news to Knutsford, long before the Flying Posts and Weekly Mails have wind of it; and it is noticed soon after that Spanish money has suddenly come into circulation about Knutsford—where, perhaps, a more cosmopolitan spirit reigned than at present, in the way of currency.

People might have put this and that together, but it seems they didn't, for Higgins still continued to move in the best society; and one night attended an assembly at Knutsford, ruffling it among all the county grandees. One Lady Warburton, of Arly, was noticeable for the splendour of her diamond parure, and general display of gems and jewels; and Higgins marked them for his own. He left earlier than the rest and rode out to intercept the Warburton chaise, which presently came lumbering up. Higgins, trusting to the darkness of the night and his slouched hat and cloak, dashed up to the coach; but the lady within, catching sight of his face, greeted him with a friendly wave of the hand: "Oh, Mr. Higgins, why did you leave us so early?" The highwayman, abashed, muttered some polite rejoinder and rode off.

His last exploit was to break open the house of a lady of rank near Carmarthen, a terrible ride for the thoroughbred over the wild mountain passes; but here he was caught red-handed, tried, and convicted, protesting that he was a gentleman of condition, and that the whole affair was a mistake. Apart from these eccentricities of conduct, Higgins seems to have been an amiable man—anyhow, he had secured the warm affection of his wife, who stood by him to the last. Just before the date fixed for the execution, a reprieve came down, signed by Lord Shelburne; but the under-sheriff, convinced that this was a forgery, refused to delay the hanging. The gallows was, as was then usual, some little distance from the town, and Higgins walked at such a rate that the attendants could hardly keep up with him, abusing the under-sheriff all

the way, and protesting that the reprieve was a good one. On mounting the fatal ladder he handed a letter to the sheriff, it is said, containing a full confession of his crimes, including the Bristol murder. According to the Annual Register, however, he only gave a letter to his wife, and died impenitent. A broadsheet exists, purporting to be the full confession in question, which is evidence at all events of the current belief as to his crimes.

Another original from whom Mrs. Gaskell might have drawn, was M. Rogier, French emigré and dancing-master, a model such as Molière would have delighted in, penetrated with a profound sense of the importance of his art, remarking of the younger Pitt that his dancing gave no promise of his future greatness; an inventor of the wildest projects, and always airing his acquaintance with distinguished people among whom he considered he had every right to be classed.

Then there was John Astly, the artist, a fellow-pupil with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who, passing through Knutsford, was asked to take the portrait of Lady Daniels, a rich and fascinating widow, who, when the sittings were over, blushing asked him whether he preferred the original to the portrait; and who, in giving him her hand, endowed him with the Dukensfield estate, worth five thousand a year. The artist proved something of a spendthrift, and alienated the best part of the estate; but the name is still to be found in the bead-roll of county gentry.

Nor should Molly Coppock be forgotten, the great maker of black-puddings, who had the honour of supplying the Prince Regent with these delicacies; nor John Slater, whose fame as a maker of hunting-breeches secured him the patronage of Prince Albert. For Knutsford is in the centre of a good hunting district, where squires and farmers muster strongly in all the good fellowship of sport, even in these days of agricultural depression, for, as the song goes:

For to keep a farmer's spirits up gen things be
getting low,
There's nothing like fox-hunting and a rattling
tally-ho!

But after all it was in her girls that Mrs. Gaskell most excelled, sweet and healthful creatures, with just sufficient faults to make them not too good for human nature's daily food. Have we not loved them in youth, and sought them in vain in manhood, and shall we find them at last, always young, always fresh and innocent?

There must have been such girls once upon a time, and probably they lived hereabouts, in this quiet, placid, restful scenery, among these country houses with their modest luxury; in these snug, professional, red-brick mansions along the high street, with their snowy curtains, and the sheen of their cool shaded gardens seen through the oak-lined passages, as the sweet bells of Knutsford ring out the passing hours.

Just to the north of Knutsford lies Rostherne with its mere, one of a small chain of meres, which stretch, a puzzle for geologists, from the basin of the Weaver to that of the little river Bollin. This village of Rostherne is altogether charming, with an ancient church and a few scattered houses in a rich secluded valley. The church has noble monuments to the proud family that has lived for centuries here in dignified seclusion, and the graveyard with its mouldering heaps slopes steeply down towards the little lake—the last a thing quite unexpected here in Cheshire, which is not a lake county at all, and is very still, and peaceful, but melancholy-looking, shaded with high and thickly-wooded banks, where an everlasting silence seems to reign. Something about the lake in its solitary seclusion seems to have struck the popular imagination. The story goes, that when the church bells were first brought to Rostherne, one of the bells could not in any way be got into the church tower, but, breaking away from ropes and levers, rolled down the steep slope towards the mere, and went on rolling and rolling till it splashed right into the lake, where it was lost in the fathomless abyss. Fathomless indeed is the mere, according to popular estimation, and undoubtedly very deep; a depth of over a hundred feet has been actually measured, and that, for a bit of a mere like Rostherne, is a pretty good record. Now when the bell got to the bottom of the mere, if it has a bottom, it might reasonably have expected to rest there in peace, but that would be to reckon without the mermaids, notoriously addicted to bell-ringing.

Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Hark! now I hear them—ding dong bell.

But how should mermaids get into Rostherne Mere? Well, the story goes that there exists, between Rostherne and the sea, an underground channel, and that every year on Easter morn a mermaid works her way through and rings the bell that lies at the bottom of the mere, so that those who get up early enough may hear

it. The connection of the bell with Easter seems to class the legend with those children's stories which are suggested by the customs of the old faith. For from Good Friday to Easter Sunday the bells are altogether silent, and when children, wondering, ask "What has become of the bells?" they are told "They are gone to Rome to be blessed, but are coming back on Easter morn;" and so it turns out when at daybreak upon the hallowed morn, the children hear the joyous peal.

Beyond Rostherne lies Altrincham, now almost a suburb of Manchester, like its twin town of Bowden, and close by is the ancient park of Dunham, with its deer almost lost in the bracken that spreads beneath the venerable trees. Dunham once belonged to the Masseys, but is now the seat of the Earls of Stamford and Warrington, whose strange family history may be more fitly told elsewhere.

Leaving with regret the district of parks and pastures, we must now deal with a cluster of towns lying on the borders of Stafford and Derby counties.

Crewe comes first of all, and as every road leads to Rome, so all railways lead to Crewe, the most thoroughly railway town in existence, having no other *raison d'être* than the workshops and offices of the great railway junction. It takes its name from Crewe Hall, an old Jacobean mansion not far off, but the Crewe of the railway time-tables sprang up suddenly from nothing, at the behest of railway directors and engineers, without any nucleus of market-place or hamlet, built, indeed, upon a barren and clayey farm that a wide-awake attorney from Nantwich is said to have bought for fifty pounds an acre, and sold for five hundred. Then comes Sandbach, with something of a manufacturing air about it—for we are here upon the confines of the silk manufacture—with a fine old timber hall converted into an inn, and a market-place with two obelisks, probably mutilated crosses, said to be of high antiquity. Upon these crosses, it was said, an inscription could be traced, not so that anyone who ran might read, but traced in peculiar characters, "which," writes our old historian, "a man cannot read aright except he be held with his head downwards," an operation more trying than thought-reading, one would think. But our old historian saves us the trouble of standing on our heads by recording the inscription, not saying whether he read it in the approved method or not, and a rather

vague inscription it is relating to buried treasure to be found in the river by anyone who can interpret it aright.

In the same circuit is Congleton, still more silky than its neighbour, with some fine timbered houses, and cheerful and thriving in appearance. And then we come to Macclesfield, the metropolis of silk-weaving in these parts. Macclesfield was once a walled town, it is said, with a strong castle, guarding a junction of important highways; but all vestiges of the fortifications have perished. The silk manufacture at Macclesfield dates from the eighteenth century, and would seem a little out of place in the old fortified Norman town, and yet in tracing the manufacture to its source we come upon the tracks of the shrewd and adaptable Normans, who have left so many marks of their practical sagacity all over the county.

To begin with, we all know the history of the introduction of the silkworm into Europe. Gibbon describes how two Persian monks, missionaries in China in the reign of Justinian, brought the eggs of the silkworm to Constantinople concealed in a hollow cane, risking the penalty of death, which would have followed a discovery by the jealous Chinese. The silkworms hatched out, and flourished in their new home, and from Constantinople the cultivation of the mulberry and raising of silkworms spread through Greece, especially in the Morea. About 1130, Roger, the Norman king of Sicily, took possession of the Morea in returning from the East. Struck with the flourishing state of the silk trade in his new conquest, he gathered together from Athens, Thebes, and Corinth all the silk-workers he could lay hands on, and by mingled force and persuasion induced them to emigrate, partly to Sicily and partly to Calabria. Thus the industry spread through Italy, and then in 1274 Pope Gregory planted mulberry-trees at Avignon, and brought there spinners—throwsters is perhaps the proper word, the actual spinning is done by the worm; anyhow, those who prepared the silk and those who wove it. From Avignon the industry found its way to Nismes and thence to Lyons, and there would have remained, perhaps, without striking root in England, but for the great Louis and his edicts against the Protestants, which drove from their native land some of the wealthiest and cleverest of the silk-manufacturers in the south of France, to settle mostly about Spitalfields, where their dwellings are still to be seen about

Spital Square. Between the Protestants of France and the English Presbyterians there had been an intimate connection; and the Spitalfields manufacturers, looking out for people to prepare the silk, seem to have been drawn to Macclesfield, where there was a flourishing settlement of their co-religionists. And so the industrious population thickly settled in these valleys—for we have left behind us the flat and fertile land of cheese and milk-pails and are approaching mountainous Cheshire—this industrious population was glad to take to silk-throwing, and by degrees many of the Spitalfields manufacturers transferred their works altogether to Macclesfield. Thus the trade has come down to our own days, always something of an exotic, not quite firmly rooted in the soil, nor making any vigorous native growth, but with a large population dependent on its fluctuations, just making a living when trade is prosperous, and something less than that in adverse times.

Of old Macclesfield something is left in the fine old church of St. Michael's, founded by Queen Eleanor—the princess who may have sucked the poison out of the wound of the assassin's dagger, and whose funeral crosses are still in evidence of a husband's affection and grief. When Edward was warring in Wales, Eleanor, who seems to have liked to be always near him, was church-building in Macclesfield; and this church of St. Michael attracted the bounty of the great people in the neighbourhood. The Leghs of Lyme built a chapel in connection with it, where monuments still remain of this ancient family—a family devoted to the Plantagenets, and to whose influence probably is due the favour in which the town was regarded by that line, to which it owes its charter and many ancient privileges. Sir Perkin Legh fought at Crécy by the side of the Black Prince, and his descendant Sir Piers was one of the few faithful found among the faithless who stood by the luckless Richard the Second, and was put to death by the Percys.

This same family of Leghs still occupies Lyme Hall, a fine quadrangular hall, partly of the Tudor period and partly of eighteenth century Italian. All about the hall the scenery is wild and charming, quite unlike our received ideas of Cheshire. But here Derbyshire Peak is full in view, and the wild hills about Buxton. And the narrow strip of Cheshire that runs up between Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire is

a country of rugged hills and wild mountain moorland. Here the Manchester water-works have annexed a whole district; in one case removing a whole village and building it afresh on a new site, and now there is a great lake over the spot where generations have lived and died. It is not said whether on stilly nights the church-bells can be heard ringing from these watery depths.

At the foot of these hills lie a cluster of busy towns, Stockport, the chief, in its valley of smoke and reek—a valley of tall chimneys and huge factories, crossed by the fine railway-viaduct, from which you look down upon a scene of lurid smoke and vapour, almost appalling in its stern intense grimness and gloom. Wonderful is the contrast, and enormous the difference, in the conditions of life between these toiling myriads below, and the proud squires and sturdy farmers of the plain.

TRUE BLUE.

MR. SPENCER has told the world how it misunderstands its own social history. Even after the existence of a science of society has been recognised, there are many difficulties in the way of the student. There is a bias of patriotism, of anti-patriotism, of education, of interest, and so on. All this he has illustrated in a book, dry of title, grim in chapter-headings, erroneous in its premises, but vying in interest with most novels. It is a peculiarity, perhaps it should rather be said it is a necessity, of this study, that its advance should best be comprehended by the variety of its illustrations, and the domain of folk-lore has hardly yet been sufficiently explored for this purpose. One need not necessarily be entangled in Mr. Spencer's system of philosophy, and the present writer is far from believing that Mr. Spencer's conclusions are confirmed by liberal study of primitive man, or, what is not always the same subject, primitive belief.

Every one knows the common rhyme,

Green's forsaken, and yellow's forsworn,
And blue is the colour that must be worn,

and nearly everyone regards the rhyme as indicating an ancient preference for blue instead of green. Some may go farther, and give a reason for the preference of blue. Blue, we will be told, is the sky colour, naturally it is the colour that in old days would dominate the likes and

dislikes of a simple Nature-worshipping people. Blue in the sky and blue in the sea, the one highest, the other deepest, of all which met man's gaze, is it not natural to conclude that the rude couplet which has been quoted, represents, in modern language, a tradition of very remote ages? This is no unnatural conclusion. Nevertheless it is almost certainly an erroneous one.

It is a singular fact that colour seems to have but little entered into the thoughts of early peoples. They were but children, and children left to themselves will not manufacture general terms. Sir John Lubbock notes that the words blue and green are not to be found in the most ancient of Indian sacred books, the Rig Veda, although it consists principally of hymns to Heaven; and that the word blue is also absent from the earlier books of the Old Testament, from the Koran, from the Iliad, and from the Odyssey. A word which Homer uses came later to mean blue, but, as he used it, it meant black. Mr. Gladstone, whose contributions to this subject, as to so many others, are numerous and valuable, some years ago contributed an essay of great interest to *The Nineteenth Century*, on the Colour Sense, and in it he indicated the stages of historical development of knowledge of colour. First of all there is absolute blindness to colour in primitive man; next the eye distinguishes between red and black; thereafter colour and light part company, and the eye discerns red, orange, and yellow; the third stage is the recognition of colours which belong to no extreme, but are like green and its varieties, in a mean; lastly, blue is discovered. This scale is the work of Dr. Magnus, and he refers Homer to the second stage, that is when the eye distinguishes between colour and light, and notes red, orange, and yellow. Mr. Gladstone indicates that, in his opinion, it is hardly possible to pass more than an approximate judgment on the sense of colour in Homer, but he expresses his belief that the estimate of it given by Dr. Magnus is liberal rather than the reverse. Sir John Lubbock says that he finds this mental colour-blindness, if we may so describe it, quite inadmissible as an explanation of the lack of primitive colour terms.

However this may be, there is, in the opinion of the present writer, no doubt that the associations of name, or perhaps of sense, with colour are comparatively new; that they are not to be found among those early

peoples respecting whom we have definite records; and that this, while it does not necessarily indicate that colour was not enjoyed, yet proves that to the enjoyment was wanting what, to us, is perhaps represented by definitiveness. If the Greeks and Romans had no word for blue, this indicates that in their mental culture there was a certain want, although it does not indicate that our notions of their civilisation, their art, their philosophy are wrong. One fact must not be strained; only when it is understood that the facts of sociological enquiries are not made of, or like, india-rubber can really useful progress be made in this branch of research. Admit that, as Mr. Gladstone says, a child of three years in our nurseries knows, that is to say sees, more of colour than did Homer, or again, that Aristotle and Xenophon only saw purple, yellow, and green in the rainbow, and yet, whatever explanation, whatever elucidation this enquiry demands from other sources, to us here there is no occasion to consider either the problematic development of visual perception, or any enquiry arising from this. It is enough to ascertain that the secret of mystical association of colours and qualities, if it has descended from primitive times, has come down through unformed, unuttered, imaginative conceptions, and owes little or nothing to the influence of word makers, and that, if this descent is to be traced, we must seek the secret in times, customs, ways, and peoples more of our time than of the past.

Let us glance at the current superstitions which we find as to blue, before attempting any explanation.

It is a lucky colour for daughters to wear, they say in the South of England, while green is very unlucky.

Those dressed in blue
Have lovers true,
In green and white
Forsaken quite.

In the North-east of Scotland we have:

Blue
'S love true,
Green
'S love deen,
Yellow
'S forsaken.

After this who would expect that blue would be rejected by ballet-dancers on account of its ill-luck? Yet Mr. Boucicault has told how when Babil and Bijou was about to be produced, a première danseuse and twenty other girls rebelled at a full-dress rehearsal when they found that

their costumes were to be entirely of blue, without silver; silver adornments, it seems, serving to counteract the baneful charm of blue. This prejudice reminds us of an ancient story of the Lady Onnestaun in the early part of the seventeenth century. Alexander Hamiltoune was angrily sent by her from her gates with the words: "Away, custraun carle, ye will get nothing from me." Hamiltoune, seemingly filled with rage, invoked Satan, and received from him "the boddom of a blue clue." This he laid down, "foirment the said Lady Onnestaun's yett of Woidheid, and within ane schort tyme, scho and her eldest dochter took bayth suddane seikness, and was both bereft of thair naturall lyfe thairby." Dalzell, who furnishes us with this tragic story, says it is not to be ascertained that blue was in Scotland more a mystical colour than some others. It does not, however, appear that any other colour was more in favour for use in enchantments. A blue clue was used to ascertain who one in the future should wed. Burns tells how when Nell and Rob burned nuts on Hallowe'en:

Merran sat behind their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell,
She leaves them gashin (a) at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel'.
She through the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins graipit for the bauks (b),
And in the blue-clue throws them.
Right fear't that night.

An' aye she win't (c), an' aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin',
'Till something held within the pat,
Guid L——! but she was quaukin'!
But whether 'twas the de'il himsel',
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She didna wait on talkin'.
To spier that night.

(a) Conversing. (b) Cross-beams. (c) Winded.

The explanation given by Burns is: "Whoever would with success try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a clue off the old one, and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand 'Wha hauds?' that is, who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse." Henderson tells us that in Roxburghshire it is a peculiar species of Brownie, called Killmoulis, who holds the Hallowe'en clue. Every mill has its own Killmoulis, and the stories of him are very numerous. The blue clue is to be thrown

into a pot alone in the gloaming, and the worsted wound on a new clue. Towards the end of the winding, the mysterious "Auld Killmoulis" will catch and retain the end. The enquirer cries, "Wha holds?" and Killmoulis "will snort out the name of your future spouse."

Blue is frequently associated with mysterious lights and appearance. That lights burn blue when a ghost comes we have all heard from our cradles. When John Fian, schoolmaster and sorcerer, was charged with hindering by enchantment the return of King James the Sixth of Scotland with his bride, Margaret of Denmark, it came out that when the warlocks met Satan in North Berwick church the light of a candle "appetit blew." This was in 1590. A hundred and nine years later we are told of a bluish light in connection with the proceedings against Christian Shaw. It is said that as an antidote to the evil eye Arabs will throw salt into the fire, "concluding, as the flame arises, that every evil genius is banished." Is the presence of evil indicated by blue? queries Dalzell. This at least appears, from some research in unsavoury records of demonology, that when the Fiend gave his servants the nip or mark by which their service was supposed to be indicated, the colour of it was blue.

As an example of the good repute and honour of the colour, we may remind our readers how almost universally in Catholic countries blue is regarded as the colour devoted to the Virgin, and therefore sacred. The Virgin is always represented as wearing a blue robe, and to those who are at all familiar with Continental habits and costumes, the current associations of blue with her name must at once suggest themselves. On the Ale and the Teviot, blue cords are worn by women from the birth of their children till they are weaned. They are supposed to avert fever. The cords are all old, and have been passed on from one generation to another. We cannot be far wrong if we regard this bit of folk-lore as closely allied with a mental, perhaps unconscious, survival of Romanism. When blue is worn at the celebration of the mass it is said to denote humility and expiation.

It is somewhat strange to note that the Covenanters, of all religious bodies the most opposed to anything savouring of Rome, also regarded blue as a fortunate colour. Of course their supposition—may we not say superstition?—was founded on Scrip-

ture, and upon a passage of Scripture probably wrongly construed:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the border a riband of blue; and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes.—Numbers xv., 37, 38, 39." Hudibras mentions, "Presbyterian true blue," and this has probably reference, as Dr. Brewer indicates, to the occasional use by preachers of a blue apron as covering for the temporary platform upon which they held forth. The phrase "true blue" we owe to Spain. The great families believed that necessarily the blood flowing in noble veins must be somewhat different from that of the base-born. It was conjectured, therefore, that the blood of the aristocracy had a tint more blue than that of the mob. Hence "true blue" would mean "well born." In current English it indicates as much qualities of mind as of birth. We know what peculiar meaning large numbers now attach to the bit of blue ribbon in the button-hole. Blue has been adopted as the symbol of temperance. Again, in armoury—or, popularly, heraldry—it possesses a significance of purity and honour, which is indicated by its use in many noble orders, as for example in the ribbon of the Order of the Garter. Upon all those associations which seem born of modern days, of Covenanting blue, and temperance blue, and heraldic blue, we have an altogether new light thrown by several incidents in fairy-tales told and believed in distant lands among humble folks who never heard of Bothwell Brig or of Rouge Croix. For instance, turn to one of the North German stories in Thorpe's Yule-tide Stories, and what do you find? It is a blue riband which Hans picks up in the road, although his mother says, "Let the old riband lie; what dost thou want with it?" And it is this blue riband which gave him magical strength, so that "no one, so long as he wore that riband, could prevail against him, and every one must stand in awe of him." Has not this little story its application to the mystical conjectures elicited by the uses of blue noted above?

After all, although the world grows wiser, old superstitions still unconsciously

hold sway, and whether we believe blue to be sacred because it is a great Nature colour, or because it was early consecrated to the Virgin, we must own this: that despite all evasions and explanations, colour-significance holds its place in the half-faiths of the world. That the same colour should be used both for good and evil purposes is not to be wondered at in the least degree.

We can be almost certain that the same person does not hold blue to be both lucky and unlucky, and this we may expand, with some reservation, into the broader statement that a people, as a whole, do not regard luck and ill-luck as represented by one term. This, of course, is not to say that, as circumstances alter cases, one object or colour may not at one time represent one thing, at another time a quite distinct and different thing. Speaking generally, however, peoples, like men, have their individual preferences. This granted, take the case, not very rare, of a man changing his form of religion, say from Protestant to Roman Catholic. The man remains the same as before; but he changes his point of view. The same thing has happened again and again with whole peoples.

The first instinct of a convert is to blacken his previous career, and renounce his convictions of the past. A people does this also. The result, therefore, alike in the case of individuals, and of races is this: you have two currents of feeling, one old, one new. Take the case, then, of a Roman Catholic girl brought up to regard blue as the sign of the Virgin's purity, and in a lesser degree also, of the Holy Church. When she turns to Protestantism, is she not likely to have of all colours a dislike to this, which reminds her of her past? In Ceylon, and other places, the gods when they were expelled from worship became the people's demons, and this is a change with which every one who has studied folk-lore is familiar. It has its application to the theory of colour significance. It cannot be pressed too far, but it goes, in its way, to explain how in Protestant countries we must expect to find a Roman emblem signifying evil (except where is a mental survival, as on the Ale), while in countries under the Romish Church it remains indicative of good.

It is possibly true enough that could we go back a long way, we should find that blue became the Virgin's colour through some such mental transfer as gave the

Virgin the attributes of deposed goddesses. But we do not require to enter into the question this suggests. We are content to point out the significance which long attached in the popular mind to colours—to blue, for example, as shown above—the importance, not to be overlooked, of widespread colour sympathy—and, lastly, the extent to which colour-theory must still be regarded as influencing the thoughts and lives of the many millions, whose tastes, prejudices, customs, and culture are traced and classified in the study we call sociology.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART IV.

THE director and his wife, and we as their friends, were received with the greatest possible cordiality by M. de St. Pol, who insisted upon taking us all to dinner at his château close by, an immense building that seemed half deserted, with great iron gates, and ferns growing out of the interstices of the brickwork; and with great gardens and conservatories, not absolutely neglected, but showing almost the wildness of Nature. But the parts inhabited were very scrupulously kept and charmingly cool, with shining polished floors, and everything studiously arranged in careless ease.

"Ma foi, vive Valognes pour le rôti!" cries the marquis in Lesage's comedy of Turcaret; an exclamation we might very well have echoed looking to the excellent dinner provided by M. de St. Pol. The count was Anglophile in everything, even in the cuisine. As a delicate compliment to Hilda, no doubt, was the "côtelette d'agneau à la belle Anglaise," and equally for the squire's benefit, no doubt, the "gosberi pie au John Bowl." The same spirit pervaded the whole establishment. The horses were English, and English also the stud-groom. English "bowl dowgs" snuffed about the legs of visitors, and infused a terror speedily allayed by their pleasing affability. Our friend's chief delight in his country life, it presently appeared, was to drive a fast-trotting English pony in a little village cart with a little retinue of "bowl dowgs" disporting beneath. But he owned that even this occupation did not redeem his country life from weariness and ennui. Custom prescribed that he should visit his estates as soon as the Grand Prix had been run; but a fortnight on his estate generally gave

him a surfeit of the country. And yet he felt that it ought not to be so. The pure tranquil life of the country he appreciated, and would be willing to share with a congenial spirit. Ah, if he could find such a one! Some young English girl, perhaps—he had a peculiar tendresse for the English girl. She must be beautiful, rich, accomplished, and at the same time tender and loving to a degree to put a man out of his senses; and, above all, she must never have loved before.

The count confided these sentiments to us men, as we smoked after dinner on the lawn beneath a pure, deep, star-lit sky. Our director pronounced these ideas to be impracticable. He too confessed that in his own youth he had dreamt of marrying some young English mees, fair as an angel, and of a wealth to enable him to follow his cherished pursuits without ignoble cares. But the event had falsified his anticipations. He had indeed encountered more than one mees with wonderful personal charms, but always with nothing or next to nothing in the way of "dot." Others had been pointed out to him undoubtedly rich, but with bad complexions or otherwise not corresponding to the ideal belle Anglaise. And as for the first bloom of the affections, he had it on the authority of the greatest English novelists that the little mees began her love-affairs before she had given up her doll, say at twelve years old, or perhaps even earlier.

There was just enough truth in this last assertion to make both Tom and myself a little angry with the director, and the count artfully took our side, though it was easy to see that he was trying to pump Master Tom a little on the subject of his cousin Hilda. For De St. Pol was enthusiastic on the subject of English marriages arranged on a basis of pure affection, and of the virtue and fidelity of the English demoiselle, who not content like the average French girl with the husband presented to her by her parents, will live a celibate life for years till she meets with a fitting object for her virginal devotion.

"How's that?" cried Tom doubtfully, looking at me as if I were the umpire in the match. But just at this moment, saving us from further discussion, came the sound of a piano from the salon, and the clear rich voice of Hilda singing some English ballad; so we rose and left the director in possession of the field, in possession, too, of the battery of liqueur bottles, of which every now and then he mixed and tasted

a dose, on principles of science and hygiene.

The count was in his right as host to hang about the piano as he did, asking first for one song and then another, but it was irritating to see that Hilda received all his attentions very graciously, turning upon him all the full powers of her lovely dark eyes, and throwing herself into the exchange of compliments and badinage with light-hearted appreciation. There was nothing in her now suggesting the love-lorn damsel! Surely both Mrs. Murch and Justine must have been completely deceived as to her having any after-thoughts or regrets! Once or twice, indeed, I found her eyes resting upon me with a grave kind of scrutiny; but for the rest, she so persistently evaded all my attempts to gain a word with her, that in vexation I began to devote myself exclusively to Madame la Directrice—a devotion that was not ill-rewarded, for beneath the little artificialities of the Frenchwoman there was evidence of a charming, candid soul, full of sympathy and appreciation for all phases of human life.

Madame, too, sang very feelingly, although not with Hilda's power and execution. It was my turn now to hang over the piano and beg for songs, and I was delighted to see a flash of anger and scorn in Hilda's dark eyes. Yet still she was engrossed with the count, and it was impossible for anybody else to come near her. It was just the same, too, as we drove home through the pleasant perfumed night, the bean-flowers filling the air with sweetness, and the more subtle scent of the roses clinging to everything. Not a word could I get with Hilda, who retired to her room at once on reaching the hotel.

And then, as I walked up and down the courtyard, I watched the light shining in her window—a light that brought out into faint relief the old gateway and tower, while the quaint outlines of the twin spires of the church rose dark against the sky. Justine, her light labours finished for the day, was standing in the doorway below, humming to herself her favourite "Sur le bord de l'eau." She ceased as I approached, and began to examine the border of her apron in a manner suggestive of coquettish confusion.

"Justine," I said in a low voice, "you will take a little note from me to mademoiselle—a little note of two lines—that she may read it before she sleeps!"

But Justine, perhaps resenting a little

that she should be considered only as a channel of communication with her mistress, received my overtures in a temper quite unexpected.

"I, monsieur!" she cried, her eyes flashing fire, "I carry billets to my mistress, who is confided to me by your countryman, to whom she is bound by vows almost sacred! Never, monsieur!" And with that Justine darted off, her nose contemptuously in the air.

And then another window opened on the opposite side of the courtyard, and Madame la Directrice appeared, wrapped in a white peignoir, and combing back her long hair. Then she leant upon the window-sill, looking up at the stars, and sighed gently. Presently, her eyes attracted by the glowing tip of my cigar, she acknowledged my presence gracefully. Yes, it was a heavenly night, a night on which one would like to fly about like the moths.

"Stéphanie!" at this moment cried the manly voice of the director, who appeared in his shirt-sleeves with a shawl in his hands, "Stéphanie, my child, be careful of thy throat." And he wrapped her up with quite parental solicitude.

And then there was a new arrival, which brought the landlord to the door in a discontented spirit. Indeed, the appearance of the new comers, although highly picturesque, was hardly reassuring to the strictly commercial appreciation of an inn-keeper. First of all came two men, brown and dusty, with great leathern wallets over their shoulders, and ragged garments, adjusted with a certain careless grace. In the rear marched a couple of Pyrenean sheep with long curly horns and long curly brown wool, with an air rather as if they were driving the men than being driven by them, while absolutely last was a pretty gipsy-looking girl of thirteen or so, in a short skirt, with bare brown legs and feet, and a tambourine thrown over her shoulders. The men wanted a lodging for the night—a stable or something of the kind—for themselves and their companions.

The landlord looked at them suspiciously.

"Three francs," he said, holding out his palm for the money.

The leader of the band shook his head. They had no money just then, but after they had given a few performances in the morning—

"Let us have a performance now," said madame gaily from her window. "And

then, if we are pleased, perhaps the money will be forthcoming."

The girl unslung her tambourine and one of the men produced a tin flageolet, and they began a shrill noisy tum-dee-id-dity, the sheep scraping the ground with their feet, and executing a few gambadoes in the direction of the maids of the inn, who had all gathered at the doorway to assist at the entertainment. The maids fled themselves with loud cries, and this proved the best part of the entertainment, especially when one of the sheep took a decided fancy to the fat cook, and chased her into a distant corner of the yard. This brought down the house, as well as showers of coin from the spectators. The girl gathered up the largesse, and tendered it respectfully to the landlord as his tribute. "Keep it, my child," said the landlord, waving his hand grandly; "it was only as a guarantee of good faith that I demanded the money. You shall have your niche in the stable for nothing."

Soon after daylight next morning the wandering band departed. They were satisfied with their receipts at Valognes, and anxious to get on to the bathing-places on the coast, where they expected a still more plentiful harvest. When the slight stir caused by their departure had ceased, the bells began in a shrill clamorous way, and turning out to the gateway I found quite a stir going on—black-robed priests, and stout elderly dames with their missals, and little bands of sisters, grey and white, gliding about. It was possible that Hilda, being an early riser, might come out too, and give me a chance of speaking to her. But I saw nothing of her, and was half dozing over my cup of café noir when I heard the laughing voice of Justine in the courtyard. There she was, talking to a servant in a shiny hat, whom I recognised as belonging to M. de St. Pol, and who had brought a splendid bouquet, with which Justine was tickling her nose ecstatically. The old squire now came out, and began to talk to the groom about his horse, which had been ridden hard and was flecked with foam. Next moment Hilda appeared, holding the bouquet and an opened note in her hand.

"It is from M. de St. Pol, papa," she said carelessly. "He wants you to see his model farm, and give him your advice. He will drive us there on our way to St. Vaast. And he suggests breakfast at the farm. You see no objection?"

"On the contrary," said the squire

politely, "I shall be only too pleased. Answer the note, Hilda, to that effect."

The count must have been waiting for his answer in the town, for he soon made his appearance in person, driving a phaeton and a pair of high-stepping horses. Justine rushed madly to and fro for a time, as she attended to Hilda's imperious requirements, and then Hilda herself, fresh and glowing, all her spirit and brightness restored, mounted to the driver's seat.

"It is so kind of you to let me drive," she said as the count handed her the reins, "for I know your prejudices are against it."

"I am only too proud of my charioteer," said the count politely; but the people of the inn all came out and held up their hands in wonder and disapproval.

"We shall wait for you at Quettehou," said Hilda, waving her hand to the rest of us, and then she drove off at full speed.

"They'll have fleet steeds that follow, quoth young Lochinvar," quoted Tom, rather malapropos as I thought. Certainly no fleet steeds were at our disposal—nothing but the pair of horses that worked on alternate days in the diligence; good for six miles an hour on an emergency, but for not a step beyond.

"We shall wait for you," Hilda had said, but we felt the waiting would be very doubtful with the count in command, and with such a start too.

For the director positively refused to start on the chance of getting breakfast on the way. He knew the country, he said, which, fertile as it might be, was not prolific in good breakfasts.

"Ah, it must be barbarous," cried his wife; "a place called Quettehou for instance. Is it possible that a place can exist with such a name?"

"Another of the footsteps of your ancestors," cried the director; "Quettehou is just West Hythe, a little polished by the attrition of French tongues."

"Polished, you call it?" cried Tom. "I should say turned from good English to bad Dutch."

And then madame called out that she was starving, and led the way to the breakfast-table.

Hardly had we finished breakfast when we heard a great clatter of hoofs in the courtyard, and, looking out of the window, beheld a scene which recalled something similar in Don Quixote. A company of horse-dealers had ridden in, well-mounted, and with their horses gaily caparisoned. The leader of the band, who rode up to

the door, was mounted on a bright bay of wonderful power and symmetry, his satin coat creasing like a glove at the slightest movement, and the pose of head and neck full of fire and pride, without a particle of ill-temper.

"I call that a perfect horse for harness," cried Tom, examining his points critically. "I should like to buy that for the governor. I wonder how much he would take."

"What will I take, sar?" exclaimed the horse-dealer, who had associated so much with brother horse-dealers from the other side of the Channel that he had picked up a good many English phrases. "I will take a thousand pistoles—mille pistoles."

"Listen!" cried the director admiringly. "He says pistoles. Don't we hear the very accent of the Biscayans? Let us hear that once more. How much did you say, my friend?"

"Tenthousand francs for you, monsieur," said the horse-dealer in a jocular tone, as much as to say: "I don't look for a customer in this quarter."

"Ah, but you said pistoles just now," rejoined the director in a disappointed tone.

"Ah," replied the other, "that is just a way we have among ourselves. 'Pistoles! francs! What does it matter?' And with that he turned to Tom, whom he seemed to recognise as a kindred spirit. "Ah, you English have one eye for the horse. We met the young Englishwoman just now, and she would have bought the horse for the old gentleman, her papa. But she had not enough money in her purse, and though I would have trusted her willingly for her pretty face, she was too proud to be under obligation to me. But I know very well, from the look I had from the young De St. Pol, that he will pay me my price for the horse, and no doubt make something out of the bargain. For myself, if I could afford it, I would gladly abate a few hundred francs for one little embrace from the pretty English mees."

"Look here," said Tom, doubling his fist, and tapping significantly the white hard knuckles, "no more talk about made-moiselle, or——"

"You ponch my 'ed," cried the horse-dealer, laughing good-humouredly. "No, I not like that kind of ponch. We shall have French ponch together, if you like. Tenez, garçon! du ponch!"

While this was going on, the post had come in with our letters, and among them

two rather important ones for me. Hitherto I had received nothing of importance from my uncle's estate. The lawyers had made certain advances, and would have gone on advancing; but I did not feel myself justified in launching out on borrowed money. But now here was a letter from my agent, stating that so many lacs of rupees had been remitted by an Indian bank, and that he had placed to my credit with Rothschilds of Paris the sum of forty thousand pounds—a million francs. The second letter was a polite one from the bankers themselves, announcing the credit, at the present rate of exchange, of one million ten thousand francs. Now I could buy this horse, which I had taken a fancy to, and still be a (French) millionaire.

I called Tom on one side.

"Look here, old fellow," I said, "before you bemuse your faculties with punch, I want you to buy that horse for me. We will catch young Lochinvar in spite of his start, and while you are buying the horse I will go and buy a dogcart;" for I had seen a very nice one for sale in a coach-maker's shed that morning.

Tom managed his part of the business so well that he saved the price of the dogcart out of the ten thousand francs demanded by the horse-dealer, and in less time than it takes to record it, the horse was harnessed and taken for a trial trip round the town. He trotted splendidly, and Tom, as we drove into the hotel-yard, exclaimed:

"I say, old chap, we'll win some cups out of these Frenchies before we go back. We'll call him Contango, because you bought him out of the first coin you touched, and we'll enter him for the trotting-race at Trouville."

Madame was delighted with our purchase, and it was arranged that she and the director should share our dogcart, while Justine followed in the waggonette with the heavy baggage. But when the director had witnessed Contango's playful performance on his hind-legs as he was brought up to the door, he decided that Justine should take his place, and that he would follow with the baggage.

"One femme-de-chambre the less, what does it matter?" cried the director; "but who will fill my chair at the Bureau of Public Instruction?"

And so we drove merrily on through a pleasant fertile country, till presently the road began to rise over a bleak hillside, and then, when we reached the top, the

sea came upon us without warning—the bright silvery sea dimpling in the sunshine, with a cluster of masts in the port below, and in the roadstead a fine English yacht, with her burgee flying from the masthead, which we soon recognised as the Sea Mew. But Quettehou was passed, and nothing seen or heard of Hilda and her party.

A pleasant bay this of La Hougue, and well-known to English seamen in mediæval days, for here the English often landed in their frequent invasions of Normandy in the days of the Plantagenets; and from this hill, too, it is said that in later years James the Second watched the sea-fight in 1692, when the French fleet, gathered here to invade England in the interest of the Stuarts, was defeated and destroyed by the Dutch and English united. Fourteen of the French ships of war lie sunk beneath the wave in this smiling bay. Fort rises grimly beyond fort on each promontory and rocky islet, picturesque too, with something of the grace of mediæval towers about them.

But the picturesqueness disappears as we approach the port, where ship-building is going on briskly, with the noise of many hammers and all the dirt and confusion of a small port devoting itself energetically to business.

A trim boat from the Sea Mew, with her smart crew, lay among the Norwegian timber-ships, the colliers, and trading-brigs in their unkempt and rough-and-ready trim. And presently we came across Mr. Wyvern sitting disconsolately in front of a noisy, dirty-looking inn. His features brightened up considerably at the sight of us.

"Here you are then, at last," he cried, and then he was introduced to Madame la Directrice, who was duly welcomed.

"I shall have to send the crier round for our party," he went on; "they are scattered in all directions. It was a mistake coming here; you never know till you have seen a place. You read a flaming account in a guide-book, with all kinds of historical flummery cooked up, when all the time the place should be labelled B. H., or 'beastly hole,' as a warning to travellers."

"And Chancellor?" asked Tom. "Is he on board?"

"Well, no," replied Wyvern; "he joined us for a few hours at Ryde. Terrible sell for him Miss Chudleigh not being there. But he can't get away, there's a jolly row in Parliament. Ain't I glad I'm here! But where's Miss Chudleigh all this time?"

Tom explained as best he could. Wyvern looked grave.

"Well," he said, "it's just as well the chief isn't here. There would be a jolly row among them. What is the old squire dreaming about?"

At this moment the rest of the party from the yacht came along, Mrs. Bacon leading the way, very hot and sunburnt, with a red guide-book in her hand that wasn't a patch upon her cheeks in the way of colour.

"A charming country," she cried, seizing me by the hand, while Tom greeted Miss Chancellor with quite joyous recognition; "charming country, only not a nice place to stop at. Smells, smells!" lifting up her hands and nose in admiration. Experience of life, indeed, is no guarantee against astonishment at French smells. They are so varied, with such a depth and richness of bouquet about them as to compel admiration. You miss them, too, when you leave; the air of England seems cold and chill without them. But Mrs. Bacon could not take them calmly.

They had all been for a drive almost to Cherbourg, to see the old Château of Tourlaville, noted as the ancient patrimony of the family of Ravalet, themselves noted as being the wickedest people in Normandy. All sorts of crimes appear in the family annals, and of all these this ill-omened château was the scene. The Moine de Saire, who haunts the coasts hereabouts, is said to have been a wicked priest belonging to the fated race. Strong natures had these men, and wild passions, and chafed against the chain which bound them to these gloomy rocks, and to a lonely uneventful life. Their fierce longings of berserker and viking, untamed by civilisation, broke out into all kinds of excess and violence. As Mrs. Bacon remarks charitably, perhaps if they had come over with William the Conqueror with the other Normans, they might have become model country gentlemen and good Christians. As it was, they got into a wrong groove, and came to the headsman's axe in a general way whenever the king's justice found its way into these parts.

Boom! The Sea Mew presently fired a gun, at the sound of which all the fishermen and seamen about the port jumped about and sacred and anathematised the English; and the gun signified that we were wanted on board. The director, too, had arrived with the baggage, and all was ready for going on board, only where was Hilda?—where

was the old squire? As for De St. Pol, nobody asked for him.

"But, monsieur!" cried Justine in an aside to me, "if you are waiting for mademoiselle, you may wait long enough." Justine, I may say, had been in an awful temper at being again left behind by Miss Chudleigh. "My last mistress took me everywhere, shared all her distractions with me," Justine had sobbed; "but mademoiselle treats me as if I were a parcel, to be forwarded by luggage train."

What did Justine mean? Why, simply that M. de St. Pol had no intention whatever of putting mademoiselle on board the Sea Mew. His own yacht was somewhere on the coast, and it was in her that he intended Miss Chudleigh should make a cruise. Oh, Justine was perfectly sure of M. de St. Pol's intentions. She had been so informed by the count's own man.

The affair now began to look awkward. Hilda might in all unconsciousness seriously compromise herself. True, her father was with her, but female tongues would say that he was not likely to be an efficient chaperon.

"Of course you will follow Hilda?" said Tom, "and I will go too. We shall have to fight that St. Pol, one of us, I fancy."

And Justine must go with us. And yet it was awkward. However, we went with the others to the pier, hoping that Hilda and her father would turn up at the last moment. Up to this time Madame la Directrice had been full of pleasant anticipations of the voyage. But when we came to the "bord de l'eau," about which Justine was always singing, the aspect of things was rather alarming for madame. A fresh tide was coming in with something of a swell, dashing among the timbers of the pier with noise and tumult; the boat tossed violently up and down, while it was as much as the sailors could do to keep her clear of the pier, while one of them hung on with a boat-hook to the slimy, slippery steps. Madame clung to my arm in terror. She had always loved the sea, she sobbed, but it was an ideal sea, a sea that was always calm. She had never imagined anything so dreadful as this. The director, who had made the voyage to England before now, had already been hauled into the boat and was calling to his wife to be brave:

"Stéphanie, do not be so foolish; there is no danger. Come on!" But Stéphanie could not master her feelings.

"After all, why go on board," cried

Tom, "when you don't like it? Come with us—and the director too. Hi!" shouting to the director; "we have got a seat in the trap for you!"

"No, no!" replied the director; "better the sea than a raging horse. But you go, Stéphanie; we shall meet in a few hours."

"Heaven be praised!" cried madame, as she turned to wave a last adieu to the director. "I would have followed thee, Alphonse, to the death, but I infinitely prefer being safe on shore."

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER IV.

It was not by chance that Mrs. Pentreath happened to be downstairs when Hetty returned from St. Gudule's. Of all evil spirits difficult to lay, when they have once been raised up, the spirit of suspicion is the most difficult. Yesterday Mrs. Pentreath had been really touched by Hetty's subdued manner and pale cheeks; and had felt anxious to give her a proof of confidence; yet so mischievous was that lurking spirit, that even the girl's glad gratitude for the trifling favour accorded her was sufficient to stir him into fresh activity, and the vision of that interrupted tête-à-tête set him to work again as vigorously as ever.

If these young people, her own son and the girl who owed everything to her bounty, were really capable of scheming vulgarly for her deception, then it was right that they should be convicted and exposed as speedily as possible; wherefore, Mrs. Pentreath, much to the disgust of her maid and not a little to her own, had herself called and dressed a full hour before her usual time, only to find (she hardly knew whether to her vexation or satisfaction) that though Miss Mavors had been up and out some time ago, Ernest was still snugly in bed, and turning his customarily deaf ear to announcements of hot water and breakfast, even after the latter had become a visible fact, and was smoking appetisingly upon the table.

Hetty came in rather shyly. If the vicar had gone home to his breakfast in a sufficiently jubilant mood, hers was not much less happy. To know that she was no longer alone in the world—a solitary little waif belonging to no one in particular—but an object of importance, holding another person's happiness in her hands, and that person the one of all others in the world

whom she most admired and revered, was enough of itself to make her so happy that she was almost afraid to lift her eyes, lest the inward joy shining through those tell-tale windows should betray her secret too soon; and this timidity was increased to a nervous flutter by the unexpected sight of Mrs. Pentreath and the dread of being questioned as to the cause of her lateness.

She need not have had any such fear, however. Once satisfied as to the fact of Ernest's whereabouts, that young man's mother cared very little about the lesser one of Hetty's being five or ten minutes late; and though the consciousness of having put herself to considerable inconvenience by her over suspiciousness gave a slight touch of irritability to her manner, she took pains to show Hetty that this was not directed against her, by cutting short her apologies with a good-humoured readiness which greatly relieved the girl's mind.

Yet she could not help noticing that her young protégée was looking more lovely than usual; her bright eyes soft and dreamy with a new delicious tenderness quite unlike their wonted sauciness, and her cheeks wearing so rich and rosy a livery as a man must have been blind indeed not to see and admire. Be as cautious as he might, Captain Pentreath could not take his eyes off her when once he had contributed his presence to the breakfast-table, and his mother thought to herself with a half amused annoyance, "If saying her prayers in a cold church and running home afterwards makes the little monkey look as pretty as that, I almost wish, for Ernest's sake, I hadn't let her go at all."

If Mrs. Pentreath had only known what caused that brilliant illumination she would have clasped her hands for thankfulness, and been ready to embrace both the engaged couple out of the fulness of her heart; but her severity had overshot its mark. She had neither taken into account Hetty's affection for herself, nor the innocent liveliness natural to a young and healthy girl; but had spoken to her as to any vulgar-minded, unscrupulous young woman, bent only on achieving a good match. The result was in every way unfortunate to both of them. In the first place it taught Hetty to fear and distrust where before she had felt nothing but love and confidence, and, if it did not make her absolutely dislike her patroness, it robbed her of all feeling of reliance on the latter's

kindness and justice. Further, on the present day, it almost brought about an actual quarrel between her and her lover.

It is easier, men say, to bear a separation of three years from a woman who doesn't belong to you, and is never likely to do so, than one of three hours from one who does, and that so recently that her acquisition has not yet lost its value. Hetty's heart thrilled, and her long eyelashes drooped before the look of passionate gladness which greeted her in the vicar's eyes, when she met him that afternoon. They were pleasant eyes at all times, straightforward, blue, and kindly; but grave usually, and stern sometimes; that expression Hetty had never seen in them till then; and certainly no woman before her had ever heard from him the whispered "My darling!" which accompanied it, and brought her small hand to nestle into his with an answering glance of shy, loving gratitude.

But the quarrel was to come, and began in this wise:

"And now I've got to tell Aunt Julia that I am going to steal her house-fairy; so when shall I come about it—this evening?" said the vicar cheerfully, as he and his young sweetheart walked slowly and happily in the direction of a certain poor cottage, rather outside the village; and the words, natural as they were, made the girl start violently, and look up at him in a dismay for which he was not at all prepared.

"This evening!" she repeated almost with a gasp. "Oh, no, no. How can you even think of such a thing? Not nearly so soon; not for a long time yet. Please, please, don't! Indeed you mustn't."

The vicar looked at her in frank astonishment.

"Mustn't tell her!" he repeated; "but why not? Surely, my darling child, you're not ashamed of your goodness to me?"

"Ashamed! No, of course not, but——"

"Then why not let it be known?"

"But not just yet—not at once. Oh, George, please don't be in a hurry. You don't know how unpleasant things have been at the Lodge of late."

"I can guess it from what you've told me, dear, and it's just to put an end to this unpleasantness that I want to have you in my own care as soon as possible. You won't be afraid to trust yourself to me, Hetty?"

"No, indeed," she said warmly, and nestling her hand a little closer into the arm on which it lay, "but it is so sudden,

and Mrs. Pentreath—— George, can't we wait a little before saying anything to any one? It is enough pleasure for me to know that you care for me. Yesterday I thought no one did; and now if Mrs. Pentreath were to be unkind, or try to take you away from me——"

"She might try," said the young vicar gaily, "but as the effort would be entirely futile, I hope she won't be foolish enough to make it. Why should you credit her with such a wish, however? Have you any reason to think she would object to me as a husband for you?"

"N—no, except that she objects to me. She does not like me at all now."

"Nay, that I can't believe. My aunt is a jealous, autocratic woman, and apt to turn rusty if any of her whims are crossed; but I am sure she loves you, and from something she once dropped I am not at all certain that she would not be really pleased to hear that we cared for one another."

"Oh, Mr. Hamilton, I don't think so."

"I do, so let us prove which is right. Come, Hetty," laying his other hand reassuringly over the one whose trembling he could feel upon his arm, "this is only foolish nervousness, and I love you too well to bear with it. Our secret must be known sooner or later. Why not out with it at once?"

"Oh, not quite at once! Surely that isn't necessary. Couldn't we wait just a little bit—till—till Captain Pentreath is gone, at least?"

"Captain Pentreath!"

"Yes," she said so eagerly that she missed the tone of his voice as he repeated the name after her. "He will be gone quite soon. His new regiment is under orders for Canada; and he will not want to spend all his leave in this quiet place. Only yesterday he was talking of running over to Paris for a few weeks. Promise me not to say anything till he is gone. Do!" and she looked up beseechingly into his eyes, not, however, to find them beaming on her as they had been a while ago, but dark with an expression of mingled surprise and displeasure before which she shrank instinctively.

"That is strange!" he said slowly. "What, in the name of Heaven, can Captain Pentreath have to do with you or me in the matter of our engagement? His mother is your guardian, of course, but he—what is he to you?"

There was no mistaking his tone now. Hetty had made a mistake, and, being frightened, she stammered and bungled, and made matters worse in her anxiety to mend them.

"Nothing—nothing, of course," she said hurriedly, "except that if he—I mean if Mrs. Pentreath were vexed it would be so horrid for me—worse than it is now, and—"

"If he were vexed! That is what you were going to say, I think; and what right, pray, has he to be vexed in such a matter?"

"None, none; only— Oh, George, you know what his mother has been saying about—about me and him."

"I do, and that is why I am anxious to show her, with the least possible delay, how wrong she was in her assumptions. My dear little love, it is for your own good and dignity that I urge it. Can't you trust me?"

His tone was very gentle and caressing again, so gentle that Hetty thought he had come down to pleading, and foolishly persisted.

"No, because she would not believe you. I know she would not. She would think," crimsoning all over, and speaking in a whisper strongly suggestive of tears, "that it was only because she had put a stop to—to—the other—I mean, that I wanted to get married to someone, it didn't matter whom."

For a moment the vicar made no answer; and if the tears had not been so near Hetty's eyes that she had no courage to look up at him, she would have seen a sudden colour come into his face, the quick, startled flush of a man newly confronted with an idea at once painful and repugnant to him. Suggested by anyone else, indeed, he would simply have flung it aside with indignant contempt; but put before him by Hetty herself, and emphasised by the poor child's shamefaced blushes and faltering lips, it met him with unpleasant force; and against his will there shot through him a horrible thought piercing him like a poisoned arrow: What if it were true? and, if not, how should the imagination of it have come into her mind?

"That is a strange supposition," he said at last, and in an altered voice—a very grave one. "I do not understand how it could have occurred to you unless— Hetty, be frank with me, I beseech you. Do you remember what you said to me only this morning, that you had not the

slightest caring for Pentreath except as a friend?"

"Of course I do; and it is true. Oh, surely you believe me!"

"Certainly I believe you; but if I am to do so, and if I am also to believe what you said of him when we first spoke on the matter—that his attentions to you were also purely friendly and playful, such as a brother might pay you, in fact, and his mother had no right to object to—what can induce you to speak of him now in the way you do, or to make him an obstacle to the announcement of our engagement?"

It was Hetty's turn to be silent now. Truly she had said so, and at the time she had believed what she said; but since then, few weeks ago as it was, she seemed to have grown years older and wiser, and her eyes had been opened to the meaning of many things which had been unnoticed before. Besides, Captain Pentreath's manner had certainly altered in at least an equal degree. There was nothing in it that even she could honestly call brotherly now, and enough of something so different as to make her shrink with timid dread from anything like a scene, or even such further comments from his mother as might be produced by announcing her engagement to some one else whilst living in the same house with him. Yet how was she to say this to any one without seeming to give the lie to her former protestations; and how, in especial, was she to say it to George Hamilton, who had already proved that he could be more than a little jealous, and who was now looking at her, as she felt, with angry astonishment? In her embarrassment at not being able to find an answer she blushed more than ever, and by so doing added to Mr. Hamilton's annoyance.

He was very much in love with this fair young pupil and parishioner of his, and fully believed in her love for himself. He believed, too, that she was the very essence of all that was innocent and pure; yet, at the same time, he could not help remembering that he had heard his cousin speak of her in terms sufficiently light and familiar to indicate an intimacy which had pained and angered him even then when he had no right to resent it, and the mere remembrance of which at present filled him with an agony of wounded pride and jealousy stronger still than love.

For a minute he waited, hoping that Hettie would answer, and silence the horrible doubt which had arisen in him; but when she did not speak, his impatience

became too great for his self-control, and he stopped short, dropping almost unconsciously the arm which had been supporting her hand to his side, so that they stood apart.

"Hetty," he said then, trying to speak gently, though what the effort cost him might have been guessed by anyone who had seen the drops standing on his brow, "I don't quite understand you. I asked you a question, and, instead of answering it, you are silent. Is it because you are offended with me, or because— My dear, be frank with me. You don't know how I love you, or how dear you are to me; so dear that if it was a choice between my happiness and yours, between losing you altogether or taking you with even one grain of reluctance on your part, one shadow of regret for another, I would give you up this moment, and do my utmost for you instead in the way you preferred; only, Hetty dear, don't let there be anything between us, anything my wife could not say to me, or I to her. I do not believe that it is so. I believe that you do love me, and even if I were not the first—even if you had cared for some one else before me, or had given him the right to think so at any rate, I would rather know it from yourself and now. It would not make me love you less, or blame you, even though it might be a trifle bitter to me just at first. Nay," with a forced laugh and a kindly touch on the girl's cold hands, as he saw the paleness which had come over her cheek, "I did not mean to frighten you, love. Maybe even the bitterness might be wholesome for me. When I was a little lad I had an old Scotch nurse who used to tell me I was 'ow'er proud than gude,' and pride needs a fall now and then, you know. Only be honest with me, dear."

Hetty looked up at him, her eyes full of tears. That poor attempt at a jest had not at all deceived her, or weakened her perception of what the question really meant to an "ow'er proud" man. If she had kept silent so long, it was not from coquetry, or even cowardice, but rather from a desire to be perfectly sincere. She spoke, clinging with both hands to the arm which had dropped hers:

"George, there is nothing to tell you, and you must not suspect me. I have never flirted with Captain Pentreath, or given him the least cause to think I cared for him. I might have done so, perhaps," her pretty face flushing ingenuously, "if I hadn't heard that he was a man who said

pretty things to every girl he met, and expected them to fall in love with him in return; but I was determined not to fall in love with him. I joked and laughed, and tried to be very kind and friendly with him, because he was Mrs. Pentreath's son, and kind and friendly to me; but I never said a word to him that all the world might not have heard. I never gave him so much as a flower or a sketch, or wrote—"

"My darling, don't go on. That is quite enough, and I am ashamed of myself for asking you. The fact is, I am horribly jealous, and I care for you so much that when Ernest took to rhapsodising about you—"

"But he had no right to do so, and if you asked him, he would tell you so himself. After all," with a little innocent sauciness, "I cannot help a person's admiring me."

"You couldn't help my doing so, certainly, and I couldn't help it either," said the vicar, laughing, and pressing the little hand more closely against his side. "I was not blaming you, love, because Ernest admires you; only—"

"Only you don't want me to admire him! And I do not; but, George, if you still distrust me in the very least, do as you wished to do: go up to the Lodge and tell Mrs. Pentreath of our engagement. She cannot be much more disagreeable than she has been to me of late; and if I wanted you to wait till her son was gone, it was only because unpleasantness of that sort is so much worse before a man, and I thought he would make it still more so. Do as you like about it, however."

But the vicar had been put on his mettle and would not listen to such a suggestion. His little sweetheart had been too generous for him not to be generous on his side, and he declared that she should choose her own time for the avowal. For the present, at any rate, he would be content, and more than content, to enjoy the knowledge of his happiness in private, and wait on her pleasure for the rest. So the quarrel which had threatened to be so serious blew over like a summer cloud; the lovers parted even more tenderly than they had met; and when Mrs. Pentreath saw the yet lovelier rose colour in the girl's cheek that evening, she said to herself in despair:

"It's no use, the little monkey is prettier than any girl in the neighbourhood, and Ernest would be a bat if he

couldn't see it. How can that stupid George have been blind enough not to do so!"

All of which proves how excessively foolish it was for Hetty to beg for silence about her engagement, and for George Hamilton to accede to it.

They met again next day at early service, but only for a moment. Hetty had been made nervous by Mrs. Pentreath's unexpected appearance at the dining-room window on the previous day, and was in a desperate hurry to get back quickly on this occasion. She said that she felt sure her guardian had suspected something, and though Mr. Hamilton laughed at her and called her a terrible coward, he was too kind-hearted to detain her against her will.

She would not even let him accompany her, but rushed off, turning her bright face back for one tantalising little nod at him before she disappeared round the corner, and making the vicar say to himself in half-humorous desperation:

"If I don't persuade Ernest to start for Paris before another week, I'll be shot. I'm not going to have my little girl frightened of any one, now I've got the right to take care of her."

Perhaps it was to exercise this right, or perhaps only to get a longer vision of the little figure so dear to him on its homeward route, that the vicar, instead of turning off to his own house, re-entered the church and ran upstairs to the gallery where the choir were in the habit of sitting. There was a window there from which he could get a view of the road which, after skirting Kew Green, passed the walls of Guelder Lodge, and could thus have the pleasure, such as it was, of at least seeing his sweetheart within her own gate.

On this occasion the pleasure was a very negative one. The little figure was there, it is true, just coming into view round a turn of the road and clearly distinguishable in its neat dark ulster and cap, the trim rounded outlines sharply defined against the background of white pavement and blue sky, where the rosy colour of morning yet lingered in a crimson stain; the small well-poised head thrown a little back as though to meet the frosty breeze which gave a backward sweep to her draperies from the tiny, swift-stepping feet. But the feet were not stepping as briskly now as when they had left him, and the face might not have been raised to court the crisp morning air, but to meet the down-bent

glance of the tall square-shouldered young man who was walking at her side; the man whom, by his whole cut and bearing, no less than by his erect soldierly figure, Mr. Hamilton recognised as his cousin, Ernest Pentreath!

Poor Hetty! The surprise to her of finding Captain Pentreath at her side, as she turned round the first corner from the church, was at least as unpleasant as it was to her lover; and her violent start, coupled with the tone in which she uttered his name would have said as much to most men not abnormally conceited. It said nothing to Captain Pentreath. He only laughed good-humouredly, as he put out his hand to her and exclaimed:

"Why, Miss Mavors, how you jumped! I really thought you were going over my head. Please take my arm and hold tight, or we shall have you flying away altogether. One would think you hadn't expected to see me."

"Expected to see you! But I did not," Hetty exclaimed in almost angry astonishment, and taking no notice of the proffered arm.

Captain Pentreath smiled quietly:

"What, because I didn't turn up yesterday? My dear child, it was from my care for you that I abstained, and if I had only had a chance of speaking to you during the day, I should have told you so. I guessed from something in my mother's manner that she was on the look-out, and meant to surprise us; so I stayed in bed on purpose, and let her have the trouble of getting up early—which I know she hates—for nothing. She won't do it again. Her maid had orders to call her an hour later than usual this morning, and directly I heard it I gave similar ones, and then got up, without being called, as soon as ever I heard you go out, and followed you: with this difference, however, that, as I walked out of the French-window in my room in preference to the front-door, the domestics probably imagine that I am still in the arms of 'Murphy,' and are at the present moment depositing cans of hot water outside my chamber portal in that happy delusion.

"And why do you want them to imagine it?" said Hetty, with great coolness considering how fast her heart was beating between fright and anger—yet she knew nothing of that choir-window, by the way. "I am very stupid, but—" "I don't understand you at all," she was

going to say, but it was a foible of Captain Pentreath's to like doing most of the talking himself, and he broke in :

"Why? Because my mother's absurd folly makes it necessary. But, Hetty, you are looking grave; and if you didn't understand my motive I must indeed have seemed a brute to you to stay in bed like a log when you were sweet enough to take my hint so readily, and act on it at once."

"Your hint, Captain Pentreath!"

"Yes, about the church-going. Don't you remember the mater interrupting us just as I was telling you about it. You are so quick, however, that I knew you had understood already, and though, you see, she suspected too, I couldn't think of any other way of getting hold of you."

"Getting hold of me for what, Captain Pentreath?" and then Hetty did manage to get out her former sentence: "I don't understand you in the least; and I wish very much that you would not come to meet me and talk in this way. Your mother would be very much vexed if she knew of it, and," with a great effort, for she saw a look of unbounded surprise growing slowly in his eyes, and her small stock of courage began to waver, "I do not like it either; not at all."

Captain Pentreath stared and then smiled a little. He had been inclined to be annoyed, but it occurred to him that the little girl was cross because she had been left to take her walk alone on the previous day; and after all, she was pretty enough to be allowed a few airs. He set himself to pacify her at once.

"What is it that you don't like, Hetty?" he said softly. "That the mater should be vexed? I assure you I don't like it either, and I think it abominable of her to have made you so uncomfortable, and to have spoilt all our fun in the way in which she has done of late; but it's partly your own fault, and that's one of the things I've been wanting to say to you. You shouldn't give in to her so much, or let her tyrannise over you. I don't. In fact I like to pay you more attention whenever I think she has been sitting on you; and there is really no need for you to be so afraid of her. She

couldn't eat you for talking to me; and she knows that if she tried I should make her sorry for it. It's a very bad plan to give in to a woman who likes power, and my mother loves it. The more people yield to her, the more she'll bully them; and it was chiefly to tell you this, and because your sweet, sad face made me so miserable, that I threw out the feeler about exercise and early services. If you knew," with a laugh of conscious merit, "how I hate turning out in this confounded weather you'd think it a magnanimous suggestion; but I really couldn't devise any other way for our getting a little talk together, you were so desperately careful not to offend the powers that be. My dear Hetty, there is no occasion for it. Only trust me to take care of you, and you shall be quite safe; but if you run away from me in the way in which you have been doing of late I shall have to run away too. Don't you know that it is only your sweet smiles that make life at the Lodge bearable to me, and that if I am to stay there I can't do without them? Give me one now at any rate, to show me I am forgiven for letting you come out alone, and to reward me for walking up and down here in the cold all the while you were in at your prayers. I should have been there too, by the way, but for my cousin. Upon my soul, Hetty, I believe it is he who has put my mother up to all this nonsense."

"Captain Pentreath!"

"I do. You needn't look so astounded. Hamilton is a parson; but parsons are no different from other men, except that they are meaner. Hetty, I'll tell you a secret. It's he who's at the bottom of all this. He wants you for himself!"

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PRICE TWOPENCE

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XII. MADAME VOGLIO AT EASE.

MRS. JERVOISE was spending one of her ordinary high-pressure days. Her London house was near to everything to which a society woman's house ought to be near. It was a corner house at the end of one of those rows of palaces which have sprung up on the site once occupied by Gore House and grounds. Its decoration and furnishing, the joint achievement of her husband's purse and her own taste, were magnificently perfect. There were in it grand collections of antique china, silver, and glass. But Mrs. Jervoise was not a mere collector. Each individual bit was treated as a work of art, and not huddled together with dozens of its fellows as a specimen merely. Her house was very sumptuous, but better than this, it was very beautiful and refined.

It was a morning in May, and the sun was shining, and the water gleaming, and the young green leaves and fair spring flowers were all looking their freshest and best, as Mrs. Jervoise rode across the park. She had only taken a turn or two in the Row, when a sudden resolve had moved her to leave it, and make her way along long lines of terraces and through some tortuous streets to St. John's Wood, where in one of the prettiest of the villas which abound there, Madame Voglio reposed on her well-earned laurels.

The bright fair woman with the fairy-like figure, and the golden hair, who was always capitally mounted, was an object of attention in the Row whenever she appeared there, as well as in every hunting-field she frequented. But to-day her numerous acquaintances found her rather brief, not to say forbidding in her manner. The fact

is she had much cause for silent reflection, and many reasons for wishing to have her reflective fit out undisturbed.

In the first place the doctors who were in constant attendance on her husband, had told her this morning that she must nerve herself to bear the worst, as it was a physical impossibility that Mr. Jervoise could live many weeks longer. She did not make any pretence of grieving greatly about this. There was nothing to gain by such pretence. But though she did not grieve, she was rather sorry. Mr. Jervoise had been the kindest and most useful friend she had ever met with in her life. It is not every wife who can say this with truth of her husband. But Flora Jervoise could say it, and did say it to herself. Therefore she was sorry to hear that it was inevitable that she should part with this kind and useful friend shortly. Certainly this sorrow was greatly alleviated by the knowledge she had that she would be the sole possessor of his houses and lands, horses, carriages, and indeed all things that he would be compelled to leave behind him. But as he had never been an exacting, dictatorial, or niggardly lord and master to her, her thoughts did not dwell on the absolute freedom which would soon be her portion, as rejoicingly or even comfortingly as they would have done had he been all these things.

Mrs. Jervoise, as has been said, was an active, untiring pupil and proficient expert indeed in the art of pleasure. With all her heart she loved change, excitement, and amusement. But for all this she was no mere frivolous fool of a creature, unable to concentrate her thoughts and powers on anything besides the whim of the hour.

She could devote herself for hours to

complicated business accounts, from which many a staid, graver, more industrious, domesticated, and generally praiseworthy woman would have turned aside in fear and trembling. And she would bring all her bright winning ways, and prompt power of action to bear upon any cause which interested her. As many good causes, as well as many indifferent ones, did interest her in the course of every year, she certainly may be accredited with being very useful in her generation. People who disliked her were apt to say that her zeal in good works was mere feverish love of excitement. Her chronicler will only say that it led her into the commission of many an act which called forth blessings on her head.

Her object to-day in getting away from many congenial associates in the Row, and going over to St. John's Wood to see Madame Voglio, was at least an unselfish one.

A letter from her sister, Mrs. Ray, had informed her of the facts of the break-up of the Moor Royal establishment, and of Jenifer's intention of studying for twelve months under Madame Voglio.

"It will be a great relief to me," Effie had candidly written, "when old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer part company with us. My mother-in-law is a skeleton at the feast. I know her position is a hard one, and I don't feel inclined to better it at my own expense. But if Jenifer can only succeed as a concert-singer, and make a lot of money, and so be able to make the poor old lady more comfortable, I shall really be very glad. Do all you can with Voglio; get the rapacious old cormorant a few good paying pupils who'll only want to howl in private, on condition that she really does exert herself to push Jenifer's interests with public concert-givers."

It was on this request of her sister's that Mrs. Jervoise was acting now. A season or two ago, Flora had herself taken lessons of Madame Voglio. That is to say, she had paid lavishly for singing for a quarter of an hour three times a week under Madame Voglio's auspices, and had spent the rest of the lesson-hour in entertaining Madame Voglio at luncheon, and being entertained by that lady's pungent accounts of the way in which the majority of the young ladies whom she taught agonised her exquisitely acute ear, and wrung her artist soul.

It was on Flora's advice, which had filtered through Effie to Jenifer, that the

latter had in the first instance applied to Madame Voglio. And now that negotiations had resulted in the relations of mistress and pupil being established between Madame Voglio and Miss Ray, Mrs. Jervoise was going to try what her personal influence, together with the indirect power of the purse, could do for Jenifer.

Madame Voglio was at home. She generally was at home until two o'clock; the rare exceptions to this rule being when she had pupils who were wealthy and munificent enough to pay her for the sacrifice she made in getting herself into a costume in which she would be presentable to the eyes of men at this early hour of the day.

The room in which she received Mrs. Jervoise was not the one into which pupils, or possible pupils, were admitted. The latter was a large, well-ventilated, and pleasantly-furnished apartment to which madame descended in faultlessly neat, as well as rich apparel. The sanctum into which Mrs. Jervoise—a "past" pupil—was frankly conducted, was a little room, stuffy as to its atmosphere, overcrowded with luxurious fat armchairs and sofas, carpeted with velvet-pile in every crevice, reeking with the mingled odours of fading flowers, cigarettes, scents, and essences of various descriptions, for both internal and external application, and lighted in a sultry way by two windows which were veiled by deep rose-coloured silk blinds and creamy muslins.

The ex-queen of the concert-boards was in the full enjoyment of her hour of ease, lolling back in the deep recesses of one of the plumpest armchairs, her untidily slippered feet stretched out before her on a soft velvet cushion, a French novel in her hand, and a tiny cigarette between her lips.

A large, loosely stout woman, her proportions appeared huge now enveloped as she was in a flowing blue silk wrapper, that did not restrain her in any direction. Her head was uncovered by any kind of cap, and her hair, which fell over her forehead in a ragged black fringe, and was much tangled at the back, did not conduce to the propriety and neatness of her morning toilette. Her face, broad, fat, snub-nosed, mobile, and greasy, was saved from being repulsive by its quick, changeful, humorous expression, and by that dramatic instinct which has enabled more than one great stage luminary to compel a snub nose to appear perfectly in place on the face of a heroine of classic tragedy. Madame

Voglio's personal appearance, it may as well be admitted at once, was intensely vulgar. But there was about her such intellectual force, that in her presence she compelled you to forget the vulgarity.

She rose up, adroitly sending the flowing folds of her blue silk robe-de-chambre over her carelessly-attired feet, and greeted Mrs. Jervoise with effusion. Mixture of German and French woman as she was, she spoke English with perfect purity and grace, never betraying by the faintest touch of accent that she was other than one born to the right of speaking it with native perfection. But at times she permitted herself the indulgence of being a little florid in style, after the manner of one portion of her nationality.

The cigarette went into the silent grave formed by a large Japanese pot, and the massive blue silk enveloped arms were held out towards the fragile-looking fair Diana, who came in, exquisite in the sublime austerity of a modern English horsewoman's toilet.

"My always charming Mrs. Jervoise, you are welcome to me as the breath of spring which you bring into my room," Madame Voglio began, and Flora laughed, managed to evade the impending embrace, and asked:

"Why don't you have more of that same breath in your room? Ah, madame, madame, the old story, I'm sure! You shatter your nerves with your abominable cigarettes, and then shut your windows hermetically to keep off the neuralgia," the lady who was half patroness, half pupil said audaciously as she ruthlessly pulled up the sultry-looking blind, and flooded the room with light and air by opening the window.

Madame Voglio flung the yellow-backed novel aside merrily.

"You are always the same, always vigorous and unsympathetic," she said admiringly, "and I revel in you now when you put me in a draught that makes my poor fat shoulders ache, just as I did when you used to bring tears to my eyes by the way in which you would bring all your notes from the wrong places. You shall lunch with me to-day, and tell me how many tickets I shall send you for my concert at which I introduce one of my most creditable pupils."

"I'll do both," Mrs. Jervoise acquiesced; "and you shall tell me what you can do for Miss Ray, if she is worth doing anything for."

"Ah, these young sanguine local amateurs!" madame said, sighing heavily, and shrugging her shoulders as if the subject were too painful for her to venture to approach it. "They come to me, these enterprising and brave young ladies, and they say to me, 'Madame, my master, who is the most famous teacher of singing in Little Peddlington, tells me he can teach me nothing more! I have quite got beyond him, and so I thought I would take a few lessons of you, and then go on the concert-boards;' and then," madame continued, grasping the sparse locks on either side of her head with vehemence, "then when I tell them the truth—that they know nothing, nothing! not one single little thing that would fit them to be professional singers, they look upon me as a jealous old woman—jealous of them and their puny pipings."

"You won't find Miss Ray a fool of that order; if you tell her plainly she can do nothing, she'll believe you, and ask you if she can ever hope by hard work to do anything. I think she can."

Madame Voglio laughed.

"You thought the same thing of yourself, my sweetest friend," the jovial professional—who was, happily for herself, successful enough to dare to be candid—cried; "but," she added suddenly, "I will promise you this: I won't mislead your friend Miss Ray with the little delusive flatteries which my conscience assailed me for offering to you, a rich woman who could never suffer through them. Are you so fond of this young lady that you will—or whim—her to succeed."

"No; but I like her very well, and I want you to do all you can for her, for—for family reasons," Mrs. Jervoise said rather haughtily, for Madame Voglio was not proving as amenable to Flora's wishes as she had led Effie and Jenifer to believe the powerful procurer of places on public concert-boards would be.

"Then it is that you want to get her comfortably out of the way of somebody. Tell me. The somebody is——"

"My sister," Mrs. Jervoise interrupted impatiently; "how tiresome you are with your suggestions and innuendoes! Just listen to a prosaic statement. My sister is married to a man who hasn't half enough money to satisfy her very reasonable requirements, and she doesn't want to have her mother-in-law a fixture in her house for the remainder of her life. If Miss Ray makes an income, she and her mother will clear out of Effie's way without giving any

one the chance of reflecting upon Effie. You see I am quite disinterested. My appeal for your valuable aid in establishing this girl is quite an unselfish one."

"You are always that, my charming Mrs. Jervoise, and we shall see, we shall see. Is Miss Ray one whom one can present on the boards, or is she a wayside flower requiring a great deal of culture before it can be offered to the view of connoisseurs?"

"She's a beautiful girl, well-bred, high-spirited, fearless, and clever."

"Bah! she'll marry in a month, and I shall have my month's conscientious teaching thrown back upon my hands without result. My favourite pupil at the present moment—the one who will soon be a popular favourite, and redound to my honour—is a pork-butcher's daughter, without an 'h' in her vocabulary when she speaks, and with a style that is admirably adapted to win the gilded youth of the period to the refreshment-room bar. She will win all—all! far more than all at which she aims. She has no nerves, no humour, no artist feeling. But she has sound lungs, a magnificent voice, and the advantage of having been my professional pupil for seven years. My child, these are the gifts that repay one for giving them publicity. But we will have luncheon now, and moralise on the impossibility of making virtuous incapability succeed, and of feeding properly during those months of the year when the birds of the air are protected by the law of the land."

She rose as she said this, and shuffled out of the room and downstairs into a well-appointed dining-room, where a round table daintily set out with many delicacies awaited them temptingly.

"Ah," she murmured gratefully, falling comfortably into a chair, and beginning to eat with a zest which sent Mrs. Jervoise's appetite away to the limbo of lost things, "ah, for how many years of my life did I restrain myself, and hunger because of my voice! I have feared that one morsel more snipe might destroy me with the public for more times than I care to remember, and I have left truffled larks to be devoured by the unappreciative, when I have paid a guinea for half-a-dozen of them, in brief forgetfulness of the duty that was on me that night of singing to a remorseless, surfeited crowd at a Monday Pop. Ah, you little realise what sacrifices we artists make at the shrine of duty," she went on cheerily, helping himself as she spoke to

enough *pâte de foie gras* to upset the liver even of the goose that contributed most largely to it.

"And if Miss Ray does as well as I think she will, you will exert yourself to get her engagements, won't you?"

"I shall wait and see before I promise. Ah, how you cast contempt on my little luncheon; you pick, pick like a little bird. It is your fear of getting fat which makes you starve yourself. You all do it in your youth, and Nature revenges herself by spreading you out so" (she extended her arms to their utmost length in illustration) "as you age."

"You didn't starve yourself in your youth, and you have spread," Flora said, laughing at madame's unconsciousness of her own dimensions, while she was deriding the bulk of the ordinary Englishwoman.

"I have rounded," Madame Voglio said solemnly. "See, I have not lost my waist; we see no beauty in flat surfaces. We round gracefully, gradually; your country-women widen awkwardly."

Then, finding that her guest would not be persuaded to take any more food and sustenance, Madame Voglio heaved herself out of her chair with an effort, and waddled to the door to see Mrs. Jervoise mount and depart.

MAORIS AND PAKEHAS.

Now that the Queensland Government is probably going to annex New Guinea, I for one hope that they, being so much more within reach, will manage matters better than we, with more than half the world's circumference between us, have been able to do in New Zealand. Our management somehow resulted in Hau-Hau, that terrible travesty of missionary teaching dashed with determination to cling to the land that was slipping from their grasp, which was described in ALL THE YEAR ROUND* some four years ago.

The Maoris were worthy of a better fate. I suppose they must go, though they will leave a good deal of their blood in the veins of the colonists. Mr. Delisle Hay, who talks of New Zealand as "brighter Britain," and is far above any such weakness as "Maoriland for the Maoris," admits that they had arts and industries of no mean kind. Their

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 26, p. 151, "Hau-Hau."

dwellings, often highly decorated with carving, were far superior to Irish cabins, aye, to too many English cottages.

Their "pahs" were fortified on a system quite equal to that of Vauban. They were careful tillers of the soil; and with nothing but stone axes and shark's-tooth knives, they would cut down the huge kauri pines and shape their war-canoes with an accuracy that would stand the test of geometrical instruments. A canoe with forty or fifty paddles on a side would be driven as fast as a steam-ram or a racing-skiff. Wooden statues, picture-writing on rocks and trees, image-amulets, showed strong artistic leanings, though among artists the mōku (tattooers) ranked highest. Great was the request in which clever workers were held. Battles were fought to secure possession of them; and of several the poetical biographies are still current. To an Englishman's notions their highest artistic attainment was the making of what are incorrectly called "mats," togas, that is, of flax-fibre, some as soft as silk, some interwoven with kiwi's feathers, which were stitched in so thickly as to make the fabric look like fur. Such a robe would take several women two or three years to make it, for the kiwi's feathers are almost as thin as coarse hairs.

I for one don't think they have improved. I would far rather see a chief in his toga and mōku than dressed in a bad imitation of our costume. And they do dress nowadays. Mr. Hay tells of a young lady in pale green silk with lace trimmings, panier and train, lace collar and cuffs, pink satin bows, gorgeous cameo brooch, gold watch-chain, and lavender kid gloves. She wore a white hat looped up on one side, trimmed with dark green velvet, and adorned with flowers, a long ostrich feather, and a stuffed humming-bird. She had a huge chignon; a laced parasol in one hand, and a feathery fan in the other; and dainty boots on her little feet.

So long as she was in the Settlement this gay beauty wholly ignored all her kindred, walking in solitary grandeur, proud of her "Englishness." But when she got outside, she fell in with two or three old Maori women, as filthy and ugly as such women always are, and before long she had her silk skirts turned up, and was squatting amongst them, enjoying a hearty smoke. Such a lady is not likely to make flax-fibre mats, though she does (in spite of her grand airs) look after her husband's

cooking. You will meet her riding by his side in a blue velvet habit, with hat and feather to match, he, too, being considerably "got up," from his white helmet down to his spurred boots; and when, next day, you accept their invitation, and call upon them, you find the fair Amazon in a dirty blanket and nothing else, squatted beside the dinner-pot smoking a short pipe. Her husband, when he comes in, will be angry, but only because she did not do honour to her pakeha guest by appearing in full pakeha costume.

Mr. Hay witnessed a strange and embarrassing ceremony; the husband actually dressed his wife in her best clothes before his very eyes; and when it was done he proudly said: "You come see common Maori, sah? You come find pakeha gentleman, pakeha lady, pakeha house! Good, good. Now you sit talk to my missee; I get pakeha dinner." That is the new style, and somehow it does not seem to have much vitality in it. What I cannot understand is why there should be so few marriages between settlers and natives. Mr. Hay speaks of a girl, "a delicious little brown innocent," who brought her husband ten thousand acres of good rich land; though, on the principle that the land belongs to the tribe, and not to the chief, I do not quite see how that could be. The main drawback is one that was equally felt of old in Ireland and Scotland—you marry your wife's kindred, and they all think they have a right to come and feed upon you in any numbers, and for any length of time. If her tribe was a large one, even the brown innocent's ten thousand acres would not go a very great way.

These dress-stories show that the veneer of civilisation is not very solid, and a great deal of the Christianity is only skin-deep. How can it be otherwise, when it is not (like ours) a thing which has been in the blood for over a thousand years, but is far newer than the muskets and the fire-water which have so sadly hastened the decay of the race.

Many a tattooed Christian still believes that the spirits of good men (in old time it was brave chiefs) have a long and toilsome journey to make to the far north, where, from a great projecting rock they leap into the sea and swim across to "Three Kings' Islands," which are the gate of Paradise. Many, too, still hold the ngarara—a beautiful little green lizard—to be awfully tapu. To throw one of these at a man is a deadly insult. Such an act nearly cost Mr. Hay his life. He

had a lot of Maoris cutting lines through the bush for land-surveying, including two pious old fellows, Pita (Peter) and Pora (Paul), who used to hold a prayer-meeting every night, and who, by their comic look, their quaint affectation of childishness, and their love of laughter, reminded him of Irish peasants. One day, picking up a ngarara, he held it out to the old men, asking what it was, and threw it, saying "Catch!" when all at once they were transformed into fiends, yelling, dancing, singing their war-song. He thought at first it was a joke; but, just as they were going to fall on him with their axes, a couple of half-breeds hurried him off, crying: "Run for your life!" At night they were all good friends again, and Pita, lying by his side in camp, said: "We should certainly have killed you, in our wild passion, and then have been very sorry for it. It's all over now, for we've had time to reflect that, being only an ignorant pakeha, you knew no better. Besides, we are Christians, though we had forgotten that for the moment."

Such an anecdote shows what manner of men these Maoris are—people who not only weep in church at the pathetic passages, but laugh uproariously at anything in lessons or sermon that tickles their fancy. Mr. Hay has seen a church full of them waving their arms, stamping their feet, grinding their teeth with rage, when the treachery of Judas was being related. To such people Christianity came as a new form of tapu (taboo). They were ready for any number of rites and ceremonies, and it was only when they began to read for themselves, and to contrast the teachings of the Book with the conduct of the land-grabbing pakehas round them; when, moreover, their implicit faith in the missionary had been weakened by the coming in of rival faiths, each claiming to be the only true way, that they got to be eclectic, giving up the New Testament, in its practical portions, and sticking by the Old, because it allowed polygamy and revenge, and strictly forbade the alienation of land.

This tapu had many uses. A river was tapu at certain seasons, so as to give a close time for fish; a wood was tapu when birds were nesting, fruit ripening, or rats (delicacies in the old Maori cuisine) multiplying. To tapu a garden answered—till Captain Cook brought in pigs—far better than the strongest fence. A girl, tapued, would be as safe amid the wild licence of unmarried Maori life as if she had been

in a nunnery. Tapu was probably never intentionally broken, so weird was the horror which surrounded it. But, in this case, ~~staying~~ staying in ignorance was no excuse; and the most furious wars were those which arose from breaking it. The sign of tapu was easily set up—a bunch of flax or hair, a bone, a rag on a carved stick, that was enough. To lift it was much harder, needing the intervention of the tohunga (priest), who, by muttering incantations, and, above all, by making the tabooed man eat a sweet potato (kumera), charmed it away.

Judge Maning, who years ago wrote a book called by his own nickname, *The Pakeha Maori*, became tapu through an act of humanity. He buried a skull which he saw lying with a number of other bones on the beach. Straightway his companions shrank from him; he had to sit apart at night, the food which they set before him he was to eat without touching, and when he neglected to do so they made off in a body, and warned his household of the plight in which he was coming back. When he got home the place was deserted. He held out for four days, but on the fifth he was forced to send for the tohunga, who made him throw away his clothes and pull down his kitchen.

A very convenient way of forcing the trader's hand in the early days was to put his ship and cargo under tapu. This made it impossible for him to sail away, or to have dealings with any one else than the chief who had laid him under this embargo, and who, therefore, at last brought him to his own terms. One can fancy this was a natural way of making reprisals for the fancy prices which, we may be sure, the trader would exact.

Many a massacre of whites was due to an unwitting infringement of the tapu; just as if you trespass on Lord Marlshire's covers in breeding-time, you'll find yourself subject to all sorts of pains and penalties, even though your object was the harmless one of plucking a butterfly orchis or a twayblade. The historic massacre of Du Fresne and his crew was brought about by a deliberate breach of tapu; and such outrages on native feeling were so dangerous, that Governor Macquarie, of Sydney, in 1813, tried to make every skipper in the New Zealand trade sign a bond for one thousand pounds not to ill-treat Maoris, not to break tapu, not to trespass on burial-grounds, not to kidnap men or women. His efforts were fruitless.

Maoris were fine sturdy fellows, and though there was, as yet, no Kanaka labour-market in Queensland, no Queensland at all in fact, a ship that was short-handed was very glad to get some of them on board by any kind of device. The worst thing connected with the carrying off of native women was that the poor creatures were generally put ashore in some other part of the islands, i.e. among enemies. There slavery, or worse, was sure to be their fate. Hence more than one massacre. A captain carried off a chief's daughter, and left her two hundred miles down the coast, where she was made a slave of and finally eaten. What more natural than that the chief and his people should feel deadly hatred against all whites, having, as savages always have, the firm conviction that all whites belong to the same tribe, and therefore ought to suffer for one another's faults? Another cause for bloody reprisals was the treatment of the men who were taken on board. "I'm a chief," said one who was being driven with a rope's-end, when incapable through sea-sickness, to some menial work. "You a chief!" scoffingly replied the master of the Boyd, for that was the name of the ill-fated ship. "When you come to my country you'll find I'm a chief," was the reply. The Boyd happened to sail into the harbour of Whargaron, the very place to which the flogged chief belonged. He showed his tribesmen his scored back, and they vowed vengeance, for even a blow to a chief is an insult that can only be wiped out with blood. The captain and part of the crew, leaving some fifty souls in the ship, went ashore to select timber. The Maoris way-laid and murdered them, and, dressing themselves in their victims' clothes, went at dusk to the ship, climbed on board, and killed every one except a woman, her children, and a boy who had been kind to the chief during his distress. The vessel was plundered, and the chief's father, delighted at securing some firearms, snapped a musket over an open barrel of powder and was blown to pieces with a dozen of his men.

Tapu was successfully broken by the early missionaries in the Bay of Islands. One of their settlements was up the Kerikeri river, the tapu of which for fish during the close months was very vexatious to them, for it blocked up their only road to Te Puna, the head station. Stores must be had; and at last, in defiance of tapu, they manned a boat and rowed down, amid the

rage and terror of the Maoris, who expected to see them exterminated by the offended atua (spirits). When the mission-boat came back it was seized, and the crew bound ready to be slain and eaten. Happily, to eat the stores seemed the proper way of beginning, and these stores were partly tinned-meats, jams, etc., and partly drugs. Having greedily devoured the former, the plunderers duly fell upon the latter, finishing off the jalap, castor-oil, salts, and so forth, as part of the ceremony. The result may be guessed. The "mana" of the missionaries began to work mightily, and with grovelling supplications the anguished Maoris released their prisoners and besought relief. The whole tribe was converted. How could they help it? Had not the gods of the stranger proved their superior might by utterly disabling those who had stood forth as the avengers of their own insulted deities?

This was a far different result from that which befell Du Fresne. De Surville, who came while Cook was making his survey, had not left a good impression. He had been most kindly received; his sick, kept ashore by a fearful storm, had been carefully tended. But, after the storm, a boat was missing, and he, thinking the natives had stolen it, inveigled the chief on board, put him in irons, and sailed away after destroying the village. The chief pined for his wife and children, and died a few days before De Surville was drowned in the surf off Callao; but the transaction was remembered against the Wee-wees (French). Two years after, Marion du Fresne came to a different part of the island. For a month he and his crew were treated like gods. Then, suddenly, Du Fresne, and sixteen others, were killed and eaten, and Crozet, the second in command, carefully drawing off the sixty survivors, wasted all around with fire and sword, and sailed away, reporting that the massacre was wholly unprovoked, and wishing to name Cook's Bay of Islands Treachery Bay in memory thereof. Not till 1851 did the truth come out. Sir G. Grey was then governor, and hearing that some Frenchmen were shipwrecked on the west coast, he sent Dr. Thompson to help them on to Auckland. Some two hundred natives had gathered to assist the French, and, in the night, Thompson heard old men telling why the Wee-wees had been eaten, twenty years before. Du Fresne had ill-repaid the month's exuberant hospitality. He had cooked food with tapued wood, had

cut down trees in which, after Maori custom, the bodies of chiefs were temporarily slung; and when remonstrated with he had put chiefs in irons and burned villages. The French story that it was a relation of the chief carried off by Du Surville who had eaten Du Fresne was wholly wrong. Du Fresne bore his own trespass, and died in his own iniquity (the very word, for it means unfairness). Dr. Thompson was sure, from internal evidence, that the Maoris were telling truth.

"Mana," by the way, means influence, prestige, authority, good-luck—all these together. It may be possessed by inanimate things; a "mere" (greenstone axe) had mana, like Excalibur and other charmed swords. A chief's mana waxed or waned as his power grew more or less; and when it left him there would be some portent, like those which ushered in the death of Julius Cæsar or Brutus. Connected with the idea of mana was the reverence for rank. The chief was inferior to the head chief or king, who could trace his lineage to the chiefs of the little band which came across from the mythic Hawaiki, and peopled the islands. Chiefs worked at any task, not servile, as hard as their slaves. The slave (often a captive of noble birth) might by valour and conduct rise to high position. There was no remnant of a servile race, though ethnologists suspect admixture with some melanic people, especially among the few Maoris in Stewart's Land and Middle Island. A white man was valued according to his supposed position; if he was not supposed to be a rangatira (nobleman) he was of little account, unless, indeed, he had muskets, the ownership of which gave great mana. Mr. Delisle Hay, in his delightful *Brighter Britain*, gives an amusing instance of how a ball-room quarrel was prevented by playing on the Maori feelings about gentility. To a bush-ball came a number of Maori belles, and also "Miss City Swell," who had never before been out of Auckland. The latter, whose head was turned by flattery, roundly said that she was disgusted at the attention paid to "those brown wretches," and she would not dance with anyone who chose to dance with them. Here was a pretty business! Some kind friend, of course, repeated the injudicious remark to the native girls, and they went off in a body, followed by their brothers and cousins. "They were not going to stay where they were to be insulted in that manner." There they were down by the river, waiting for the turn

of the tide to go back to their kainga (village). Happily an old colonial came in time to hear their grievance, and to say: "Ah, poor creature, she's not rangatira. It's a pity she gives herself such airs when her parents are only kukis." "Oh, if that's it," replied a chorus of sweet voices, "we'll go back. We are ladies, and don't mind what common persons say or do," and so the ball went on.

All these gradations of rank, all this tapu and mana, were kept up by a strong belief in the supernatural. Perhaps the most remarkable instance is that dying through horror at having broken tapu, which reminds one of the voluntary dying so common among the Sandwich Islanders. A chief's slave, a fine brave fellow, honoured by being allowed to fight at his master's side, ate unwittingly after battle some of the chief's food, thus grievously breaking tapu. When told of his trespass he fell ill and was dead in a few hours. The tohunga (priest) might be of any rank, or of either sex; some unusual power, ventriloquism, or what among us makes a man able to work a "medium," or what the Scotch call second-sight, marked out the tohunga, and a few successful utterances sufficed to make him or her famous. Ambiguous he was, as a Greek oracle. "A desolate country! a desolate country!" was the reply to a consulting war-party. They went out in high hopes, and were slain to a man. It was their own country that the seer had meant. Judge Maning tells of a spiritualist meeting at which he was present, where a young chief, lately dead, was brought back with such thrilling effect, that his betrothed, in spite of the efforts of her brothers, killed herself that she might go away with him into the spirit world.

Such was the race to which, like a sea-mist taking solid shape, Cook's ships and crews appeared just one hundred and fourteen years ago. He was not the first; there were French and Spanish tales of a large South land, which may have been Madagascar, certainly was not New Zealand, for the inhabitants used bows and arrows; and then in 1642, Tasman sailed from the great island now known by his name, and anchored in Golden Bay, as it is now called. He never landed; the Maoris came alongside in canoes, and attacked a boat which was passing from one ship to the other. Three Dutchmen were killed, one of whom the natives carried away; Tasman gave them a broadside, shooting down a man who stood in the prow of the fore-

most canoe holding an ornamental spear, and then sailed away. Cook, the Whitby collier-lad with a craze for mathematics, who forced himself into notice by publishing while on survey off Quebec some observations on an eclipse, took with him his tame Tahitian, Tupia, and landed at Taranga, beginning by shooting a chief who was not to be daunted by several volleys fired over his head. This was on a Sunday; next day, seeing a gathering of chiefs, each with his green-stone mere, he and Sir J. Banks and Dr. Solander took Tupia with them and tried to get up a conference; but Tupia's harangue did not move them to friendship. "Go away," was their reply; "go; what have we to do with you?" Cook offered beads, and iron of the use of which they knew nothing; but what they wanted were a musket and a hanger, and when these were refused, they became so importunate that one had to be killed and the rest peppered with small shot. But Cook would not be baffled; he tried to seize a canoe's crew, and when they resisted four were killed, and the other three (one a boy of eleven) leapt into the water and were captured. "I am conscious," says Cook, "that the feeling of every reader of humanity will censure me for having fired on these unhappy people; and it is impossible that on a calm review I should approve it myself."

The three captives, after being consoled by Tupia, were dressed and put ashore, but soon came rushing down beseeching that they might be taken on board again; they had been landed in an enemy's country, and were in fear of being killed and eaten. Even when they were restored to their people it was found impossible to make peace. A chief whom one of the boys claimed as his uncle, took two green boughs, one of which he handed to Tupia, the other he laid on the body of the man who had been shot in the conference, showing plainly that what had begun with killing could not end peaceably. Cook, who sadly wanted provisions, was disappointed and named the place Poverty Bay. Nor had he much better success till he got to Tolago Bay. Here chiefs came on board, fearlessly staying all night; fish and sweet potatoes were readily provided; Sir J. Banks was allowed to botanise unchecked; a war dance was got up in the visitors' honour. "We have found the terra australis incognita," was the feeling of all on board, and what most astonished the scientific men was the exceeding neatness of the

Maori sanitary arrangements. "Their gardens," writes Banks, "are as well tilled as those of the most curious people among us. This place Cook called the Bay of Plenty; and thence he sailed about, surveying, ascertaining that Middle Island was cut off from its northern sister, peppering impudent chiefs with small shot, patting children on the head (this was remembered of him by a chief who was alive in 1850—Maoris are sometimes very long-lived), admiring the skill with which the paks were fortified, taking possession of the whole land in King George's name, leaving pigs and fowls (which multiplied), sheep and goats (these disappeared), and potatoes—far more innutritious fare (though of easier cultivation) than the fern root or the sweet potato. He thought them a fine race, not without chivalrous feeling. He was right; in bitterest war, if the men of a besieged pak had eaten up their food, their foes would give them some, while, as to drink, they were of the same mind as Duke Robert when Henry proposed to force William to surrender by cutting off his water-supply. I have often wondered, when going over a British pak, on the Wiltshire downs or the Cornish moors, and finding no trace of a well, whether the same courtesy went on here in old days; whether Icenian would allow Catyeuchlanian to come out and fill his water-vessels and go inside his defences unharmed. The gentlemanly bearing, too, of the Maoris impressed Cook as it must impress everybody, that is, until in manners and feeling they are degraded down to the level of the mean whites, who for more than a century were the chief pioneers of civilisation among them.

That such a race should be doomed seems very hard, and harder still that the doom should be wholly due to the white man. Evil diseases (brought in before Cook's day, by some unknown ship, probably lost on her way home), drink, and above all firearms, did the work.

The exterminating effect of the latter cannot be measured without knowing how Hongi, determining to make himself in Maori land what King George was in Britain, brought in firearms, and shot down his countrymen wholesale. With us gunpowder has, perhaps, made war less deadly; with the Maoris it is quite the reverse, for the killing did not cease when one tribe was beaten. It went on to the bitter end, the musket giving fearful power. But of this

and of the after fortunes of the island by-and-by. In these days of dear meat, one can scarcely know too much about a country where there are twenty-seven sheep per head to every inhabitant.

THE ICE HARVEST.

A COUPLE of centuries ago, or less, a ton of ice would have been readily bartered for a few lumps of sea-coal. The fuel had its market value, while the congealed water was a worthless encumbrance. Not merely our recent forefathers, but the ancients also, regarded ice either with indifference or with fear and dislike. It was an accessory of pinching, dreaded winter. It impeded navigation, made the streets dangerous, and was an affliction to the shivering housewife. As for deriving any benefit from so odious a phenomenon, no one dreamed of it. A few scholars were aware that the Greeks and Romans had cooled their Falernian or their Chian wine in summer with snow from the mountain-tops. A few travellers reported that Turks, Arabs, and other misbelieving and turbaned persons, in the Land of the Morning, refrigerated their sherbet, or, sometimes, the forbidden grape-juice so dear to Hafiz, by a similar process. But even the skilful surgeons who, when Charles the Second had his fatal fit of apoplexy, tortured the Merry Monarch, like a Red Indian at the stake, never thought of ice, which, from what we read of the symptoms, might have done the royal patient some good. And even if they had thought of it, there was no ice to be had for love or money in all England. The age of jocular tenures, when a fair estate was to be held by serjeanty of a snowball on Midsummer Day, and a red rose at Christmas, was over. Nobody thought of husbanding a substance so useless, so vexatious, and so ephemeral as that ice, the production, collection, transport, and distribution of which now afford bread to toiling thousands, and necessitate the employment of a flotilla of lighters and a fleet of screw-steamers, of caravans of waggons, and ponderous rolling-stock on many railway lines.

The first ice-houses date only from the eighteenth century. Very few of them existed before the reign of George the Third, and of such as there were, most had been built in great men's parks to provide the means of icing the new wine called Champagne, after the new-fangled method

of the French aristocracy in Paris. Presently, perhaps about the time when Corunna was fought, some shrewd London fish-mongers began to realise the fact that their perishable wares would be the better for ice. Next, there set in a rage for cream-ice, for water-ice, for icing everything, from bottles of hock to the heads of fevered patients; and winter ice was heedfully hoarded, and rough Norwegian ice brought over in the lobster smacks. Then the Wenham Lake Company reaped well-earned dividends by the first systematic effort, on a large scale, to produce what everyone wanted, and America for years ruled the market, even in India, where every regiment and every station had for a century depended on the shallow trenches and the bundles of wetted Sál twigs or thorn-boughs that are sure on clear dry nights to be thinly coated with the coveted commodity. Perhaps the finest ice now to be bought, and the most massive, comes from the artificial fiords in Norway, great glassy blocks of transparent crystal, huge and solid as the Herodian masonry of the Temple of Jerusalem.

But, needful as ice is, as a requirement of our modern civilisation, the first essential is that it should be cheap. The magnificent specimens produced by artificial culture, sawn into blocks, like Carrara marble, and sold by the cubic foot, are, compared with the commoner sorts, what high-priced Château Margaux and Château Lafitte are with reference to the humble clarets which make up the bulk of the exports from Bordeaux. In England the Norfolk Broads, carefully farmed for that purpose, yield a large supply. Belgium, that rich, populous, and busy little kingdom, not merely furnishes itself with ice, but supplies the north-western departments of France with vast quantities of ice, collected in a far more romantic fashion than is possible amongst flat plains and shallow meres. High above the corn-lands of the Low Countries on one side, and the Rhine valley on the other, rises the strong backbone of the Ardennes, with its miniature mountains, savage gorges, leaping cascades, and lofty moors, and there, at Spa, lies the depôt of the ice traffic for a considerable portion of Continental Europe.

The ice-winner, like most skilled workers, is, in his way, a specialist. Summer is his idle time, his period of enforced inactivity. He may, like his neighbours, bear a hand in the hayfield, or help to carry home the oats, but a long, sharp, and early winter is

the sort of season for which he prays. When it comes, in all its rigour, blocking the lanes, and putting a stop to agriculture, then is the chance for the husbandman whose crop is the harvest of ice. He is, himself, always a peasant, one of those petty freeholders who work harder, and fare worse, than the rustics of any other land in Europe. But his freehold is very small, bought, as it has been, by his father or grandfather, at about the price of a hundred pounds an acre, and it just keeps the two lean cows, and the few gaunt pigs, and the mare and the foal, and the pallid, hardy children above starvation pitch. But clothes and comfort, the doctor's drugs for the sick girl, the means to keep bright-eyed Eugène at the Liège University, the annual savings, depend on ice. And he who seeks to make or supplement a living by the sale of ice must not only be robust, bold, and tough of constitution, but needs to be a petty capitalist. There are hay-waggon and teams of horses to be hired from farmers whose nags and hinds are earning nothing while frost locks up the soil. There are men to hire, to teach, and to keep steady, helpful, and good-humoured in the most trying weather, and during the severest toil. The ice-winner—Gagneux is his name, in Walloon *patois*, though he is very frequently described as "Maitre Coupeur"—needs to possess a good many of the rough merits that went to the making of an old sea-captain of the Elizabethan era. The first and indispensable requisite is, that he should know the high moorland, as well as ever pilot or channel-proper knew the salt water between France and England, rock, shoal, and current. And it should be known that he knows it. Life is dear to us all, and labour, carried on among the wilds of the bleak Ardennes, fifteen or sixteen hundred feet above the sea-level, and exposed to every gale that blows, is certainly not lacking in the element of danger. Dwellers in the valleys shudder when they talk of the "fanges," of the desolate, wolf-haunted uplands, in mid-winter. There, the rural postman goes armed. There, around every lonely moorland farm, bark and snarl fierce dogs, with sharp spikes studding their collars, because of their cousins that lurk in the heathery ravines to snap up whatever prey is left unguarded. "Pig first, child next, then dog!" is the Walloon estimate of the predilections of a wolf. But snow is more to be feared, in the high Ardennes, than wolves are, terrible as it is to the lonely

wayfarer, at sunset in January, to see black specks rapidly advancing across the trackless waste of white, or to be dogged through the forest by a persistent something on four feet, that slinks, and lags, and crouches, waiting only for a stumble, or a sign of fear, to dash upon the victim it has marked. Wolves in Belgium, after all, do very little harm. Some five or six human lives in the year—those of broom-makers chiefly—compose a fair average. But cold and hunger slay their scores. Whole households have been known to perish, amid the far-off wastes, when deep drifts lay between their cottages and the nearest place where bread and brandy could be bought, while the rescuers, whom pity has tempted to explore the distant passes of the moorland have sometimes been surprised by a tourmente, as in the Jura, and paid the penalty of their rash chivalry. "They that go to the fanges in the snow, are not sure to come back," says a local proverb. Yet the ice-winner—the Gagneux—must go, and that in the most trying of temperatures.

To be weatherwise is almost as much a necessity of life to the man of ice as is local knowledge. Were he not reputed to know the causeways that lead to every morass, the hummocks of firm ground, and the springs which, in that region of mineral waters, are warmer or colder than others, the mothers would not trust him with their sons, nor the farmers with their horses. But he requires, also, to keep a keen eye on the signs of a possible snow-storm, and it suits him better in the long run to lose days and days, and to run the risk of thaw, than to get his horses and his men involved in the risk of a tourmente, locally known as a "trouble." What suits him best is the fine, clear cold that sometimes comes in winter, and sometimes in spring, when he can reap his harvest in the chilly sunshine. Then he is active indeed. Long before dawn, long after dark, the waggon rumble along the well-kept high-roads, or strike off into the stony lanes. The bells on horse-collars jingle merrily, as if the crop to be won were golden wheat or bearded barley. The men—three or four—who trudge sturdily beside the horses, wear fur caps with flaps and ear-pieces to enable them to bear the cutting blasts; always have a red handkerchief put on, turban fashion, under the fur cap, with vest and jerkins of knitted wool; and are shod with tremendous boots, well greased, that are to save their feet from frost-bite. They are all strong young

fellows, except the Gagneux, their captain, who, with grizzled hair and anxious eyes, heads the expedition. They have picks and shovels with them, and a hatchet, and iron grapnels and coils of rope, and a couple of light planks—life-buoys, these last, to be flung down in dangerous places among the fathomless quagmires, where a warm sulphurous spring makes the ground treacherous to the tread.

Whether the Gagneux's trade is easy, or the reverse, depends very much on the rainfall and the setting in of the frost. When there is sharp cold with a clear sky, and after months of rain, fifty or sixty waggon-loads of ice may be cut, loaded, and delivered at the railway-station of Spa by the different contractors in the course of a short winter's day, and without serious peril to life or limb. The ice then comes from pools nestling among the spurs of the hills, or from actual sheets that envelop the northern sides of the rolling, heathy uplands. But in years when the mercury runs, as so often happens, quickly up and down the tubes of barometer and thermometer, the ice-winner must go further afield. He gets a better price for his wares, but he earns it by risk, and pain, and cruel exposure to cold such as in England is all but unknown. And it makes the utmost difference to him whether his biting weather comes at Christmas or in Lent. Ice-merchants in the capital, like other traffickers, cannot afford to be sentimental. The commodity offered has to compete, as to cost, if not quality, with artificial ice like that of Wenham Lake, or that which is born of freezing mixtures, air pumps, and the evaporation of ether. What suits the Gagneux is what our American cousins call a "cold snap" towards an early Easter. For, as ice is roughly reckoned to lose forty per cent. in a dry climate, and sixty in a damp one, spring-won blocks rule higher in the market than those which have to drip and waste through possible months of fog and wet. The mid-winter work in snowy years is the wildest and the worst, for then the adventurers must wend their way to swamps abhorred of herdsmen, where in the early autumn many a rider following the hounds plunges suddenly to his saddle-girths in the black mud. There are quaking pits in such morasses, near which may be seen rude crosses in unhewn stone or tarred pinewood with "Priez pour lui" scrawled on a weather-beaten board, and wreathed around with garlands of heather

and faded wild-flowers, which mark the nameless grave of some wayfarer or shepherd.

Formidable as are the bogs of the high uplands towards the Prussian frontier, they are to the ice-winner what the Arctic Sea used to be to the Hull whalers—a source of profit. Knowing, as he does, the ground, as well as the tossing snow-waves and the fast-flying flakes permit him to recognise the landmarks, he tries to keep to the firm ridges and to shun the dreadful "fondrières," some of which are deep and tenacious enough to swallow down his whole company, team, cart, and all. When the pool is reached, he it is who ventures first along a narrow tongue of land, to step forth upon a jutting stone, crusted with snow and slippery with moss, and to begin the attack upon the thick marble-hard ice, as a leader should do. There is an art in ice-cutting, as in most occupations, and much tact is needed to get the maximum of weight chopped, split, hauled ashore, and swung into the waggon, with the minimum of pick and shovel work. A clever thrower of the grapnel, to bring in floating blocks from a distance, is as much prized as an adroit harpooner at sea. Often it is necessary to wade; and that in half-congealed water, and clinging mud, and mire of bird-lime tenacity. Sometimes a precious hour is lost in the process of extricating an unlucky comrade who has sunk to his armpits in the swamp, and now and then a novice can scarcely be kept from nodding drowsily off into the sleep for which exhausted Nature craves in the bitter cold, and from which there would be no awakening in this world.

Frost-bite is seldom severe, but blisters and temporary blindness from the glare of the white waste are not uncommon; while the sudden setting in of a snowstorm may in a moment spoil the day's harvesting, and task all the prudence and strength of the explorers to struggle back to the safe road. No Gagneux has ever yet carried on his business on teetotal principles. Bad brandy and worse gin are always heedfully stored in a basket, slung beneath the waggon, and frequent, if moderate, drams are doled out as the work goes on. But the great inducement to volunteers is the daily half-crown, for three francs in the Ardennes is a sum that represents princely pay.

There are two qualities of Ardennes ice. The Number One, the first-class ice, comes

from pools and lakelets which some steep ridge protects from driving snow. For the cutting of this hard transparent stuff, eight or ten inches thick, and almost equal, save in metric symmetry, to the best blocks from Norway, there is keen competition. The earliest in the field has, by tradition, a right beyond dispute. Hence every Gagneux tries to be more matutinal than his rivals. The early bird, in human shape, is he who is privileged to quarry the superfine sort of clear ice which may be fit for table use. But for every ton of this, twenty of the second quality find their way to market. The inferior ice is often in jagged masses of extraordinary solidity, sometimes sixteen, and even eighteen inches thick. But they are dull, opaque, and of a snowy colour, layer after layer of pure ice alternating with spangles and patches of drift, so that the whole has the aspect of a slab of white conglomerate. This ice, as containing more air, and as less compact in substance than the transparent, is said to lose considerably by storage; but that it is in great and constant demand is shown by the anxiety to get it safely off as fast as steam can urge the iron wheels along the iron road, to Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Lille.

The gleanings of the ice-harvest, when once the pools and lofty-lying tarns have been denuded of their thick crust, and a decided thaw has set in, are of a far humbler sort, and consist of dingy snow, beaten hard into compact blocks by the blows of shovel and mallet, packed into common carts, and stowed away in the ice-cellars of local restaurateurs and café-keepers to await the demand for sorbets and cream and water ices during the ensuing summer. But with this the Gagneux has nothing to do. Snow is to be had without peril and for scanty toil, and is paid for at a tariff correspondingly low, and is therefore beneath the attention of the bold adventurer, who has laboured, schemed, and faced danger for months in the interest of his family. Now he has given back horses and waggon to their owner, has disbanded his crew, and awaits, like a philosopher, by his chimney-corner, the chances and the changes of a new year.

TWIN SOULS.

SOME kindly look, some undefined expression
Lurks in the shadow of thine earnest eyes,
Some secret thing that claims my heart's possession
By sympathetic ties.

Some likeness of the mind, some fellow-feeling,
Blends our cleft lives to one harmonious whole;
Thy good unto my better self appealing
Haunts all my inmost soul.

Wordless, yet ever to my thoughts replying,
Giving me look for look, and breath for breath;
With thee the world is paradise undying,
Without thee—Life is Death!

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART V.

CONTANGO did his duty well that day. The milestones spun away behind him. To be sure, they only marked kilomètres, nine little ones in between to mark each hundred mètres, and the tenth on a larger scale, where the distances to different places had been carefully marked on, and as carefully knocked off by some travelling enthusiast, some Old Mortality whose ideas had become reversed, and who had devoted himself, with cold chisel and mallet, to the disfigurement of these local records. Disfigured they were, anyhow, with remarkable completeness, and the want of any authentic record of our progress caused a little discord among us. Originally we were the most charmingly united party you can imagine. The director's wife, the shock of separation from Alphonse once over, threw herself into the enjoyment of the hour like a school-girl just released from class. The day was fine, the road smooth and shaded with trees. We caught glimpses here and there of the blue sparkling sea—glimpses now through the branches of apple-trees studded with young fruit, or crowning the vista of some shady lane almost equal to a Devonshire lane in beauty; and every now and then, as a wider prospect opened out from the summit of some trifling eminence, we gained a view of the whole bay, dotted with white sails, and could make out the graceful Sea Mew steaming along in a leisurely fashion. Once or twice Stéphanie thought she could make out her director anxiously gazing landwards, and waved her handkerchief zealously, on the chance of his being on the look-out our way, at that particular moment, with binoculars of extraordinary power. Altogether, we were as happy and contented as people could well be, Contango slashing along at a pace that should have troubled the repose of people who intended to bet against him, Tom making all kinds of fun with Justine on the back seat, while the pair in front were more soberly employed in comparing impressions on what was passing. Now,

Tom had set out very carefully to time Contango's performance, and for the first two or three kilometres this went on with complete regularity. Then he missed a milestone—to call it by the familiar name—and to conceal his want of care he stuck in two which had really no existence, thus bringing up Contango's record to something astonishing. Now, if the distance on the milestones—still to use the familiar term—had been properly marked, we could have decided the real distance travelled without any discussion; but, thanks to Mortality Redivivus, we were in a complete fog about the matter. Presently, however, we arrived at a village—St. Marcouf—where we were able to correct our dead reckoning.

All along this district, the villages are nearly all either something-ville or Saint somebody; and, indeed, throughout Normandy the same rule holds good, the ville in most cases, no doubt, being an adaptation to French of sundry Saxon and old Norse terminals. Vic, wich, feld, bye, have apparently been all melted down into the French ville. So, at least, our director instructed us in a little disquisition upon the subject. But the weather was too hot for such considerations. The merits of the church, which is ancient and singular, were in our eyes chiefly the pleasant coolness and calm it afforded. The spire of St. Marcouf is, they say, a sea-mark for the fishermen and sailors in the bay, and a curious opening or oculus in the chancel over the high altar was said to have been contrived so that the altar-light burning always in presence of the Blessed Sacrament might throw a cheerful gleam out to sea, giving the sailor struggling with the waves a hopeful sense of the eye that is watching over his safety. We might also have drunk from the ancient fountain of St. Marcouf, but the spring was pronounced to be too near the village cemetery, and so we voted for the village cider, although, perhaps, in that we had still more concentrated essence of the forefathers of the hamlet. For do not apple-trees grow in the churchyard itself? and what is not apple-juice in the cider is made up from the holy well.

At St. Marcouf we were encouraged by finding ourselves hard upon the trail of Hilda and the count. They had passed through the village not an hour before—the tall mademoiselle, her father, and the young De St. Pol. Mademoiselle stopped to see the church. She was there half an hour at

least, and the count seemed very impatient at the delay. There was a long discussion among them, too, as to where they should go; the count urging them to cross the isthmus and visit Coutances and Granville, where he had his yacht; and promising to show them the coast of Brittany. But mademoiselle had decided at last—it was she who seemed to decide things, the old gentleman, her father, took no part in the discussion—mademoiselle had decided that she would go on instead to Bayeux. And then they had started, the count in a bad humour it seemed, and no doubt he should overtake the party before they reached Carentan. So we drove on, reassured by what we had heard, and not putting Contango to his tip-top speed, for Bayeux would be the general rendezvous; the Sea Mew was to put in at Port au Bessin, where there was a good harbour, which would take her in handsomely at full tide.

Thus we drove on towards Carentan, the country gradually becoming flatter and flatter, and finally resolving itself into rich low-lying pastures, protected from the network of streams that intersected them by high grassy banks, lined with willows, and elms, and tall poplars, with legions of cattle quietly grazing—a picture after Cuypp, of the Dutch rather than the French school. These wide-spreading pastures are the wealth of this rich district of the Cotentin, the country whose proud barons disdained to call themselves the men of the young bastard William; but who were speedily brought to submission by the embryo Conqueror. This and the subsidiary Avranchin, with its chief town of Avranches—the two districts together under the old régime forming the baillage of Coutances—these two districts have been the great nursery of the ancient English baronage. Just now we might call it a hot-bed rather than a nursery, the heat is so intense, with hardly a breath of air stirring over the plain, where the tangled rivers and streams are lying at rest, with scarcely a movement in their waters at the bottom of their deep muddy channels. A bountiful country too, with evidences of plenty and profusion on every side.

We find Carentan in the full fever of its weekly market—and such a market as you will rarely see in these degenerate days. The place—with some nice old houses on one side forming a covered piazza—is filled with blue blouses and white caps. Ducks, and turkeys, and chickens all quack, and gobble, and cluck unheard in

the great gabble that rises from so many strident human voices—all the world talking their loudest, and the bells clanging out from the tower of the fine old church: a bewildering maddening turmoil. The din is not to be escaped from either in the inns, which are crammed with market-people eating, drinking, and bargaining over their cups: stout men with mealy voices discussing fat heeves, and oily dames with funny, stunted-looking lace caps—degenerate successors these last of the ancient towering head-gear. Everywhere about are bundles of live poultry, carried unceremoniously by their legs, protesting loudly in their shrillest voices; but the people who carry them are as much unconcerned as though they were so many bunches of onions.

But already the crowd is ebbing away from the market-place; the market-women are counting up their stockings-full of five-franc pieces; and the buyers with their loads are scrambling into their carts, into the diligence, or filing away in long procession to the railway-station. In the midst of all this hubbub, in which we have been wandering a little dazed and bewildered, somebody touches Tom on the shoulder. This somebody wears a blue blouse, a rough three-sous straw-hat, bound with an end of scarlet braid; he is bronzed and burly, with something of the keen good-humoured air of the Norman horse-dealer.

"Well, Tom, old man!" he cries, "what are you doing along here?"

Tom stares at him for a moment in amazement.

"Why, it is Redmond," he cries at last; "Redmond disguised as a French peasant. Have you come to meet your father and Hilda?"

Redmond changed colour at this.

"No," he cried in an alarmed tone. "Are they here?"

"We are expecting to come across them any minute," replied Tom.

"Oh, I say, hide me up somewhere," cried Redmond; "I could not face the old governor just now on any account."

"Don't be frightened," said Tom dryly; "your old nurse wouldn't know you even."

Raymond, however, insisted that we should follow him to his own house-of-call, a little auvergne "Au Bouche d'Or," where, through a labyrinth of market-carts, he led us to a little café and salle-à-manger, redolent of rum, and cognac, and garlic.

We had left Madame la Directrice and Justine at the hotel to repose during the noontide heat, and Contango was discussing

his oats with great relish in the stables below them. We had determined that if we found that Hilda and her father had driven on to Bayeux, as there was now no pressing need to follow them, Contango should be spared any further work, and that Tom should remain at Carentan for the night, and drive quietly over to Bayeux next day, while the rest of us went on by train this same afternoon. We should be there as soon as the Chudleighs, no doubt, if they were going to drive the distance, and as the train did not leave for a couple of hours, we could spare an hour to Redmond with easy minds. As for Redmond, he was too full of his own affairs to take much interest in ours. It seems that he had been living at Caen, a second Beau Brummell, idle and out at elbows, pretty well supplied with money, however, by his sister, who must have devoted most of the income left her by the late Miss Chudleigh, of Weymouth, to his benefit. Of a more stirring nature than the unfortunate Brummell, however, he had struck out a line for himself. It was buying poultry, and pigs, and horses, anything he came across, and selling them again for a profit. That was his programme, at least; hitherto he had been rather unfortunate. He had begun with horses, and had lost money over them; had come down to pigs, and still lost money. Now he was reduced to poultry, but was always sanguine of eventual results. To-day, for instance, he had bought a hundred turkeys at five francs each; these he should take back to Caen, and sell for about double the money.

Tom took in all this with wonder and amazement. Was this the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the Adonis of the Guards' Club, the arbiter of Pall Mall? Had he come down to this? In the prime of his days, too, and of his manly beauty, for he was handsome—handsomer than ever, perhaps, in the easy unstudied garb of Gaul, in the blue tunic that Vercingetorix might have worn with just such an air. He was too proud, evidently, to build any expectations upon his sister's marriage. Tom gently touched upon this point, and to his surprise Redmond seemed quite in the dark as to the whole matter. Hilda had certainly written to him once or twice lately, but he had given over reading letters; he no longer took any interest in home matters. Hilda might marry whom she pleased. Tom suggested that this indifference was rather unkind, seeing that Hilda's marriage had been arranged partly for his benefit. Had

he heard nothing about Mr. Chancellor's handsome offer to give him, Redmond, a good appointment? Redmond opened his eyes at this, and taking a bundle of letters from the pocket of his blouse, picked out the most recent of them, from Hilda, and read it carefully over. Then he sat for a few moments in deep thought.

"Yes, that might do," he said at last, the expression of his face changing to a careless listlessness. "Perhaps it will suit me better than pig-dealing after all. Only I can't meet the governor and Hilda and her young man in this kind of costume," looking at his blue blouse. "Look here, Tom, lend me fifty pounds, and I'll run up to Paris and get rigged out, and then I'll meet the family council, say at Trouville."

Tom looked doubtfully into his purse, and said he did not know if he could manage it, but I gave him a nudge to intimate that I would take the responsibility, and then Tom counted out the notes, which Redmond thrust carelessly into his pocket.

"Thanks," he said calmly; "and now come along, Tom, we'll have a bit of fun with the turkeys."

Tom was always ripe for anything in the way of fun, and perhaps he felt that he was entitled to something in return for the money he had parted with so readily, and he followed Redmond to the courtyard of the inn, where the latter disentangled his cart from the tightly-packed mass of vehicles, and bringing out his pony from the stable, put it in and harnessed it with Tom's ready assistance. At the bottom of the cart were lying the turkeys, not, perhaps, a hundred—in that matter, probably, Redmond used a little customary exaggeration, but anyhow a goodly number tied together in pairs by the legs; and whatever their motives might have been, it was certainly a work of humanity when Tom and Redmond drew out their knives and cut the ligatures that bound them.

"Now we're off," said Redmond, jumping into the cart, Tom clambering up on the other side, and away they went at full speed.

For the first few moments not one of the turkeys stirred; they could not feel their legs, perhaps, just at first, or realise the unaccustomed liberty they enjoyed. But just as they cleared the porte cochère of the inn, the ostler running after them to claim the gratuity that Redmond had forgotten, the trap gave a lurch, and a fine old turkey-cock, thrown off his balance by the shock, spread out his wings, and

finding nothing to restrain him, flew out of the cart with a mighty whirr right in the face of the pursuing garçon, who clutched him wildly and then rolled over and over in the dust. And then bird after bird took to flight, their wings darkening the air, and bringing the whole town out in hot pursuit; dogs barked, women screamed, while the birds careered in all directions, settling on the roofs of houses, perching on the telegraph-wires, fluttering into shops, and even flying into the windows of the mairie and scattering the municipal records in wild confusion. Tom and Redmond meantime drove on callously regardless of the cries and shouts that followed them, and taking not the slightest notice of the train of flying birds they left behind. Strange to say, notwithstanding this wonderful windfall of turkeys, not a soul thought of looting, or of seizing the goods that fortune had so bounteously provided. Such is the respect that the French citizens bear for the law, that not a single turkey was, so to say, nobbled. Each man contented himself with defending his own possessions and calling loudly for the gendarmes.

Soon the alarm-bell was ringing at the gendarmerie, and the men turned out in a body. And it was pleasant to hear the sabres clanking and to see the cocked hats making head against the invaders. Under the protection of the law, everybody now joined in the capture; but it was melancholy to see that as each bird was caught its legs were firmly tied up again and it was carried off head downwards to the gendarmerie. Not all, indeed, were thus accounted for. A few had made their way over the tops of the houses, and were lost to sight. Meantime the chief of the gendarmes got out pen, ink, and paper, and began to "dress" a procès-verbal of the affair. It was a serious matter, he observed, to disturb the tranquility of a community in this unheard-of manner. Justice must inform itself.

Clearly it might be dangerous for Tom to show himself in Carentan after this madcap piece of business.

Anyhow, the pair had disappeared, and I made my way into the market-place, determined, now that the uproar had abated and the fierce noontide heat, that I would find out whether Hilda and her father were still in the town. The most likely place to find Hilda, I thought, would be the church. She had the usual fondness

of English girls for investigating churches and public monuments, and I should probably find her sketching some old portal, or perhaps in the cool interior, listening in a kind of day-dream to the subdued clamour of the Gregorian plain-song. The bell had just ceased ringing for vespers as I entered the church, and a small assemblage of worshippers was scattered about among the chairs: a few elaborately-dressed women, the wives, no doubt, of local magnates; some market-women in highly-coloured shawls and short petticoats; and one or two aged peasants in threadbare and carefully-patched blouses—these last the most fervent and devout of the whole assemblage, even including the officiating priest, who required an occasional pinch of snuff to help him on with his breviary. But more to my purpose, I espied, leaning against a column that cut off further view, the grey, time-worn head of the old squire. Hilda must be there too, beyond the pillar, but I could not get near enough to see without disturbing the whole congregation, and so I waited patiently till the service—a very short one—was finished.

Most of the people had left the church, but a few were still left, kneeling about here and there, and the squire still kept his seat. I edged round the church towards the pillar. The squire had surely fallen asleep, leaning his withered, tired-looking face against the cold stone-work. But he was alone, no Hilda was there, and the knowledge of this gave me a certain thrill of undefinable misgiving. I touched the squire on the arm. He roused himself and turned to me with an air of bland enquiry. No, he had not been asleep, but had closed his eyes for a few minutes in reflection. He walked with me towards the door, looking a little dazed and bewildered after his nap. His memory seemed to have failed him for the moment. He hardly knew where he was, or to whom he was speaking. "Hilda," he replied vaguely, in answer to my enquiry; "I don't quite know where she is—in the garden, or perhaps down in the village," just as if we had been at Combe Chudleigh. And then he seemed to gather his faculties together, sitting down in the porch and holding his forehead in his hands. "Yes, I think she's gone out," he repeated; "gone out with that young Frenchman to see some abbey, but I don't know where."

It was maddening to be thus thwarted by the old man's failing memory, for I was

now seriously alarmed about Hilda. Not that perhaps she could come to any actual harm, but that the count might lead her into some embarrassing or compromising position, the heroine of some story that would be told of her during all the rest of her life. Heaven only knew what trick he might play her; misinterpreting, perhaps, the free and independent bearing of an English girl, and taking advantage of the purity and unsuspecting nature of her nature.

By this time the old squire had come to a more lively sense of the situation; he began to grumble out that it was getting late, and that it was too bad of Hilda to keep him waiting so long. When we got back to the inn we found no tidings of Hilda. And now Madame la Directrice was becoming uneasy. When should we rejoin the yacht and her dear Alphonse? And that charming Monsieur Tom, where was he, and why was not everything ready for departure? But Justine drew me aside with a mysterious air. She had news of mademoiselle. She had driven off with M. de St. Pol; he had hired fresh horses, and had taken her away—away to the forest. Yes, she had found that out from the people of the inn. There was some old abbey to be visited. What could mademoiselle see in those old abbeys that were no longer fit for human habitation? But this was at Cérisy, in the very middle of the forest. Ah, why did mademoiselle leave her faithful servant behind, who would have protected her from all these dangers?

After all, Justine seemed to have hit upon the truth, for the squire, when again interrogated, seemed to recognise the name Cérisy as that which his daughter had told him. The place, too, might be called on the road to Bayeux, although it was a long way out of the direct line. Our trusty aide, Tom, having failed us at this pinch—not exactly from his own fault, for how could he have anticipated any unpleasant result from the pleasant adventure of the turkeys?—and I being left to my own resources, I persuaded Madame la Directrice to accept the escort of the old squire, and packed them off—Justine very unwillingly making one of the party—by the next train to Bayeux. And then I got Contango harnessed and put in the dog-cart, and started off at a slapping pace for Cérisy.

Through pleasant, English-looking country, flat and fertile, with many streams, bridges, and turnings, evening shadows coming on and the setting sun gleaming in

the waters, now bank-high from the rising tide—through all this I drove, not thinking much about the scenery or surroundings, but engrossed by the one thought, how to reach Hilda and take her away from that recreant count. Happily the trail was clear enough. At each stopping-place where I paused to give Contango a rest and wash out his mouth with cider-and-water, I heard of the phaeton with its pair of horses and the young man with the beard, and the tall young lady. But no one had seen them returning. The way seemed interminable, with cross-roads constantly baffling me, and more than once I missed the way and had to drive back. All the world seemed sunk into repose—the birds had retired to rest with immense twitterings, and were silent, but for a nightingale which now and then piped melodiously from a thicket. And then the little village came upon me almost by surprise, calm and tranquil as if life no longer moved there, in a green valley, while standing grey and clear in majestic solitude rose the old abbey church, solid and stern—of the true Norman build, the handiwork of the old Norman dukes—standing there like some veteran who has outlived his world, solitary and sad.

Something seemed to have kept the village awake, for several people were about. At the door of the little café stood a servant in a strange hat. That was enough. I knew that the count was not far off, although the man very respectfully but insincerely assured me that he did not know where his master had gone. The church, too, where I first went, was empty, a faint light glowing about its massive columns, and not a soul anywhere to be seen. The people, too, whom I asked seemed strangely constrained and silent.

It was possible that M. de St. Pol might have been there; he had property in the neighbourhood. Indeed, he had a house in the wood close by. And soon I was thundering at the door of this little house in the wood. But there was no one there but a deaf old woman, who to satisfy me showed me into every nook and corner. All was ready for the count, for nobody knew whether he might not come at any moment. But not as yet—no, he had not come as yet, croaked the old woman.

And then, at my wits' end, going back to the village I saw a little group gathered in the street about a couple of men in picturesque rags, two sheep with curling horns, and a little girl with a tambourine

slung behind her. The little performance was soon over—the countrywomen about here were not afraid of sheep, and handled and examined them quite familiarly. And when the performance was over the little brown girl crept quietly up to me and whispered: "You are looking for the tall mademoiselle; come after me and I will show you where she is gone." And so I followed the child, leading Contango by the bridle. "We must be quick, for she walks fast," cried the girl, and as soon as we passed out of the village I lifted the child into the cart, and drove on under her guidance. At the next turn of the road I saw a figure which brought my heart into my mouth. It was Hilda, rising tall against the evening sky, walking resolutely along, while a little behind her a masculine figure seemed to have difficulty in keeping up with her, while he addressed all kinds of remonstrances, tender and indignant, without eliciting a reply. At the sound of wheels behind her, Hilda turned and looked eagerly and intently towards me. Next moment I had reached her and leaped down to her side, throwing the reins to the gipsy girl. Hilda gave one long look.

"Oh, Frank," she cried, "you have come at last!" and she began to tremble violently while I supported her in my arms. "There, I am all right now," she said, releasing herself from my embrace. "And now, Frank, send that man away," with a look of scorn and aversion in the direction of M. de St. Pol.

A gesture was sufficient, the count turned to depart, when, overcome by anger, I slashed him across the shoulders with the whip. He turned upon us, white with suppressed passion.

"You will answer for that blow with your life, monsieur," he cried.

"Don't fear him," cried the little gipsy; "I will be your friend, monsieur," and she slipped down from the cart, and disappeared in the forest.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER V.

POOR Hetty felt as if she had been struck dumb. It was one of those crises in which the very injustice and absurdity of the situation seem to make speech or defence alike impracticable, at the very moment when both are most needed.

She wanted to answer this man, to silence him and put him down; and, instead, his flow of words and assurance together so took away her breath, that she seemed to have no words in which to reply to him. To listen to him, anyone would have thought that there was some private understanding between them, and that of such a nature as to justify Mrs. Pentreath's worst accusations.

Yet, on the other hand, though Captain Pentreath's words, looks, and manner were all those of a lover (and what can be easier than for a girl of spirit to dismiss an unwelcome lover?), this particular girl could not help feeling keenly that there was not one of them which might not be made to wear another interpretation, which might not, indeed, have quite another explanation if he chose to put it on them.

It was her old difficulty, and yet something must be done to put a stop to this sort of thing, and that at once. It still wanted nearly an hour to breakfast time, and he had said that Mrs. Pentreath would be late that morning. It was fine and bright, too, with a white frost glittering on the short thin grass of the Green, and on the dark shining leaves of the laurels and laurustinus bushes in the gardens of the old-fashioned red-brick houses skirting it. Low down in the east a big wintry sun was just struggling from above a network of clouds, grey and rose-colour, with crimson streaks between. The great iron gates of Kew Gardens were glittering in the sunbeams, and the tall trees beyond stood out like a spider's web, in the delicate tracery of their leafless boughs, against the blue sky. Hetty stopped short, looking her companion full in the face, and trying to keep down the colour in her own, as she said:

"I must ask you not to speak of Mr. Hamilton in that way, Captain Pentreath. You are quite wrong. He never made mischief between your mother and me. It is you, whether you mean it or not, who are doing so by following me about in this manner, and trying to speak to me in private, when I have shown you as plainly as I can that I do not like it; and when you know that your doing so causes me to say harsh and bitter things to

things to you! Hetty, I never annoy anyone—my mother speaking harshly to such a dear wish I had heard her, that's

all. She would never have done so a second time."

Hetty winced. Would nothing check him, or show him that it was herself as well as his mother that he was displeasing, and why, why had she not tried to do so from the beginning? She remembered distinctly now, a previous occasion when he had called her a fairy. He had done it in a playful good-natured way, as she sprang up to reach for a spray of light-coloured autumn leaves they were passing on their walk, and she had not even frowned, thinking nothing of it; but now—— She made a great effort, and said quietly:

"That is nonsense, Captain Pentreath, and I wish you would leave off talking it and go home. I would rather not walk with you."

Ernest laughed and said:

"That is rude, Miss Mayors—at least it would be if I believed you; but, fortunately, I don't, and therefore I like you a great deal too well to obey."

At that Hetty fairly lost her temper, and answered hotly that she did mean it; that if she had had the least idea he would have followed her, she would have stayed at home, and that, if he persisted in it, that was what she must do in future. She got up early to go to church and say her prayers, not for foolishness and—and flirting. Which last word she jerked out, remembering how good she had been in refusing to linger even with her betrothed, and then blushed up like a rose. Ernest took advantage of the blush, and said innocently:

"Flirting! Good Heavens, who is flirting? Not I, I assure you." And getting no answer, shrugged his shoulders with an injured air, and remarked in plaintive sotto voce: "And all this because I didn't keep tryst yesterday. I never thought Queen Esther had it in her to be so savage with her poor subjects."

"Captain Pentreath," said Hetty firmly, "if you had come yesterday you would have heard the same; and the only difference would have been that I should have stayed at home to-day. You are talking as if I had come out in obedience to some hint of yours; but I did no such thing; and instead of playing into your hands to deceive your mother, as you seem to think I am capable of doing, I was more deceived than she was; for I never suspected you of having made any plan, or thrown out any hint at all; and,

from what you say, 'she did. I do not want to be rude to you, but you force me to speak plainly, and I cannot avoid it."

"My dear Miss Hetty," said Ernest smoothly (but Heaven help the woman who could provoke the expression in his eyes which lighted them at that moment!), "you could not be rude if you tried, and your plain-speaking is adorable. Will you think me very rude, however, if I suggest that this virtuous reprobation of my society is rather a new phase in a young lady, who until the present time not only showed no aversion to it, but rather encouraged—I suppose I may not say suggested—my accompanying her to St. Gudule's and back of a morning?"

Poor Hetty blushed furiously, but said, though in a faltering voice, that that was a long time ago, before she knew Mrs. Pentreath disapproved of it.

"Then," said Ernest, more smoothly, still, "it is she who disapproves of my company for you—not you; and she who makes plans to deceive you—not I, who only try to protect you from them! But, indeed," with a subtle change of tone which somehow made Hetty shrink, "I fear both she and I are only being made the scapegoats for somebody else in this matter. You were wonderfully warm in defending my cousin George just now—and I see you can colour at his name. Is it at all possible that he is the cause of this change, and that in throwing me over you want to secure him?" And this he uttered with such a sudden blaze of anger and contempt, as seemed to imply that the mere idea that anyone who "having known him could decline" on such a "lower nature" as that of the vicar of St. Gudule's, was a possibility too derogatory to a woman to be even mentioned without disdain.

In truth, it was more than he himself could contemplate with anything like calmness. A moment back he had been really debating within himself whether the girl were only a timid goose, frightened out of her wits by his mother's severity, or a clever little coquette, making use of the latter to draw him on to a proposal; and on both these suppositions he had felt more than half inclined to let her alone and to trouble himself no more about her. The bare idea, however, that there might be a rival in the field, and that rival the cousin whom he less than liked already, was enough to rouse his vanity in an

instant, and determined him not to let her slip without a struggle.

True, for aught he knew, George Hamilton might mean to marry her, while he had not the smallest intention of doing anything of the sort; but that had nothing to do with the matter. He had condescended to patronise the girl and "bring her out," as he called it, and in return he looked on her as his exclusive property, and believed in all good faith that she cherished a warm and tender admiration for him, which all her shyness and sauciness could not wholly conceal.

Under these circumstances, to have her play him false, or stand by and see another man appropriate her without making it as disagreeable as possible for both of them, was out of the question.

For a moment, indeed, he waited, hoping and expecting that she would indignantly deny the insinuation he had so contemptuously thrown out; but anger and jealousy were mounting higher with each instant, and when he found that she made no answer save by the rich colour which mantled in her face, he could restrain himself no longer, and burst into a torrent of reproaches directed against her fickleness and falsehood, and bitter enough to drive the blood out of the girl's cheeks.

She faced round upon him at last in desperation, repeating the words after him:

"Fickle! False! How can you say such things? When was I either, or how could I be—to you? You have been kind to me and friendly, and I was grateful to you. I liked you; but you are destroying all that. I shall never like you any more. I could never even wish to see you if you speak to me in this way."

"You mean that you like Master George better, or rather that you think the well-to-do parson in possession is better than a poor soldier with expectations only. Hetty, I would not have believed it of you. I thought you were an innocent, loving girl—one who could care for me as much as I did for her."

"And that could be very little," cried Hetty. The girl's spirit was thoroughly roused, and she turned her lovely face on him, flashing with scorn and quite unsoftened by the would-be tenderness of his last appeal. "If you cared for me in the least, you would not insult me, a fatherless girl, as you are doing now. But it shall never happen again. I see to-day how

right your mother was in trying to keep us apart, and when I get back I will tell her so. She shall not think that I, at any rate, am deceiving her; and as for Mr. Hamilton—— But there! it does not matter what you say of him or of me either, and he would care for it as little as I do."

There are men, insignificant and unimportant looking in general, whom real honest anger so improves and dignifies that when under its influence they acquire a warmth and nobility of expression which in a way transfigures and elevates them even in the eyes of their enemies; and there are others, good-looking ones too, whom, on the other hand, anger deforms and defaces, bringing out all manner of mean and cruel lines which the smooth and handsome features usually obliterate, and making the whole man dwindle into something low and despicable.

It happened in this latter way with Ernest Pentreath. His face grew white and damp, a livid unwholesome white, beneath the lash of Hetty's scorn, and there was a dangerous glitter in his eyes as they met hers, a narrowed, darkling look before which the young girl shrank in involuntary terror.

"So—o—o!" he said slowly, the word coming like a harsh breath through his teeth. "That is the tune, is it? and Miss Mavors shows herself in her true colours! Ernest Pentreath was good enough to flirt with and use as a cavalier and attendant when there was no one else to the fore; or, better still, when some one else was wanted to be brought to the fore. After that, 'Le roi est mort; vive le roi!' He may go to the deuce, and someone else reign in his stead. Well, Miss Mavors, 'tis an old enough game, and young as you are, you seem to be an old player at it; for upon my soul I've rarely seen it carried out more coolly and skilfully. May I congratulate myself as well as your new lover on our joint share in the pretty play, and do you think he will be offended if I offer him the testimony of my small personal experience as to the warmth and liberality of your disposition? His own used to be of a slightly jealous, not to say churlish cast in these matters, if I remember rightly; but I suppose he has got over all that foolishness now."

Hetty looked up. The flush had quite died out of her face, and her great dark eyes looked dim and distended with a kind of horrified incredulity; the look of one

who in a dream sees looming on her some^d terrible and repulsive vision, from which she tries but cannot escape.

"Oh," she said with a sort of gasp between the words, "you do not mean that. It cannot be you who are speaking in that way. Yes, I know you are angry, and you have been saying wicked, false, unjust things to me—things you know to be unjust—and I cannot help it. I cannot silence you; but you would not say them to other people, to—to Mr. Hamilton! Even you could not be base enough for that."

Captain Pentreath smiled—not pleasantly.

"Even I!" he repeated. "You are polite, Miss Mavors, and yet I think it was you who first suggested talking to 'other people,' and making capital out of my mistaken endeavour to give you pleasure, by misrepresenting me to my mother! Don't you think, after that, the less we say about baseness the better?"

Hetty was silent. The bad dream seemed thickening around her, and making everything seem unreal and phantom-like to her. Was this—could this be the pleasant, playful, softly-speaking young officer whose grace and devotion had made a little queen of her for a few short weeks! Her hands grew cold, and her eyes misty with a sort of blank despair which might have touched even Ernest Pentreath, cruel as an angry man can be to a woman who has slighted him, had he been looking at her. As it was, his heart did give him an unpleasant twinge when she turned towards him, a sudden, pathetic courage shining out of the altered lines of her pale, innocent face.

"No," she said sadly, "you are right; it is no good saying anything to you; and to other people you must say what you like. You will not hurt me with those who know me; and with others it does not matter. Only let me tell you one thing. Mr. Hamilton has done nothing to injure you in any way. If he had thought that you or I cared for each other he would have kept away himself, and tried to help us, instead of helping to keep us apart; but it was not so. I was your friend when I did not know what a bad, cowardly man you were; but he was an older friend by far; and if I liked him better than you, as I did—and do—it was because I knew even then that he was a better man and more worth liking. Say what you please to him. You cannot have anything to say

that he does not know; and he will only despise you for saying that."

It was a brave speech. Indeed, the girl was strung up to that pitch where despair becomes recklessness; but it was an unfortunate bravery all the same, for it banished what little compunction the sight of her white face had awakened in Captain Pentreath's breast. No man, no soldier especially, likes to be told that he is a coward, even by so insignificant a being as a little girl whom he has thought to honour by his notice, and the fact that the same suggestion had been more than hinted to him by other parties, and in another land, rather added venom to the wound than helped to deaden it. The mocking pitiless sneer with which he turned on his young companion had something in it far worse than the curse which good-breeding stifled on his lips.

"Say—what?" he asked with an admirable affectation of surprise. "I really beg your pardon, my dear Miss Hetty, but I'm afraid I don't understand you, or what you are referring to by this very heroic speech of yours! So far from quarrelling with my worthy cousin, or injuring you in any way, I had no thought in my mind, I assure you, but of congratulating him on having won the affections of a very clever and charming young lady, and one who, I have found, can be as tender and seductive as the most exacting of swains could desire. Surely there is nothing to offend you in that; and as far as quarrelling with George, why should I when he has not injured me? Of course I admire you intensely. You don't need me to keep on telling you that, I hope; but I'm not a marrying man. To be so implies a large income nowadays, and I am too poor to afford anything but the lesser bliss of an innocent little flirtation; so if George doesn't grudge me the skimmed cream of that, I won't grudge him the wholesome milk of matrimony beneath. Nay, I'll be more generous than you think, and will even if entreated make over to him such relics of my 'good times' as other men might be tempted to keep—photographs, I mean, and such like."

Hetty had been hurrying onward, her steps quickening with every word, and her head turned resolutely away in the effort not to hear them. On one thing she was determined—not to answer him. Let him say what he liked, George would believe her, not him, she kept repeating to herself; and that being so, what did such a man's

insults, however stinging in their bitter irony, signify? But the last part of his sentence so startled her that she forgot her determination of silence, and flashed suddenly round on him a pair of lovely scornful eyes as she said:

"You must possess such relics before you can be generous with them, Captain Pentreath; and you have none in this case—neither photographs nor anything else."

"No!" he said, his pale angry face breaking into a smile of triumph at having forced her to speak. "Yet I think this is rather like you. I understood it was a portrait of you at any rate," and he took from an inside pocket of his coat a photograph folded up in tissue-paper, which he unwrapped and held up to her. The effect was not what he expected.

"That!" she said with a little relieved laugh. "Yes, that is me, certainly; but I never gave it you, as you know. It was in my album a week ago, and you must have stolen it. I dare say Mr. Hamilton has heard of men doing that sort of thing before."

"And of writing—let me see, what is it? 'With best love, from E. M.' on the back of their trophies?" said Ernest as he slowly turned it round, and read the inscription on the back. "My dear Miss Hetty, no man could be rude enough to refuse to stand you out in anything you say, even though he—had stood by, as I am afraid you must remember I did, and saw you write the words you now deny; but is it safe to do so? Your handwriting is rather uncommon. Are you sure Hamilton is not acquainted with it?"

For a moment Hetty stood still, gazing at the written words, while the colour slowly died out of her face, and a hunted look came into it like that of some tortured animal.

"Of course he is, and I did write that," she said hoarsely; "but I never thought or dreamt it was on my photograph. You came across the room with one, and asked me to scribble those words on it. You said it was one of yours which you wanted to send to a friend by that post, but that you had sprained your finger. I knew you were called Ernest Meredith Pentreath, and I thought the 'E. M.' stood for the two first names. You meant me to think so, and you laid the card on the table face downwards. I never even saw the other side."

"Of course not! I see! That is how

it is to run. Surely it sounds a little too innocent though. I'm afraid Hamilton might be sceptical. He's not a man of much faith. Shall we try him, however?"

Hetty made no answer, but she looked at him, and perhaps that look, not so much of indignation as of silent, shuddering pity, smote nearer to Captain Pentreath's conscience than any speech could have done. To do him such small justice as he deserved, he had no thought in reality of carrying out his unmanly threats, or of showing George Hamilton the photograph he had so unfairly obtained. He was simply mad for the moment with temper and wounded vanity. Hetty had offended him, "thrown him over," and in the desire to punish her he went farther than he had intended. Even now, if she had humbled herself to plead with him, he would have relented and given her back the photograph; but it was too late. They were almost at the gates of Guelder Lodge, and springing from his side, Hetty hurried on so quickly that he had no chance even to overtake her till they reached the front door, where the butler was standing looking anxiously up and down the drive with a telegram in his hand. He came to meet them at once.

"Please, sir," he said "this has just come for you. I didn't know you were out, and was knocking at your door for some time before I thought of opening it. The boy's waiting for an answer."

Captain Pentreath tore it open impatiently. Telegrams were common things with him; but the next moment an exclamation of such fury and concern broke from his lips as even checked Hetty in her onward course.

"Tell the boy there's no answer. I'm going to town myself," she heard him say, as, still standing in the hall, he tore the paper in pieces. "And here, Hickson, bring me my frock-coat, and take this. Where is my ulster? Make haste, deuce take you! What is it? Back to breakfast! Certainly not. Didn't I say I was going to town? Tell your mistress so; and that I shall sleep there to-night."

He was gone with the last words, and Hetty saw his departure with a grateful heart; but how she got through the day that followed she hardly knew. She had meant to carry out her intention of speaking to Mrs. Pentreath before breakfast, but that lady had taken it into her head to breakfast in bed, and sent down word that she was very sleepy, and did not want to see Miss Mavors till she rang for her. Long

before that happened, however, poor Hetty was incapacitated from attending to anything. A maddening, terrible headache, the result of the overstrain on her nerves, had come on, and so held her in its merciless grasp that for the rest of the day she was fit for nothing but to lie motionless, and with face pressed down upon a sofa-pillow in a darkened room.

If George Hamilton had been there, he might have rested the throbbing temples on his breast, and soothed the pain with love's own healing of tender words and touches; but though he had promised to call during the day, he never came. By the rest of the household she was left in peace at any rate; Mrs. Pentreath contenting herself with sending up her maid now and then to see how the girl was, and make proffers of strong tea and the advice to go to bed as soon as she was able to move.

Hetty took both gratefully. She had been going to a party with her guardian that evening; but this headache put it out of the question, and Mrs. Pentreath departed alone, having first looked in on her protégée, and seen her tucked up in bed and apparently asleep.

Indeed, the girl was so in reality. Sleep had come on from utter exhaustion, and when she woke it was between ten and eleven o'clock, the pain was gone, and the house perfectly quiet. Hetty threw on her dressing-gown, and looked out of the window. Mrs. Pentreath had not returned, for she could see the great iron gates standing open in readiness for the carriage. The shadows of the cedar-branches swept softly to and fro upon the frost-white lawn, and from the housekeeper's room over the porch came a faint red glow, giving suggestion that the lady's-maid had fallen asleep over the fire whilst waiting for her mistress.

Hetty sat down and began to think. One thing was clear to her already—that she and Captain Pentreath could not live in the same house any longer. She would not make mischief between him and his mother. On reflection, she thought that would be hardly right, when it might be that her own thoughtlessness and imprudence had brought this trouble on her; but she would ask leave to go away for a little while to visit her mother's relatives, and—she would tell George Hamilton everything. Loving him as she did, she felt sure he would believe her if she could only be beforehand with Captain Pentreath, and

prevent her story being forestalled; and at that thought a bright idea seized her—an idea which made her first start, and then flush and tremble all over.

Her photograph! Without that basis to go on, George would hardly be likely even to listen to his cousin's boasts, and would it not be possible for her to get it even now?

While taunting her with it, he had replaced it in his coat-pocket—the rough shooting-coat which he had changed so hurriedly before starting for town after the receipt of the telegram. Might it not be there still? She felt almost sure that, in his haste and agitation, he had had neither time nor thought for shifting the contents of the pockets; and, if not, what was there to prevent her slipping into his room and securing her property at once? He was far away in London; Mrs. Pentreath was at her party, with Hickson in attendance on her; and the rest of the servants, with the exception of the lady's-maid, were in bed. Besides, her chamber was at some distance from the other sleeping-apartments. It was over the kitchen, and at the end of a long corridor, separated by a short flight of stairs and a baize door from the hall. On the opposite side of the latter, and facing the baize door, was what used to be called the garden-room, which Ernest had appropriated to himself. She had only to cross the hall, secure the photograph, and be back behind the shelter of that friendly portal in three minutes. Never could an idea seem happier or easier to carry out, and before another second she had proceeded to put it in execution, and was soon hunting about in the moonlight which flooded Captain Pentreath's room (blessed moon! how she thanked it, for she dared not light the gas) for the object of her search.

Fortune favoured her. She had neither made or heard a sound as she glided softly through the sleeping house; and now, almost the first thing she saw was the coat for which she was seeking. It was hanging over the back of a chair, where Hickson had left it; and as the girl plunged her cold, trembling fingers into the pockets, she well-nigh uttered a cry of delight. At only the second dive they closed over something with a smooth, flat surface which instinct told her was the object of her quest; and she was just drawing it to the surface, her heart beating joyfully, and her

mouth rippling with a little mischievous laugh, when she stopped short, the mirth frozen suddenly upon her lips, and her distended eyes fixed in a glassy horrible stare as she became aware of a certain low sound at once startling and familiar to her—the faint, grating noise of a latch-key in the front door.

And there was no one in that house who had a latch-key except Captain Pentreath!

For a second—less, perhaps, but it seemed an eternity to her—the girl stood still, struck numb and motionless with the very horror of her position. She had thought him miles away, that there was no chance even of his returning till next day, and now—what should she—what could she do? To escape was impossible. Before she could cross the hall he would be in it. To be found there, in his room, at night, would be worse than death. The mere thought made the girl's senses reel and sicken. She felt as if she were going to faint. Her breath came short and suffocatingly. Her eyes swam and darkened. Already the front door was opened, letting in a current of frosty air, which even penetrated to where she stood, when, before it closed, a Heaven-sent idea occurred to her. There were two cupboards in the room—a hanging one, and a dark, roomy place, with a sloping roof, and half filled with boxes. It was not likely Captain Pentreath would want to go to it. She doubted if he had ever done so; and while he was still wiping his boots on the doormat, and lighting a candle at the hall gas, Hetty had crossed the room with one swift, silent spring, had glided into the refuge aforementioned, and was crouching inside it, her body crushed against the door which opened inwardly; and her two hands pressed above her heart, as if to still the frantic beating which seemed as if it must be audible throughout the house.

He was in the room now, but she was safe—safe, thank Heaven! and the thought had not yet come to her how she was to get free again.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDEK-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XIII. "WASN'T IT HORRID?"

FROM the moment that young Mrs. Ray had made up her mind to break up the establishment at Moor Royal, preparations for a speedy exodus went on apace.

Effie was not one to suffer the grass to grow under her feet when she had a goal to gain, an object to carry out.

Her object now was to divest herself of all responsibility concerning her husband's mother and sister, and she knew she could not do this while they were under her roof-tree. The easiest and most courteous way of getting rid of them, was to get rid of the home in which they were all dwelling together. By making herself a "wanderer, a waif and stray," as she pathetically termed herself, she did away with there being anything invidious in leaving them to become the same.

Accordingly, servants were dismissed, horses were sold, the furniture was covered, and a general air of going away diffused over the whole place, before old Mrs. Ray understood what it was all about. Then, when she questioned about it, and listened comprehendingly, Jenifer told her plainly what she had often sought to suggest before.

"It means that you and I must make a new home for ourselves, where we must try and be happy," the girl said hopefully; and then she went on to tell her mother what she proposed doing in order that she might help to support the new home.

"I shall never consent to it, Jenny. You, Miss Ray, of Moor Royal, to think of becoming a concert-singer—a public singer! I shall never consent to it," old Mrs. Ray kept on repeating for at least five minutes after Jenifer had mooted the plan to her.

Then she changed her ground a little on finding that Jenifer would not argue with her on the propriety of becoming a public singer, but was steadily resolved to be one if she could.

"And if you are obstinately set on having your own wilful way, my child," the poor widow-lady went on with overdone resignation, "why go to the needless expense of having more lessons? I'm sure you sing beautifully, Jenny. Your poor father always used to say that you strongly reminded him of Louisa Pyne in her best days. Further lessons for you in singing I shall regard as quite superfluous."

Jenifer knew that it would be mere waste of time to try and make her mother understand that she still had everything connected with her art to learn; so she speciously put the necessity for going to Madame Voglio on other grounds.

"You see, I shall want introductions, and I can only get them through professional mediums. Mother dear, you must let me have my own way in this."

"I shall speak to Mr. Boldero about it. Badly as I feel he has behaved, I shall certainly speak to Mr. Boldero about it. Your brothers I can no longer rely upon nor consult."

"I have told Mr. Boldero what I'm going to do."

"And he is allowing your father's daughter to do it!" old Mrs. Ray said with bitter sarcasm. "Ah well, I may as well include him with your brothers in the class upon whom I can no longer rely."

"Everything is so changed for us at Moor Royal that the complete change to a London life will be a happy one, I'm sure, for us," Jenifer said bravely. "Let us try and picture the little home we'll have by-and-by, when I am making money, and we can afford to live where we like."

"That we shall never be able to do, my child; but," with a sudden recollection of all she owed to this daughter's high-hearted endeavours to make the best of things, "but we will try and be happy wherever we are, Jenny. I shall have you, and, having you, I am rich and blest."

"We must go into lodgings while I'm on probation. I think I shall rather like going about and looking for them. Effie knows more about London than we do; she may be able to suggest some place that would be near Madame Voglio, respectable, and cheap at the same time."

Accordingly Effie was consulted, but though she was put into a thoroughly amiable mood by the announcement of Jenifer's intention of taking her mother and herself away from Moor Royal with as little delay as possible, she could not give any very sound advice on the subject of lodgings in the vicinity of St. John's Wood.

"There must be thousands of apartments to let about there, but you see I don't know that side of the park at all, with the exception of Westbourne Grove; but my idea is that all the people about there either let lodgings or live in them. You'll have no difficulty in getting them, I'm sure. When do you go up, Jenny? Hugh and I think of going up this day week."

"Perhaps we had all better travel up together," old Mrs. Ray said, before her daughter could interpose.

"Hugh and I go straight to the Jervises, and the next day Flora and I go down to Brighton to take a suite of rooms in an hotel. The doctors have ordered Mr. Jervoise to Brighton, and Flora wants me to be with her. So you see we should only just travel up together, and part at the station," Effie said carelessly; and then she added: "Flora has been taking no end of trouble with Madame Voglio about you, Jenifer; she went and nearly made herself ill by lunching with her; but Flora never minds what she does when she wants to have anything done. She has made Madame Voglio promise to get you engagements, and Madame Voglio will keep her promise to Flora, because Flora always takes ten guineas' worth of tickets for any concert Voglio is interested in."

"It all seems horribly low and sordid," Jenifer could not refrain from saying.

"Oh, I don't know; society in every grade is carried on by a system of give and take. We can't help it, and we can't

mend it; the only thing is to get all the benefit from it we can. I do, and so does Flora. We must all pay our way in some form or other; we must all contribute to the amusement of society if we want society to have anything to do with us—in fact, to amuse us in return."

Effie was standing before her dressing-table glass decorating herself prettily with lace and sparkling bracelets and rings as she spoke. She was putting on her war-paint for a ball that was to come off this night at one of the big adjacent "places," and as she wanted to go out of the neighbourhood with good effect, she was expending a good deal of care and thought on the arrangement of her decorations.

Jenifer was not going to this ball, which was given by people who were really old and loyal friends of the Rays. Jenifer's crape and grief were both too fresh for anyone to think of proposing any form of festivity to her. But it was clearly understood that young Mrs. Ray had discarded crape altogether, and, as a bride, wished to have nothing further to do with family grief for the present.

"I only trust society expects as little from me as I do from it," Jenifer said with unruffled good temper. "After all, the good things are more equally distributed than people think sometimes in temporary fits of dissatisfaction; for instance, you get all you want from society by paying your way, and I am quite content to get nothing, as I give nothing."

"You do think I make a fair return then, Jenifer?" Effie asked joyously, basking as it were in the refulgent rays of her own brilliant self-appreciation.

"Yes, I do," Jenifer said, regarding her sister-in-law critically; "it can give you no such graceful pleasure in return as you give it. Effie, be equally gracious at home to us; get Hubert to say a word or two of brotherly kindness to Jack before we all leave him to his isolation."

Jenifer's voice broke as she said it. It was very much to her now that the hour had nearly come when almost all the old ties were to be severed, that there should be brotherly love between Hubert and Jack.

"Hugh may say as many kind words to Jack as he has the eloquence to utter," Effie laughed, as she twisted a flashing bracelet higher up on her slender arm. "I saw that horrid woman—by the way, I forgot to tell you—this morning, as I was riding home by the back lane; she was

just opening the wicket to go into the fruit-gardens, and I called out to her that neither Mr. Ray nor I allowed trespassing. I rode straight up to her as I said it, and she had to let go the gate and stand back, or the horse would have been over her. Wasn't it horrid?"

"Of you!—yes."

"Now, Jenifer, don't pretend to think that I ought to treat her as I treat you, for instance. Will you get my cloak—the ruby-plush one, to-night, please! Funny, it seems, that we are all going away from Moor Royal, doesn't it? Thanks. I wonder if Hugh is ready; he has not learnt yet that he's never to keep me waiting. Good-night, dear. I wish you were coming; I hope you won't be dull."

So young Mrs. Ray pursued her path to the ball, and Jenifer went back to her packing, and to the perfecting of her plans for the future.

"From the very first I must let Effie see that I can do without her," Miss Ray said to herself, as she finished writing a letter to a lady who still kept the establishment for young ladies in Kensington, at which Jenifer had sojourned for two years of her life. Miss Ray had not learnt anything particularly good, useful, or ornamental there, but she knew the lady-superintendent, Miss Barton, to be a good, clear, London-minded woman. Therefore, to Miss Barton Jenifer appealed for advice as to the locality in which she ought to seek for lodgings.

"They must be cheap, respectable, and not out of walking distance of Godolphin Place, St. John's Wood," she wrote, and hopeful fancy told her that some such might perhaps, be found in one of the terraces in Regent's Park.

"Shall we take any of the furniture away with us, Jenny?" her mother asked, when an encouraging letter from Miss Barton opened the prospect before them of getting lodgings that would be all their hearts desired in Delamere Crescent, Paddington.

"I cannot conscientiously say that Delamere Crescent is even on the borders of a fashionable precinct," Miss Barton wrote, "but it is a quiet, respectable, convenient, and cheap locality, and by walking over a little bridge which crosses the canal, you may reach St. John's Wood comfortably in half an hour. I am sorry to hear of the reverses which have made the step you have taken necessary. Still, my sympathies are so entirely with the women who strive

to make an honourable independence for themselves, that I cannot pity you for having been compelled to take it. Mine is such a peculiar connection that I scarcely dare to hold out any prospect of being able to get you any pupils. The parents will have masters and mistresses with established names and fames. Doubtless you will soon make a name and fame for yourself, and then, dearest child, as you were ever a favourite pupil of mine, I shall be delighted to help you to the full extent of my poor power."

"How kind!" old Mrs. Ray said gratefully, when Jenifer read this passage. And, as Jenifer wished her mother to take a genial view of the world and worldlings at the time, she refrained from offering her own opinion as to the value of Miss Barton's proffered aid in the future.

"Yes, very kind to be definite and tell us of this Delamere Crescent," Jenifer said briskly; and then old Mrs. Ray asked her daughter again if the latter "thought it would be well to take away any of the furniture."

"I wouldn't take a chair," Jenifer said firmly. "Effie won't like it if you do, and already there is so much disunion in the family that it seems a pity for us to do the least thing that may annoy."

"Perhaps you are right about taking things away from Moor Royal, Jenny; but, before I go, I'll have it distinctly understood by Hubert that I can take what I please, when I please."

To this Jenifer had no answer to make. She could only hope that the day would never come, when an undignified struggle for a few goods and chattels should take place between the mother and her son.

The hour for them all to leave Moor Royal was very near at hand now. And still old Mrs. Ray had held out, and refused to see Jack, her youngest born. It was not to be endured any longer by Jenifer at least.

The night before the dawn which was to witness their departure, had arrived. Effie had stood her ground stoutly against her own inclination, which would have taken her to London several days before. But so resolved was she to see her mother-in-law off the premises before she herself left, that she stayed on in discomfort, and made her husband feel that she was something very like a martyr.

This last night seemed a very long and dreary one. Nearly all the servants were gone; nearly all the rooms were dismantled

and locked up. All the domestic arrangements were a little out of order, and Effie was cross.

After all, this having to shut up her own house, and go back as a visitor to her sister, was rather humiliating, now that it had come to the point. When she had proposed doing so first she viewed the change from the height of her own wilful independence. Rather than put up with a wearisome mother-in-law and an obnoxious young brother-in-law and his wife, she "would go back to Flora," she had said threateningly. And her husband had taken her at her word.

"Jenifer," she said reluctantly as they went back to a disarranged drawing-room, after having partaken of an ill-ordered dinner, "I forgot to tell you that Captain Edgcomb worried me nearly to distraction the other night at the Pembertons' ball with questions about you, and your intentions, and plans, and prospects. I told him all I could remember, and said if he wanted to know more he could find out from you yourself, as he happens to be going up to town with us to-morrow. If you play your cards well, Jenifer, you may bring him to the point before we reach Paddington. I'm sure of it, and I know him well."

"You've just said the very thing to make me cool to him," Jenifer cried; "he would have been like any other fellow-traveller to me if you hadn't said that; as it is I shall feel that you look on him as a mouse, and on me as a cat."

"To be honest, I don't care a bit about whether you catch him or not now," Effie said indifferently. "When I thought that Mr. Boldero and you were going to unite your forces, I did try to put Edgcomb forward as a rival to the family lawyer. But now the Boldero danger's overpast; so, believe me, I was quite disinterested in telling you of the flattering interest Captain Edgcomb manifested in you the other night."

Young Mrs. Ray said this in her most supercilious tones, and her tones could be most offensively supercilious when she pleased.

"May Heaven save me from the necessity of ever living under the same roof with Effie again," Jenifer prayed silently but fervently. Then she got herself out of the room, and made her way rapidly to the home-farmhouse to say good-bye to Jack.

She had seen her brother several times since his marriage, but she had not been

able to overcome her repugnance to his wife sufficiently to induce her to go to his house. But now the break-up had come. The parting between them might be final, for Jenifer felt that it was more than improbable that she would ever come to the old home again. She forgot his wife, and only remembered that he was her brother.

Her knock at the door was answered by Elsie, who, anxious as she was to play a paying part on either side, was a little awkward and "'mazed," as she herself expressed it.

"Miss Jenifer! Lor! now, won't the missus be glad to see 'e; not that she could look—— But then, 'lus best between brothers and sisters to be friendly like, I say. Come in, do 'ee."

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART VI.

"Of course I knew you, Frank," said Hilda, as we travelled swiftly along the road towards Bayeux, having left C risy and the vengeful Count de St. Pol far behind. "I knew you at once," she continued; "but, as you thought proper to hide yourself behind an alias, it was not for me to break down the barrier you had raised between us."

That was all very well, I urged, but who had raised the barrier in the first instance—the most formidable barrier possible—in the person of Mr. Chancellor, the accepted suitor? Not that I blamed her indeed. I knew the pressure under which she had acted. But now, surely, all barriers could be removed, there were no difficulties in the way that could not be overcome. But Hilda looked grave. How could she break her faith with a man who was both honourable and generous, who had saved her father from ruin, and her brother, perhaps, even from disgrace. No, she had been betrayed into the expression of her long suppressed feelings at the sight of me just now. But still, emotion must give way to stern realities. She must leave Mr. Chancellor to thank me fully for rescuing her from a situation of some embarrassment. And then she went on to explain how the situation came about.

Hilda had been anxious to see this old abbey church of C risy; and then there had been a misconception as to the distance. Some country people who had been asked had given the distance as six kilom tres, she understood, or not quite four miles,

while in reality six leagues were intended, or at least fifteen miles. The country people cling to their leagues as measures of distance, as they do to their sows in monetary matters, just as if the Revolution had never happened. But the count must have known that Hilda was under a delusion when she informed her father that she would be back in an hour or two. And then there had been delay after delay, wilfully contrived, Hilda believed, by the count, who seemed to enjoy her perplexity and discomfort. In the end, Hilda had declared her intention of making her way on foot to Bayeux, and had started with that intention, the count urging her with unpleasant persistence to remain, when I appeared upon the scene.

All's well that ends well, and the incident might have been soon forgotten, but for the unfortunate blow which I had given the count, and which, if he deserved it ever so much, he could hardly be expected to forgive. He would hardly remain beaten and content; but anyhow, it rested with him to take the next step; and why should we mar the sweetness of the hour by any thought of him? Contango seemed to feel that no great speed was required of him for the moment; he fell into a walk which became more and more leisurely as he looked about for something to startle him—a cow cropping the hedge, or the distant whinny of some brother or sister quadruped.

We had a hundred things to talk about, Hilda and I—all the past times that we had spent together, culminating in that sorrowful parting before Miss Chudleigh's house at Weymouth. Was it possible, Hilda asked, to have your heart broken more than once?

But it was useless, she said, to dwell any more on what had passed away. Mr. Chancellor had behaved splendidly. He was a man of action, full of energy and resource, and he had taken up the Chudleigh family, and brought them out of the pit into which they were falling. He too was an old friend; his father had been a poor curate in a parish near Combe Chudleigh. But John Chancellor had left home when a boy, to seek his fortune among the manufacturing people of Lancashire, and had found it. He had fought his own way to the front, and might be trusted to maintain himself there; but he had remembered the Chudleighs, who had been kind to his father; and he had sought out Hilda, although he might well have looked for a more brilliant match.

"Can I desert such a man?" asked Hilda.

For some distance we had travelled along a narrow country road bordering the forest, very quiet and almost gloomy in its shaded stillness; and then we struck into a broad well-frequented highway, which turned out to be the high road between Bayeux and St. Lô. This road followed pretty closely the course of the little river Drôme through a fertile pleasant valley in the midst of a gently-undulating country, and before long the spires of Bayeux appeared in the distance outlined against the evening sky. There is a strange, yet home-like appearance about these spires of Bayeux, home-like in the twin spires that might belong to some English minster, and strange in the curious dome that crowns the whole—if dome it can be called, which is neither tower, nor spire, nor dome, but a curious mixture of all three; as if some old Crusader had brought home a cupola from an Eastern mosque and stuck it on the top of the grim solid old cathedral.

Presently we pass the little octroi hut, where a sleepy old fellow looks out, but does not take the trouble to ask if we have anything to declare, and so into the precincts of quiet old Bayeux, passing the railway-station, where a little knot of omnibuses are waiting for the train from Paris, and then across a rich lush valley, where the quiet river Aure winds among willows and elms, and is almost lost in the thick grass and luxuriant foliage. And here on the broad highway the young people of the town are at drill—boys and young men who have not yet reached the age for candidates for the conscription. The boys are restless and fidgety, and inclined to level their chassepots at every passing object; but the youths march smartly enough and look thoroughly in earnest. A new departure this for France, and likely to develop the love of soldiering, which in most parts of the country had for long almost ceased to exist.

Across the road, as you enter Bayeux, still hang the old-fashioned street lamps suspended by a cord as in the days of the Revolution, when it was the fashion to use them for hanging any unhappy aristocrat who might have incurred popular displeasure. Then there is the washing-place, where the old women are still at work beating their clothes and rubbing them in the running stream, chattering all the while and seeming to enjoy their evening toil.

One old lady amuses Hilda especially, as she stands in her tub half-way in the stream, as if on an island, while she works vigorously away at her lessive. And then a glimpse at the pond, where horses and cattle may drink—a solemn shady nook, overhung with trees, with fragments of ancient stonework to be seen here and there. After this, into the High Street, for such it must surely be, although it bears the unfamiliar inscription, Rue St. Martin. This is quite an English High Street, like that of Guildford, for example, steep and up-and-down, with smart little shops all lighted up, where the shopkeepers stand at their doors discussing the affairs of the day and staring at the new arrivals with curious eyes. And then we drive into the courtyard of the Hôtel de Luxembourg, where a pleasant, comely hostess comes out to welcome us. Oh yes, our friends have arrived, and are about to sit down to dinner; but there is no hurry; dinner can be served as much later as we wish.

“Which of our friends have arrived?” is now the question asked a little anxiously. But the suspense is soon over as we appear at the table d’hôte—a prolonged table d’hôte that is kept up till almost any hour at night. There are the old squire and Madame la Directrice, who have become excellent friends, it seems, under the stress of circumstances. No one else is there, not even Tom, about whom we are getting a little anxious. And we slide into our places without remark from the others, except that Stéphanie sweetly enquires “if mademoiselle has enjoyed her abbey?”

But immediately dinner was over Hilda disappeared for the night. She was quite too tired, she said, to sit up any longer. Justine had everything ready for her mistress, and made great eyes of curiosity, but did not venture to ask any questions. And then the little diligence came in from Port en Bessin—a nondescript vehicle in which only the coupé in front and a bench at the top, still called la banquette, remain as survivals of the ancient, roomy, lumbering diligence. The diligence brought news of the Sea Mew, which was lying at anchor outside the harbour, and Wyvern had sent word that the whole party would sleep on board that night and come to Bayeux next day.

In the middle of the night there was a great bustle in the hotel. Guests had arrived. Bells rang violently, waiters and chambermaids ran to and fro. Presently there was a knock at my door, and

Tom Courtney came in like a whirlwind, eager to tell his adventures. Redmond had driven him to his cottage in the country, not far from Caen. Tom described the place with enthusiasm. Surely Redmond might have been very happy there, with his orchard and his cider-press, with the pretty little paysanne who lived in the cottage close by. He might have married the pretty paysanne, and have set on foot a new Norman family to grow and flourish when the one in old England should have died out. Perhaps Redmond had had some such ideas in his head before we met him. And then at the sight of people from the world he had left, the current of his ideas was at once changed. If his creditors could be appeased, if his position could be regained, why should he hide himself any longer under a peasant’s blue blouse? And as for the pretty paysanne, it was adieu for evermore, my love! Or rather he did not trouble himself to say adieu at all. Redmond would have left all things to take their chance, his pony, his poultry, and all his little pigs; but Tom persuaded him to sell the whole for a lump sum—the lump not being of any great size—to the stout, red-faced Norman who kept the auberge of the village. Redmond would not stop to give one shake of the hand, or say one word of adieu, to people who, on his own showing, had been very kind and hospitable. He was a man thoroughly reckless and selfish, Tom said, who would sacrifice everybody and everything to the whim of the moment. Tom felt, he declared, like the fisherman in the Arabian Nights who had let the genius out of the bottle.

Then Tom had to listen to my story, and like the captain of the Thunder Bomb, he very much approved of what I had done, especially the horsewhip business, but he agreed that it was certain we should hear more of the matter in the future. And we must take care that Hilda’s name was not brought into the affair. Tom shook his head when he heard of Contango’s performance. So much work on a heavy road might put out his chance for the trotting-race. Contango must rest all the following day, and if people wanted to drive anywhere they must go by diligence.

Next morning the sun was shining brightly through the green rush-matting of the sun-blinds, and pushing them aside, a pleasant scene presented itself below, where in the garden among flowers and shrubs a

table was laid with snow-white cloth and serviettes, where Hilda and her father with Madame la Directrice were sipping their early morning café au lait. Above them rose the grey roofs of old Bayeux, roofs which owe their pleasant tone and their air of antiquity to the use of a slaty kind of limestone, or stony kind of slate, geologists must decide which; a slaty product, at all events, which is found in the neighbourhood, but which is unhappily being replaced by the staring blue slate of commerce. And above the roofs rose the still more hoary towers of the cathedral, and the kiosk-like dome.

With all these roofs and towers, the view is not crowded. There is plenty of room in old Bayeux; there are big gaps among the roofs filled up with clumps of foliage; open places with formally clipped avenues; old mansions with their grassy courts and big gardens, once the hotels of the royal officials no doubt, where now the notary and the huissier mount their brazen emblems of the majesty of the law. Altogether there is an air about the place as if giants had lived there once and pigmies had taken their place. Here are gardens, too, full of roses still, with fat strawberry-beds, and pears ripening on the walls, all fresh and glittering with dew drops, while Hilda, fresh as a rose as to her cheeks, and dewy as to her lips, sits there and drinks her café au lait, all unconscious of being observed. Madame la Directrice is a little yellow in the morning light, and has an air of fatigue, as if she would say with the sluggard, "You have woke me too soon, let me slumber again."

Tom has joined the party by this time, has disposed of his bowl of coffee, and has crumpled up a roll as if it were a comfit. And then he vouchsafes a remark in an injured tone:

"I suppose we must go and see the tapestry?"

Hilda replies with decision: "Of course we must go and see the tapestry."

Madame la Directrice, with a languid air, exclaims:

"Ah, that tapestry, it is something very nice. I think I must get some for my little salon."

Tom was inclined to laugh, and Madame la Directrice saw in a moment that she had made some little mistake, and laughed herself good-humouredly:

"Have I committed a *bêtise*? Never mind, since my husband is not here to scold me."

When I came down Hilda and the rest were just starting for the Bibliothèque to see the tapestry. It reminded one of going to morning service, there was just that gentle stream of people in one direction. Most of the people were English. There were a couple of fresh-looking English youths, who were going about the country on bicycles; a family of tall girls, who had the air of being in possession of exclusive information on every possible subject; and a married couple, who quarrelled a little in a subdued manner. And besides these, our compatriots, there were a pair of French provincials, who may have the complacent feeling that they were about to assist at the humiliation of perfidious Albion.

Hilda confesses to something like a feeling of awe, as we enter the room where the tapestry is shown. An old lady sitting in the entrance-hall, tranquilly knitting and keeping an eye upon the visitors, might be a guardian of the dead, she ushers us in with such a grave, subdued air. But here it is, the handiwork of those noble dames of old—the mothers, wives, and daughters of those mighty men who hammered out the iron framework of England's greatness. The tapestry is stretched upon a screen and covered with glass, and is still wonderfully fresh and vivid—less faded, indeed, than many of the samplers our great-grandmothers have left behind them—and worked in a stitch very much like the modern crewel-work upon hand-made linen that suggests the work of Indian looms. But what we are not quite prepared for is the admirable spirit and life of the work, of which the photographic reproductions give no idea. These ancient dames must have worked with the needle till they acquired a kind of artist's touch. The forms are rude, and often grotesque, indeed; but they live and move, and, having seen them, you feel that you know the men and their times ever so much better than you did before. The story is told, too, with much simplicity and directness, and you feel at once that the nobly-born women who worked on this elaborate epic with the needle must have known the heroes of it in their lives. Harold is the chief hero, and Harold is treated with a sympathy and respect that suggest something like affection for the gallant, kingly man. And then we see why this tapestry is appropriately placed at Bayeux, rather than at Westminster, or York, or Winchester. For the central incident of the plot is not either shipwreck or battle, but the terrible

oath that Harold took in the cathedral here at Bayeux upon the relics of the saints and in face of the high altar; the oath which he swore to William, and which he broke for the sake of England's crown. Next to Harold, Odo is the favourite with the women of those days—Odo, the warrior-bishop, who spent the revenues of this fat diocese in arms, and horses, and soldiers' trappings.

The old lady, who sits tranquilly in the doorway, kindly leaves people alone to study the tapestry at their leisure; only interfering to turn the visitor round the corner at the right moment to investigate the inner side of the screen; and it is pleasant to find that the tapestry is freely accessible to strangers all day long and every day in the week.

At ten o'clock precisely a footstep sounds upon the staircase that leads to the library above, and a grave pleasant-looking librarian mounts and opens the big door. The library is a pleasant quiet room lined with books, and there the grave librarian sits over a big volume, a learned-looking skull-cap on his head. No doubt he is diving deeply into the history of old Bayeux, and some day, perhaps, we shall see an exhaustive and learned work from his pen, beginning with the deposition of the Bajocien oolite, and ending with the introduction of gas-lamps and the new pavement.

Meantime, he shows with pride a presentation copy from "Sout Kensington" of a work on the Bayeux Tapestry, and sundry seals and charters which have been presented by English people. Perhaps there is not very much to interrupt his studies except the inquisitiveness of English people like ourselves, whose prattle he listens to and answers with urbanity and patience.

There is, indeed, not much doing. Sometimes an elderly gentleman comes in to read the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Sometimes a learned duc of the old régime looks in with a little paper of notes and queries to be resolved in some old MS. or early edition; it is chiefly with the old aristocracy of France that any taste remains for archæology.

We have been talking of Alan Chartrier, the poet of the fifteenth century who was born here at Bayeux in a house that is still in existence, and Hilda wants to see an early edition of his works, which the grave librarian courteously looks out for us.

"Faicts et dictz de Maistre Alain Char-

trier—à Paris par Philippe le Noir en la rue Saint Jacques à l'enseigne de la rose blanche couronnée." Here we have the lament of a noble dame, whose lover was slain at the battle of Agincourt, and much amorous poetry of a grave, and dignified, and highly proper character. But one little distich pleases me, which I show to Hilda:

Aymer je vous vueil
Par joye ou par dueil,

which I freely translate for her benefit, lest she should be puzzled by the old French, "Love you I will, for good or ill."

At this moment Tom Courtney comes along to whip us up for the omnibus to Port en Bessin. Madame la Directrice is uneasy at being so long away from her director, and we are to start at once, trusting to getting breakfast at Port. For everybody calls the place Port—it is the port of the district, and the people of the Bessin still hang together, a little clan-nishly.

We are to meet at the bureau in the Place aux Pommes—for there is a place for everything in roomy Bayeux; we should not be surprised to find a separate place for shrimps and watercresses. And so we find ourselves at a little glass office in the middle of a yard, where omnibuses and diligence are stored, with much poultry, and an occasional hearse. On the walls outside many coloured bills are to be seen, announcing excursions, to the British Isles among other places, and inviting us to assist at the solemnity of the "Exposition industrielle de la pêche."

The omnibus is pretty well packed with our party, and a newly-married couple, the bride looking rather frightened and not particularly happy. Just in front of us starts another omnibus, smaller and even rougher-looking than ours, for Asnelles, the roof loaded with flowers, and one fat, rosy, happy-looking curé inside. We leave Bayeux by the top of the town, where there is an old convent turned into a gendarmerie, and a vast market-place lined with a double row of trees, and with ancient-looking stone benches for the butter and egg women to stand their wares upon, where Henry Plantagenet may have come to chaffer with the pretty market-girls. All tells of ancient times, and of a life which has known no violent disruption since those days of old. And the sleepy old chimes ring us out of the town, as if it were as much as they can do to get through their bar of feeble harmony.

And then we travel along a straight road

lined with poplars, and looking back there is always the cathedral to be seen at the end of the avenue; for there its towers stand out without appearing to become more distant for mile after mile—at least for kilomètre after kilomètre. A fertile country lies around, well-wooded, and with rich pastures, the cows lying half concealed in the rich herbage. The farmers' wives are driving out in their little donkey-carts for the mid-day milking, their noble brass milk-cans glittering and clanking; or sometimes with a hotte—a rough wooden framework—on the donkey's back, that holds eight of these grand milking-pails—four on a side, and the good dame in the middle, sturdily astride the donkey's neck. The donkeys are fine and reasonable-looking beasts, with hearts to be touched by oburgation and reproof, and consequently, knowing little of the stick, fat, comfortable-looking animals, of no great size, but decidedly clever goers.

Here we pass a château, or the site of one rather, with nothing left of its original grandeur but stables, which are good enough for the farmer to live in, and some grand-looking barns and the seigneurial pigeon-towers now converted into cart-sheds. As we approach the coast the hills rise to an edge—hills not so rich-looking or so thickly wooded as the country we have just passed through, but covered with good crops of grain. This is the edge of the Bassin, the great milk basin of Normandy. What pastures there are within it, what cattle, and what prosperity! Hundreds of little homesteads lie scattered about, filled with cosy, comfortable people, who have cause to rejoice that the seigneurial barns lie empty, and that the seigneurial pigeons no longer plunder the furrows for miles around. Then through a gap in the range of hills we catch sight of the little port beneath us, and the sea spread tranquilly far and near. Our coachman has kept back a gallop for the avenue, and we dash wildly into the little town, where there is some gentle stir in the way of ship-building, and where a few fishing-boats are lying high and dry in the inner harbour.

In the port itself great works are going on, digging and excavating, with ballast-waggons and a ballast-engine running noisily about. Till recently there was a little établissement here under the cliff, for the bathers who came during the season, but that has been swept away by the harbour-works. The place is a brisk

and pleasant one, with rocky cliffs rising on either hand, and layers of limestone-rocks forming the sea-floor, while the harbour-piers make a breezy, quiet promenade.

The Sea Mew is lying a good way out at sea, for the tide runs low, and the bottom is rocky; but she is coming in as soon as the tide makes. And already the water is stirring, and the sturdy masts of the fisher-boats begin to topple to and fro. So we take our second breakfast comfortably outside the inn, in full view of all that is going on, and with the sea shining before us. The tide rises, the fishing population is astir; the fisher-wives, loaded with nets and baskets, pitch their burdens on to the boats. Sails are hauled up, and everybody shouts and pulls, often leaving off pulling to shout more freely. Meantime one or two boats have come in with the tide. The bell over the neat little fish-market rings lustily. Baskets of fish are landed. The bell rings again, and they are all sold. When more boats come in, the market begins again; the bell ringing to announce its opening. The dealers, mostly women, flock together; and again the bell jingles, and the market is closed. And so on all day long, and well into the night.

By this time a fishing-boat is ready to start from the inner basin. "La porte, ouvrez!" cries the fisherman's wife, who is managing matters on shore. And then everybody puts his or her back to the lever of the dock-gate—douaniers, women, idlers. The gate opens, and the boat passes through, her big mainsail shaking in the wind. Away they go, the crew bustling about, and the master bawling lustily. There are four men on board, and a mousse, a little sailor-boy, the cleverest of the party, who speaks up as if he were the head of them all. As the boat scuds through the harbour, the master's wife runs after her along the pier, and pelts the receding boat with anything she can pick up. It is all for luck, no doubt, like our old shoes in England, and the master shouts back a cheery adieu.

Well, our breakfast is finished just as the steam-pipe of the Sea Mew gives us hoarse warning of her approach. Such a scene has hardly ever been seen before in the little port, and the whole population clusters on the pier to see her come in. We can see our little director on the bridge with the master and the pilot. Our director shouts and gesticulates. He is carried below out of the way of the pilot—almost by force, for the channel is narrow, and the navigation

tiokliah. Soon a great hawsar clears the crowd before it like a broom, and the Sea Mew is safely moored in the harbour of the Bessin.

FETISHISM.

ACCORDING to Comte, fetishism is founded on the idea, among primitive races, that all bodies, natural and artificial, are animated by a life or spirit essentially similar to that animating the human frame, and differing only in intensity. It is remarkable that the Eskimo, according to Dr. Rink, believe that the whole visible world is ruled by supernatural powers, each having sway within certain limits. These powers are called Inua, and there is scarcely any object, physical or spiritual, which may not have its Inua. In some respects Inua corresponds with the soul, and mountains, lakes, and so on are also possessed of Inua, which require to be propitiated. Hence arose among the Eskimo the practice of wearing amulets, which possess virtue because they are still animated by the Inua with which they have been in contact, and the wearing and application of these amulets comes second only to invocation among the religious practices of these people. In the Comteist sense, therefore, they are fetish.

In the same sense, the South Sea Islanders' tabu, or consecration of special objects, may be considered fetish. The Fijians, as Mr. Stonehewer Cooper tells us in "Coral Lands," used the whale's-tooth as a propitiatory sacrifice, but it must also have been considered to hold a virtue in its own essence, because on the death of a chief, two of these teeth would be placed in his hands to throw at the tree which is supposed to bar the way to the regions of the blest. Yet we are not accustomed to regard either the Eskimo or the South Sea Islanders as fetish-worshippers.

Tylor defined fetishism as "the doctrine of spirits embodied in, or attached to, or conveying influence through certain material forms." It is, in short, as we have now come to regard it, the mere belief that certain objects are endowed with peculiar powers, and that in respect of these powers they are to be venerated. Any evidence of failure in the power ascribed will bring contumely on the object from the fetish-worshipper, and hence Sir John Lubbock has happily defined fetishism as "that stage of religious

thought in which man supposes he can force the deities to comply with his desires." This stage of thought, however, we may remark has not been confined to savage nations. There was a Catholic Queen of Spain who was so angry at the loss of her husband that she forbade her subjects to believe in God for six whole months "in order to give Him a lesson!" The doing of penance, and the offering of propitiatory candles for the intercession of the saints, may also be taken as evidence that in Catholic countries the belief is entertained that the Divine favour can be at least coaxed, if not compelled.

For fetishism proper, in the sense in which it is now commonly accepted, one must look to Africa, and particularly to the West Coast. This is emphatically "The Land of Fetish," and in a book recently published by Captain Ellis of Sierra Leone, under that very title, we have some curious and interesting accounts of the system.

We soon find that there are varieties in fetishism, as in all other forms of religion. Thus in Dahomey, ophiolatry, or serpent-worship, prevails, and the python is regarded as the emblem of bliss and prosperity. To kill a sacred serpent is a capital offence, and a child who may by chance touch or be touched by one must be kept at the fetish-house for a year, to be instructed in the mysteries. This is a species of fetishism which distinctly appropriates an object for worship, and it is, therefore, more accurately, idolatry.

On the Gold Coast, however, it is unsubstantial shadows and demons which are worshipped and feared. Every house in Whydah, on the Slave Coast, we are told, has before it a cone of baked clay, discoloured by the libations of palm-oil and palm-wine, and this is the fetish Azoon, who protects streets, houses, and buildings. Again, by the side of every road is seen a grotesque clay image of a human shape in a crouching attitude. This is Legba, the guardian of women, and propitiatory sacrifices to it are supposed to remove barrenness. The ocean, too, is fetish, and has a special service of priests, who "at certain seasons descend to the beach, shout forth a series of incantations, and request the sea to calm itself, throwing at the same time offerings of corn, cowries, and palm-oil into it. Sometimes, too, the King of Dahomey sends an ambassador, arrayed in the proper insignia, with a gorgeous umbrella and a rich dress, to his good friend the ocean. This ambassador is

taken far out to sea in a canoe, and is then thrown overboard, and left to drown or to be devoured by sharks." It is needless to add that the honour of this post is not much coveted in Dahomey. The most dreaded fetish is So, the god of thunder and lightning, who is supposed to strike with lightning those who disbelieve in or scoff at his powers, and hence it is unlawful to bury the bodies of those who have been killed by lightning. There is another fetish called Ho-ho, who protects twins; and other objects of worship are the sun, the moon, fire, the leopard, and the crocodile. But, although Captain Ellis speaks of these objects of worship as fetish, the religion is clearly a multiform idolatry, and not fetish in the accepted meaning of the word. The Dahomeans place a rope of grass round their houses to protect them from fire; a grotesque image in human shape on the door-posts is supposed to prevent the entry of evil spirits; and a fowl is nailed, with head downwards, to a post to prevent an unfavourable wind. These practices are of the nature of charms. They are fetish, but fetish only in the same sense as, to this day, in our own country, are the horse-shoes one sees nailed on to stable-doors, and the sixpences with holes, which many people carry about for luck. Similarly, the "water-sprinkling" of the Dahomeans, or, really, the blood-sprinkling, by the sacrifice of slaves, and the pouring of their blood upon the graves of the departed, is analogous to the saying of masses for the souls of dead Catholics. The frightful waste of human life at these and other ceremonials of the Dahomeans is, we are glad to hear, diminishing, but not so much through Christianising influences or British persuasion as because, to some extent, at any rate, "there are no longer any small independent tribes on the borders of Dahomey on whom war could be made, and from whom a constant supply of victims could be obtained." The persons now commonly sacrificed are criminals.

Thus we see that in Dahomey the objects which are fetish are specific, and, although numerous, are limited. Their worship, therefore, would be more accurately described as idolatry. For, in simple fetishism, anything may become fetish. A native of the Gold Coast, starting on an expedition of whatever character, selects as fetish the object which first strikes his eye on leaving his house. If this object brings him success, it is worshipped and preserved, much as the horse-shoe and

lucky sixpence are with us, for future luck. If it does not bring success it is jumped upon, spat upon, and in every way reviled, with the same object, in a less articulate form, as the Queen of Spain had in view. At Badagry, a town also on the Slave Coast, Captain Ellis saw more fetishes than at any other place. All about the houses and streets were clay figures, of human form, but with the teeth of dogs, sharks, leopards, etc. and crowned with feathers. In one case the feathers were red, and it was explained that this was to imitate the red hair of one trader who had visited the place, and who, presumably, had brought it luck. In the great central fetish-ground are to be seen such miscellaneous articles as broken pots and stools, knives, spear-heads, arrows, and even human skulls. Here there seems no specific worship of an object per se, but merely as representing a spirit or fate, while evil spirits or demons are supposed to be frightened away by the exhibition of objects for which they have an aversion. This is the simplest form of fetishism, and only on the Gold Coast, apparently, is this simple form preserved.

It is doubtful if we can regard the fetishism of Dahomey as a stage higher in religious belief. The reduction of worship from the general to the particular does not seem in practice anything of an improvement. At Bonny, for instance, where fetishism has acquired the specific or idolatrous form, human sacrifice is practised in a wholesale manner, such as we do not hear of on the Gold Coast. Notwithstanding the Christian missions at Bonny, fetishism, we are told, is everywhere rampant. Ju-ju is the favourite spirit, to whom a very common sacrifice is a young girl, who is tied to a stake at low water, and left to perish either by the rising tide or by sharks and crocodiles. A glimpse into the fetish-house was here obtained by Captain Ellis with difficulty. In the interior he saw vast numbers of skulls, of those who had been sacrificed to Ju-ju, preserved in wattle-racks, and there were also a large number of rude wooden images. At Porto Novo, a town only fifty miles from Lagos, "the Liverpool of West Africa," there is, opposite to the gates of the king's "palace," a row of fetish-huts, containing the images of a variety of deities, and here the people think it necessary to feed as well as to propitiate the spirits, or at any rate to supply them with water, which is placed in pans outside the huts. The disappearance

of the water by evaporation is accepted as proof of the bodily presence of the deities. Next to the fetish-huts is the sacrificial shed, which reeks with blotches of blood and other tokens of the ghastly and horrible rites performed in it. This, then, is fetishism plus idolatry in its most hideous aspect.

Farther north, in the Gambia and Sierra Leone districts, fetishism seems to have developed into skilful necromancy. The fetishmen are professional compounders of spells, and being well acquainted with the poisonous and curative qualities of vegetables unknown to the European pharmacopœia, they manage to effect some striking results. Poisoning in these regions is something of a fine art, and the only chance for a man who supposes that his food has been tampered with is to go to the fetish priest for another spell in the shape of an antidote, for which, of course, he must pay, and whole families are known to waste away and die from unknown diseases, until perhaps one, in desperation, calls in the fetishman. These fetishmen are said to be accomplished in all the subtlest forms of poison, not only such as act through the stomach, but others which are distributed over the clothing to permeate the skin, or are diffused through the atmosphere, to work their deadly effects by inhalation.

Among some of the tribes of these districts also, is a singular form of fetish known as Egugu, which Captain Ellis not infelicitously likens to the English "bogey." The Egugu man professes to be endowed with peculiar powers which enable him at once to scent the infidelity of a wife. He makes the round of the villages, and his favour is sought by offerings of all the most delicate dishes of the African cuisine. He lives on the fat of the land and the credulity of the people, which last he takes care to retain by a judicious exposure now and then. In Sherboro there exists a fraternity who are bound together by some mysterious ceremonies, whose nature is not apparent. One of their rites consists of human sacrifice, and it seems to be certain that one young girl, at least, is put to death by them in some horrible manner every year. A weird story is told by a French trader about how he surprised a party of them in the forest at night, being attracted by the agonising shrieks of the victim. When he reached the spot the savages had fled, but he found the body, still warm, of a girl from whom the heart had been torn out.

At Old Calabar, on the Niger Delta, there is a curious phase of fetishism, which consists in feeding the dead. When a person is buried, the relatives, before filling the earth into the grave, insert a long bamboo tube, whose orifice is brought to the surface. Down this tube are poured periodically palm-oil, palm-wine, and other liquids. In this custom one sees something analogous to the Fijian whale-tooth before mentioned. It is believed, also, by the natives of this portion of the coast, that the dead are afflicted with the same ailments as the living, and a man will often go to the European doctor for medicine to pour into the grave of his father or mother. This indicates some sort of faint glimmering sense of the immortality of the soul, and it has something about it which goes to support the Comteist definition of fetishism.

In their interesting book about the Gold Coast, Captains Burton and Cameron tell that the most frequent form of fetish there is the pot or koro, which is filled with water, oil, palm-wine, leaves, cowries, eggs, and all manner of things, for the use of the spirits. When the general mixture is stirred by the Komfo or fetishman, it is supposed to answer questions, and enable him to soothsay. This corresponds to the Obi of the West Indies, and it had its counterpart in the "witch's broth" of European nations. The whole thing is strongly suggestive of the fourth act of Macbeth. The same travellers, in steaming up the Ancobra river, passed two fetish-rocks in the channel on the side opposite to that used by the natives. Later in the day they were caught in a tremendous thunderstorm, which the natives gravely ascribed to the outrage of fetish in passing the rocks on the wrong side! Can we not find among one's own circle of acquaintances people who will ascribe the little mishaps and accidents of the day to their having got out of the wrong side of the bed? The spilling of salt, the sailor's objection to sailing on a Friday, and many other analogues, may be found in the superstition of our own people and our own day.

As for the charms, and spells, and other acts of fetish-worship, they are, perhaps, grosser in execution, but in character and meaning much the same as the practice of witchcraft, which obtained in many parts of our country almost to within the last generation. We have it on the authority of Miss Annie Keary and others, that witch-

craft was devoutly believed in forty years ago, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, not only among the peasantry, but even among the farmer-class. A well-to-do farmer of Nunnington even reprimanded the parson for scoffing at the popular beliefs, some of which really do not seem to have been much more rational than those of the lowest Africans.

It is curious to reflect how the whole human race is united by one invisible thread, differing in texture, or in thickness, or in adornment, but carrying the same fibre through the heart of it always. We like to talk in missionary meetings of our "poor black brethren," but until we consider this question of fetishism perhaps we do not realise how much they really are our brethren. For the rest, the christianising of the African races does not seem to progress as we like to think it does, if Captain Ellis's account be a truthful one.

'TWIXT CUP AND LIP.

A STORY.

"EVERYTHING we could wish for in a son! With sound Church principles, and the very house dear Edie has always had a fancy for. She is so well-qualified to take up her position in the county, dear child! I may truly say my cup of happiness is filled to the brim," Mrs. Woodcock concluded.

She had a deliberate, impressive manner, and a voice with a full, round roll in it, and could have delivered her husband the rector's sermons much better than he did. She was a comfortable, comely woman, one of the sort addicted to enveloping themselves in soft fleecy wraps, and purring complacently from the cushioned depths of big easy-chairs, as she did now, gazing with gentle pity on her friend Gertrude Bourne as on a low-born spinster, who possessed no rector of her own, nor rectory, nor yet a lovely eldest daughter going to be married to a baronet next Tuesday.

Miss Bourne sat knitting in the window-seat of the oddly-shaped apartment, too cozy for a landing, too wide for a passage, but by reason of having the rector's study, the store-room, and the staircase opening out of it, not to be considered as a sitting-room by any means. It was everybody's favourite halting-place on the road to everywhere in the house. The sewing-machine stood in one window, and Mrs. Woodcock's old-fashioned housekeeping

bureau between the other two. Her huge chintz-petticoated easy-chair had its place near the middle window, where Gertrude Bourne was resting after her journey. She was one of those stray women who, without husband or near kin of their own, seem in perpetual demand as sharers in other folks' merry-makings. When they are poor or weak-spirited they act as unpaid assistants; when rich or distinguished, as extra attractions. Miss Bourne belonged to the latter class. She was clever, well-connected, and wealthy; with a tiny little house in Mayfair, where deserving nephews and nieces were treated to a fortnight's pleasuring now and then, and where nice people of all sorts were wont to congregate. Also she had a pretty taste in wedding-presents. That she was not more often made use of by kind friends who wanted homes for the boys when there was sickness at school; or a yard of glacé silk at two shillings and elevenpence from somewhere in the City; or entertainment for themselves and their pet pastor during the May Meetings; was entirely due to Piper, her trusty maid, who ruled her for her good with a rod of iron, and presented a front of adamant to all attempts at imposition on her mistress's good-nature.

Gertrude Bourne and Juliet Damer had been school-friends, and the intimacy had survived into later life. Gertrude had been the confidante of Juliet's timid attachment to the new curate, and when he did come to the point, had worked upon the feelings of her uncle the bishop in his behalf to some purpose, and since then had given many a gentle push to the wheel of her friend's fortunes till it had rolled them into the goodly heritage of Honeymeade Rectory, where Mrs. Woodcock now reposed in dignified ease, looking down from the serene heights of her own prosperity on her less fortunate friend, who, half-conscious of the sentiment, kept her dark inscrutable eyes bent on her flickering needles, and, in her turn, from her heart of hearts pitied—did Mrs. Woodcock guess whom?

The rectory lawn stretched its green length beneath the windows, and a pleasant murmur of young voices floated up to them. They could see Mabel under the big ash-tree trying to pour out tea and read a magazine at the same time. Margaretta, the second girl, and her friend, Mrs. Leyland, were side by side in their big basket-chairs chattering confidences; and the little Leylands, who had been invited

to make hay, were plunging and rolling in the haycocks beyond. Edie, the eldest, was sitting a little apart, looking, as she nestled in her heap of soft hay, a reduced copy of her mother, plus a plate of strawberries on her lap, and a young fellow in mourning holding a Japanese parasol over her.

He was an old friend of Miss Bourne's. Someone had brought him to her house two seasons ago, when he was an unknown briefless barrister; and she had taken a fancy to the shy, dark-eyed youth, who could talk so well when he thought no one was listening to him, and who seemed so utterly friendless. So she welcomed him, and made much of him, and when, one fine day, society found out that it had another new poet in its midst, Gertrude thought better of her own discernment for having anticipated the discovery.

"I always knew he was made for great things," she said; "and yet— He seems one for whom there may be greater still in store; as if it might be granted him to live out his aspirations instead of merely rhyming them."

So she had spoken a year ago. "Songs of Captivity" had reached a tenth edition; but the author had become Sir Charles Penthony, of Whitelands, and was to marry Miss Edith Woodcock next Tuesday. Ah, well-a-day!

"How did it all come about?" she asked abruptly.

"Quite romantically," said Mrs. Woodcock, settling herself for a gossip. "You know, when first we came here, how we always fancied there was something odd at Whitelands. Sir Gilbert and Lady Penthony were most pleasant neighbours, and seemed so attached to one another, but the son was never mentioned, and we thought it strange that he should be left to himself in London, getting into quite a Bohemian set, my dear—artists, and government clerks who write plays, and actors, you know. It is much to his credit that he has always been so steady, I am sure."

"Very much so, considering the temptations," Gertrude assented with a suppressed quiver in her voice, and a laugh in her eyes.

"It was not till poor Sir Gilbert's first attack of gout, when the dear rector's ministrations proved so blest to him, that we ascertained the true state of affairs. Lady Penthony—his second wife—had from the first kept father and son apart. She had provoked Charlie into a dreadful quarrel, after which he left Whitelands,

and the poor old gentleman was so completely under her thumb that he dared not write or make an attempt to see him. Charlie's letters and attempts at reconciliation were kept from him, and his mind poisoned against him by the designing woman, who, most providentially, was visiting some of her own relations when the attack came on, and the dear rector happened to call. Of course, we sent for Charlie directly, and asked him to stay here, till his father insisted on his going to Whitelands. Poor boy! he was much touched by our interference on his behalf, and struck by his father's admiration of Edie. The old gentleman was devoted to her, and I believe told Charlie of his great wish for the marriage just before he died. Lady Penthony behaved shamefully, and utterly refused to return to Whitelands while Charlie was there. I hardly think she knew how near the end was, though. Charlie nursed his father most devotedly to the last, and since then has taken up his new duties—with the dear rector's assistance—in a most praiseworthy manner. Shall we go down and join the young people?"

Miss Bourne assenting, Mrs. Woodcock rose and led the way up steps and down steps, and round corners, to the little glass door which opened on the garden.

Margaretta sprang up and ran to meet them. Mabel dropped her magazine amongst her tea-cups and followed. Edie took things more leisurely, as befitted her prospective dignity. All three were fine, fair, healthy-looking girls, of the dairy-fed order of beauty, with round pink-and-white faces, abundant silky hair, white teeth, and wide-open blue eyes. They all looked pretty and fresh in their shady hats and summer print dresses, but Edith was the tallest, with the prettiest figure and most regular features. She turned with a graceful little gesture to hand her strawberries to her cavalier, but, behold, he had gone with the rest to join the little chattering group round the new comers. There was much laughter and confusion of greetings. Mrs. Leyland had to be introduced, fresh garden-chairs brought out, the children hunted away from the strawberry-dish, and Mabel's tea-tray re-arranged.

When they settled down, Miss Bourne found herself next Edie, with her lover lying picturesquely outstretched on the hay at their feet.

"We missed you this season," she said, "and wondered much."

"Ah, I ought to have written to you above all others," Sir Charles answered penitently; "but so much happened to me all at once that I got bewildered and lost count of time. I did try to see you, once or twice, you know, in the two days I spent in town. I had to meet my lawyers and see with my own eyes that poor Ducie's picture was really hung, and uncommonly well it looked too."

"Better still, it's sold! Oh, I have great news for you. A dealer bought it, then a rich American took a fancy to it. The dealer sold it, and gave Ducie a commission for another, and the American has ordered a companion picture. He came almost crying to tell me. Why, has he not written to you?"

"I dare say he preferred to leave the telling to you. Edie, you know about Ducie—the man who could never paint anything to please himself till some lines of mine took possession of him, and he made such a story out of them as I had never dreamt of?"

Eddie smiled with gentle indifference.

"We may give him an order some day," she said; "the hall at Whitelands wants pictures, unless we do it up with old oak and armour, like Lord Naseby's."

"You found time to do me a great kindness in the midst of your business," Miss Bourne went on presently. "I sent my young friend from Liverpool, Paul Wylie, with your note of introduction to Mr. Normandy, who has been most kind and helpful to him."

"What! You don't mean to say that Normandy is going to bring his play out at the Diversity!" exclaimed Sir Charles.

"Oh dear no! He has done better. He has convinced him of the impossibility of its ever being brought out anywhere, and has promised that if Paul will go home, study stage traditions and limitations, and produce something really actable, he'll think of it next year."

"And you call that help?"

"To be sure I do. Paul has gone back to his desk with hopeful employment for his leisure hours instead of throwing up his situation to roam about London, a misunderstood genius with an unsaleable tragedy in his pocket. He'll write himself out in a year, and make a very respectable cotton-broker's clerk in the end."

Miss Bourne checked herself abruptly, for Edie looked by this time politely bored, and just a little contemptuous. She had no part in those days of Charlie's life when

he wasn't in society, and was minded to ignore them as completely and speedily as might be. Gertrude was quick to take the hint and let the conversation drift on to Switzerland, where the young pair were to spend their honeymoon.

"Of course it's much too early in the season," Edie lamented.

She was evidently bent on conducting all the proceedings on most orthodox principles. Fortunately Gertrude had just been present at a marriage in very high life, and was able to describe the arrangements of Lady Alberta and the earl, which, to Edie's satisfaction, exactly coincided with her programme. Sir Charles seemed intent on gratifying her lightest fancy. His manner to her was the perfection of chivalrous devotion, as hers to him was of graceful, maidenly dignity. When the party dispersed, and Gertrude found herself alone in her room, waiting for Piper to dress her for dinner, she sat down and gave herself a severe scolding for all her ungenerous misgivings. How well they looked together! she thought. He slight and dark, with his finely-strung nervous organisation manifest in every movement of his delicate hands and rapid glances of his bright, expressive eyes. She, fair, plump, placid, with a determined curve in her soft, white chin, and a certain deliberation of manner and speech which accorded well with the calm steady gaze of her china-blue eyes and the firm line of the fresh red lips. A wife who will support his credit in county society, manage the household, her family, her parish on the correctest principles; never exceed her allowance, or come down late to breakfast. What can a man want more?

Piper finished adjusting her satin skirts as she asked herself the question, put a final artistic touch to the filmy mass of lace round her throat, handed her her fan, and allowed her to descend to the drawing-room, where Edie and her lover were seated demurely, one on each side of the open window.

"Have you never received a reply from Lord Glenara?" Edie was asking.

"No, dear; but we are not waiting for his consent; he may never take any more notice of me. He was indignant at my father's second marriage, you know, and may have only wanted to befriend me then to spite my step-mother."

"Don't speak disrespectfully and unkindly, Charles dear, of an uncle—in Lord Glenara's position. Let us, at any rate, do our duty by him," was the gentle reproof.

"Right now, as ever, oh queen! You will make me a model nephew in time."

"To an uncle—in Lord Glenara's position," Gertrude could not refrain from amending.

"Yes, that will be the way all through their lives," she sighed to herself that night. "Edie will keep him up to her standard of social propriety, and make a model squire of him at last; but that that should be the end of Charlie!"

Gertrude felt like a conspirator next morning when she descended into the pretty morning-room, where Edie, fresh and sweet as a pink in her crimp blue cambric, with not a hair out of place on her glossy head, was pouring out tea and coffee with minutest regard to individual peculiarities of taste.

She had scarcely seated herself when a shadow darkened the window behind her, and Sir Charles, flushed with haste and excitement, stepped into their midst, a letter in his hand.

"I am so glad to find you all here together," he exclaimed. "Here is something I must settle at once, or you must for me. Here's Lord Glenara's answer to my letter. Congratulations, of course, and then—as he says he has a subject of the utmost importance to discuss with me—he wants to know if I will go over to him for a few days before my marriage, 'unless,' as he says, 'you can induce my fair future niece to spend a honeymoon in the wilds of Glenara. The days pass so swiftly at my time of life, and I get fearful of delays.' Now what am I to do? I can start at eleven, and catch the Irish mail. I should reach Glenara at mid-day to-morrow, and could just get home by Tuesday morning. Or shall we agree to go after, Edie?"

"Certainly not," was the prompt reply. "Visiting so soon scarcely seems the proper thing to do. It is not as if he had offered to lend us the castle—besides, I do not like Ireland."

"That settles it. Then off I go. Here, I'll leave you the letter. I can't imagine what he wants with me."

"One moment, Charles," spoke the rector. "Considering the—ha—family affection that has—hem—subsisted unbroken between you and Lord Glenara, have you any grounds for supposing that he—ha—may see the propriety of offering anything—hem—in the way of an allowance?"

"Very likely. He once wished to settle something on me—when I left home, you know. He was devoted to my mother."

"Then," rolled forth the rector's impressive baritone; "then you cannot feel justified in neglecting so imperative a call of duty. It would be—ha—unseemly to sacrifice your aged uncle's wishes to mere personal gratification. If you cannot go later"—this with a dubious glance at Edie which betrayed very little hope of affecting her views—"it is my decided opinion that you should give him the time he asks for at once."

"Oh, papa, put off the wedding!" protested Mabel and Margaretta.

"I must write to Wormuns at once, then," said Mrs. Woodcock, thinking of the breakfast. "He must know about the ices."

"But, Edie——" Sir Charles began beseechingly.

"Well, dear, if it is for your good, why should I object?" spoke she with sweet reasonableness. "You needn't start in such a hurry then, you know, and if you get back by Tuesday week——"

"Oh no, my dear, that won't do; your papa and I are invited to the palace for that week, you know."

"Tuesday fortnight, then. It really can't matter much to you, and it will be so much better for Switzerland," decided the fair bride-elect, and, as usual, hers was the conclusion that every one adopted as fittest and best.

Miss Bourne bade adieu to the rectory next morning, and hurried back to town to invite some country cousins to whom a fortnight in what yet remained of the season would be unexpected bliss. Sundry notes reached her now and then from Honeymeade, containing commissions or appeals for advice from Mrs. Woodcock.

"Do come to me a day or two before the wedding," she wrote. "I feel quite unnerved when I think of all that has to be gone through all over again."

So, once more, a sunshiny Saturday morning saw Gertrude and her faithful Piper alighting at the little wayside station where the rectory pony-carriage was awaiting her, Edie driving, and Sir Charles beside her. He gave place to Miss Bourne, intending to walk home, only lingering for a few words pending the disposal of Piper and the luggage.

"You were pleased with Glenara?" she asked.

"More than pleased; but I mustn't begin about the place now, nor my uncle. Do you ever read Miss Edgeworth? Do you remember Count O'Halloran? the very

ideal of an Irish nobleman, a type I had fancied as extinct as the Irish elk."

"I am almost tempted to wish it were sometimes," said Edie with a sharp note in her voice. "Charles has come home blindly infatuated about things Irish. He has actually pledged himself to our going there."

"There are many good reasons why we should," Sir Charles replied briefly, and then they started.

Miss Bourne had a long talk with him that evening. He had been much touched by his welcome by his uncle, who had received him as a long absent son. The rector's provisions of a settlement were correct. Lord Glenara was wealthy and childless, the last of his line. He had for long years lived secluded at Glenara, devoting himself to his people and his land. His object in life had been to work out certain theories of his own as to the management of his estates, theories which, so far, had proved complete successes. His tenantry were peaceful, thriving, contented, devoted to him with an ardent personal loyalty which was new and strange, yet perfectly comprehensible to Charlie.

"He is a born leader, one for men to follow to the death," he said; "but it grieves him to think how much depends on his own personal influence. When he dies all his works perish with him, and he is failing fast. He took me about and introduced me to every creature in the place, showed me all his projected improvements, made me go into everything. It was as though he desired a witness of his work before it all fell back into its primitive chaos."

"And the people?" asked Gertrude.

"Don't, please!" expostulated Edie. "Charlie has been expounding the merits of the Irish race to us all for a week past. Mayn't he leave off now?"

Sir Charles ceased obediently for the moment, but resumed the subject on Edie's departure. It seemed to have taken possession of him. His kinsman's devoted life, the interests that depended on him, the splendid material that lay ready to his hand in the land and the people.

"The country was bog, the people half-naked savages, when he came amongst them," Charlie said; "it seems incredible now. If so much can be done in one man's lifetime, what might not a generation or two more of wise rulers effect? I mean rulers—not landlords. Chiefs of the race who would be willing to live and die for their people as a chieftain should—who

would count wealth, rank, culture, as so many treasures given them to be held in trust for and expended on the people God has given into their hands."

Charlie's voice had grown low and earnest, and his eyes were shining with the light of a far-off vision as he spoke; but a glance and graceful little gesture from Edie brought him to a sudden stop, and, obediently following her to the piano, he sang and turned over music for the rest of the evening.

An unsettled Sunday followed. Then a Monday of floral decoration and packing. On Monday afternoon a telegram to Miss Woodcock.

"Why to me?" asked Edie. "It's for Charles. Such an address! I wonder it reached anyone. Why, it's from Lord Glenara's secretary. 'His lordship died last night. You are urgently required here.' How aggravating! It will just unsettle Charlie. If nothing has been left to him why should he go? If he has had a legacy he may just as well stay away; he won't lose it!" She looked for sympathy to Gertrude with an aggrieved little frown on her white forehead.

"Something may be due to the last wishes of an uncle in Lord Glenara's position," dryly replied Miss Bourne. "But here is Sir Charles coming across the lawn. You can discuss it with him."

Sir Charles entered, looking grieved and perplexed, by one door as Gertrude discreetly withdrew by another, to wait, and wonder, and sigh, and speculate over her knitting, and laugh at herself for being more keenly touched by the events of the little drama which was passing before her than most of the actual performers seemed to be.

"Please come back," said Edie's gentle voice in the doorway; "Charles has had another telegram which we want to show you."

"From my uncle's solicitors. It came last night. This letter followed by this morning's post."

Gertrude read both, while Sir Charles paced up and down the room, and Edie went to summon her father and mother to the council.

Lord Glenara had died suddenly, leaving instructions that his nephew should be sent for as soon as possible. The Glenara estates were unentailed, and he had left everything unreservedly to Sir Charles.

"What a pity the title doesn't go with the property," sighed Edie, returning with

Mrs. Woodcock: "You must start at once, Charles. Of course the wedding ought to be postponed now. We must see that a proper notice goes to the Court Journal, mamma."

Sir Charles stepped suddenly before her, holding out his hands to her.

"Eddie, will you send me away alone again? Cannot your father marry us quietly to-morrow morning, and let us go together?"

"My dear Charles! It's impossible to go from a wedding to a funeral. I couldn't do such a thing. Besides, I have no mourning to take with me."

"That is conclusive, I suppose," he answered in an odd, impatient tone, and the question dropped.

Miss Bourne travelled up to town with him next morning.

"As your wedding, when it does come off, will be a very quiet one, I suppose, I shall start for the Engadine next month, so good-bye," she said as they parted. "Write sometimes and tell me of your doings."

Charlie promised, and bade farewell.

He kept his word, writing constantly and freely, as secure of her full sympathy. He told her of all his uncle's wise forethought for him, of the directions he had left for his assistance, and the pains he had taken to simplify and set in order all the business details which would require Charles's personal attention; of the heartfelt grief of the Glenara people, and their touching confidence in him as his uncle's representative.

"What am I to do?" he wrote in dire perplexity. "I am wanted here, if ever man was. No agent will do—even if I could find one. I have no tie to England. Whitelands can be sold at any moment. It was only bought, to please my step-mother, when my Australian uncle died and left us some money. There is a rich retired Indian officer I know of, Colonel Chestleton, who will give me a fancy price for it any day. It must be a question for Eddie to consider."

After that, Miss Bourne was not surprised that the letters from Glenara suddenly ceased.

July came to an end. Piper insisted on a speedy change of air for herself and her mistress; the house was shut up; and Gertrude, ready packed for Pontresina, found herself with a spare day to bestow on Honeymeade Rectory in answer to Mrs. Woodcock's urgent invitation. The big easy-chair had travelled out to the south terrace,

and in it she found her friend basking in the August sunshine in her usual state of serene content with life and her surroundings generally.

"The girls are at the church, finishing the harvest decorations. We have the Thanksgiving Service this evening. I hope you are not too tired to go," she purred. "We are to have tea at Bareacres Farm first. Colonel Chestleton lives there, you know, while he is looking out for a house. I want you to see him, dear. That was why I asked you to come down."

"Indeed? Is one of the girls——"

"Hush, dear! we must not be premature in our rejoicings; but I think he is here so very often, and his attentions to Margaretta are so very marked, that I shouldn't wonder if she were to be the first married, after all. A very agreeable man, of good family, with excellent principles—just what we could wish for in a son."

"You are indeed a fortunate woman, Juliet," her friend replied with a little ring of semi-scorn in her voice. "I remember you said exactly the same of Charlie."

Bareacres Farm was a queer, white-washed, many-cornered, tile-roofed construction, with a vine running wildly all over the front, glimpses of rich oriental hangings in the open lattice-windows, and a low green gate, on which leant a tall, soldierly, grey-moustached gentleman, awaiting his guests.

They found tea ready for them in the low parlour, which was hung with Indian splendours of brocade and embroideries, and bestrewed with valuable bric-à-brac, which bespoke the colonel's sagacity as a collector.

Gertrude liked the look of her host, and felt excited and sympathetic when she noticed his eager start when the click of the latched gate was heard and the girls' voices sounded outside.

In they came, Eddie first, bright and gracious, wearing the prettiest of her trousseau-dresses. She seemed rather embarrassed on greeting Miss Bourne, and replied somewhat shortly to her enquiries about her absent lover, but soon regained her usual sweet serenity.

After the service the rector joined them with one of the curates, and all strolled home together through the warm still dusk, and lingered about the rectory lawns till supper-time, when they gathered round the lamp-lighted table; the girls at the farther end. The Leylands had strolled in, and the curate's aunt had appeared from

somewhere. It was quite natural that Edie should wait for a quieter time to speak of her own personal affairs to Gertrude, who could only gather from the general conversation that, at all events, no wedding was immediately impending.

Some hours later, when Piper had been dismissed for the night, and Gertrude was sleepily turning bedwards, she was surprised by a gentle tap at her door.

"May I come in?" asked Edie, pale and precise in her blue be-ribboned dressing-gown. "I have something very important to say to you."

"My child, what is it? What has happened?"

"I am in great distress and trouble," was the reply, in tones considerably less agitated than the questioner's; "and I have come to ask a great favour of you. No one knows what I have gone through lately." Edie wiped away a lady-like tear—not one of your vulgar, nose-reddening, eyelid-blistering secretions, but a gentle drop, just enough to manifest real emotion. "In justice to Sir Charles as well as to myself, I cannot go on with our engagement, and I have written to end it all to-night."

"Edie! Oh, how will he bear it?"

"If you will read these letters you will see how completely I am overlooked in his plans for his future life. He goes through the form of asking my advice on every point, but evidently never lets my wishes or opinions make the slightest change in his projects. He says he cannot sell his Irish property now, and will not leave it to an agent. I am to be sacrificed without hesitation to his quixotic schemes. I should be wanting in a proper sense of what is due to myself if I gave in."

Gertrude wasn't listening to a single word. She had taken the letters, and was rapidly glancing over them—letters written in the fulness of Charles's heart, with never a doubt of his sweetheart's love and sympathy; not making light of her possible disappointment at the change from Whitelands to Glenara, but full of schemes for brightening up the splendid gloomy old castle into a home worthy of his darling. He promised her to arrange for part of every year to be spent in England. They should bring home visitors, make friends with some of their widely scattered neighbours, find society in Dublin now and then. Only let her come. All that was disheartening and perplexing in his work would be met with new courage if she were by his side—and so on, and so on. Gertrude blushed, as she

let her stranger eyes fall on the pages of sweet lover's fooling which Edie handed her so unconcernedly. She folded them up, and asked in a hard unsympathetic tone:

"What can I do about it? You seem to have made up your mind."

"There will be so much gossip," Edie objected, "and people are so unkind. Couldn't I go with you to Pontresina—just till the fuss is over?"

Miss Bourne sat meditating, a hot flush on her thin cheek and her black brows drawn down.

"No, Edie, I can't take you. I shall not go myself," she said at last. "I am not blaming you. You are doing the best thing for yourself, I believe; but you can't realise what your resolve will cost him. Have you sent your letter yet?"

"No; but I have quite resolved."

"I don't ask you to change your resolution, only to keep that letter back for two days. Let it reach him, when he has one friendly face near him into which he can look for comfort. My boy! My poor Charlie!"

Edie looked mildly surprised at the outburst.

"Do you suppose he really will mind it so much? I will keep the letter back, or, if you like, you shall take it to him."

"No," cried Gertrude with a shiver. "There, say no more about it. Good-night—or, good-bye. I shall start for Glenara to-morrow morning," and Edie departed to close her blue eyes in calm slumber as soon as her head touched its pillow, while the poor, lonely, foolish woman in the next room, who was nothing to anybody in the whole affair, tossed, and sobbed, and moistened her pillow with angry tears, or winced and quivered as she thought of the coming anguish—of somebody else.

The russet and umber hues of October lay warm over the land when next she beheld Honeymeade. Mrs. Woodcock and her big chair were established in their winter quarters opposite the crackling wood-fire in the dressing-room.

"So good of you to come, so perfectly sweet," was Gertrude's greeting from the rector's wife, as she sank back again into her cushioned nest, and folded her white hands on her velvet lap.

"I thought I should like to come and cheer you in your desolation. How strange the house seems with only Mabel about."

"Ah, it is a trial! Only parents know what it is to part with a daughter or two.

I wish you could have seen the brides, though, Gertrude," said Mrs. Woodcock, rousing to enthusiasm. "They looked perfect. To think of it being dear Edie that Colonel Chestleton admired after all! Of course, while she was hampered by that unhappy engagement, he, as a man of honour, could do nothing; but now, she will be actually mistress of Whitelands after all! How thankful we should be that our short-sighted plans are sometimes overruled for our good! Why, if it had been Margaretta who had married Colonel Chestleton, what would have become of poor Claud Braithwaite, who has loved her from the first day he came here as curate; though, of course, he had no chance whatever then of being able to marry."

"Till his father providentially brought on a fit of apoplexy by trying to catch a train, and left him two thousand a year," Gertrude concluded. "Yes, you are right to be thankful. Still, if Edie had married Sir Charles, and Margaretta the colonel, then he could have taken Mabel."

Mrs. Woodcock looked as if she had received a new idea. She paused to examine it.

"No, dear," she purred again presently; "it seems worldly to speculate on such matters. Let us be content with what has been bestowed upon us, and rest assured that whatever happens, all is for the best."

Miss Bourne gazed dreamily into the fire for a few minutes. A vision of Glenara rose before her eyes; of Charlie, lonely, saddened, but not discouraged, working out his appointed task without help or sympathy, bearing uncomplainingly the penalties of his many mistakes; hoping for no earthly reward of his labours, ever realising the truth of the wise man's words, that "there is in man a Higher than love of Happiness; he can do without Happiness, and in place thereof find Blessedness;" and, as the vision faded, she turned with glowing eyes and a proud half-smile to her friend.

"You are right, Juliet. This end is something far better than anything we could have planned. Far better so."

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO. GIFT.

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKFAST was late at Guelder Lodge. It always was so when Mrs. Pentreath had been out at a whist-party the night before;

but when that lady came down to it, her face and manner were redolent of more than usual complacency. What wonder, either, when the day had opened with almost spring-like warmth? The sun was shining balmily; there was no east wind—that surest ruffler of temper to all who have bones to ache and nerves to jar; and, to crown all, she had not only won nine-and-sixpence the previous night to her own hand, but had once held three aces and the king of trumps in it at the same time.

Hetty was down before her, and presented rather a contrast to her hostess, looking ill and languid, with dark shadows under her eyes, and no more colour in her pretty face than that shown by the ragged petals of the white chrysanthemums awaying in the wind outside; but these signs were amply accounted for by her headache of yesterday, and simply caused Mrs. Pentreath to give her a more kindly kiss, and address her in a gentler tone and manner than she had used for some time back towards her troublesome little protégée. Indeed, it would have been difficult to find a pleasanter or more peaceful-looking breakfast-table. Outside, a turquoise sky and emerald lawn, the latter still sparkling in patches with the frost-diamonds which were fast melting in the mellow sunshine, save where the feathering, deep-green boughs of cedars or deodars made strips of shade across the velvety turf; inside, a luxurious room, crowded with comforts and prettinesses, and bright with a great glowing fire which blazed and sparkled on steel and silver, on snowy cloth and dainty food, on Mrs. Pentreath's white hair and handsome features, and on little Hetty, with her soft black curls and pale face, and quaint woollen gown of some warm, dark-red material, cut short enough to show the tiny feet in their neat shoes and black silk stockings, and with deep ruffles of yellowish lace turned back from throat and wrist.

There was not much of what could be called conversation in the room, even after Hickson had finished his solemn ministering to the two ladies' meal, and had retired to his own regions. Mrs. Pentreath, indeed, talked rather volubly at first, narrating her card triumphs of the night before, and chuckling a little over them; and Hetty listened, and at intervals gave faint smiles of assent; but the girl was strangely wanting in her usual animation, and volunteered scarcely a word on her own account. In truth, she was partly occupied in debating

within herself how to word her request for leave of absence, and whether she should wait to propound it till after Mr. Hamilton's visit or not. She felt sure he would come this morning. He had told her that he should count the minutes till he saw her again the day before, and if something had occurred to prevent his calling then, he would be the more certain to do so early to-day. But then the question was, how could she manage to see him alone, so as to make that confession to him which was weighing on her heart, and—how would he receive it?

Somehow, she no longer felt half so happy or confident on this subject as she had done on the day previous. Suppose, after all, he did not trust her thoroughly? Suppose he were to say that a man must have some grounds for insulting a woman before he would dare to do so; or even that a woman who had been so insulted was scarcely fit to be a clergyman's wife; or suppose, though he did not say this, she could see the thought in that hard look which had frightened her once or twice before in his face—what should she, what could she do then? Nothing but let him go; for how, unless he had perfect confidence in her, could she hold him to her? Let him go, and then ask Mrs. Pentreath for an indefinite leave, and go away herself—away from her present pleasant home and the people who had been so kind and so cruel to her, and had made and marred the happiness of her life; away—where she hardly knew, or how even to find those little-known kindred of her dead mother, if so be that one of them would take her in till she could seek out something to do for herself.

But this was a sombre prospect after all, one born of sleepless hours and overstrung nerves, and one that she scarcely contemplated for a moment in reality. She might have done so if it had been the case that she had any guilt to confess, any wrong or doubtful doings of her own; for she had learnt by experience that the vicar could be both stern and jealous on occasion; and though the knowledge had not made her love him less, it had mingled with her love a flavour of that wholesome awe, the absence of which in their wives it is the fashion of husbands nowadays to lament. As things were, however, it was Captain Pentreath's faults which were in question, not her own, and all she meant to tell Mr. Hamilton was that the young officer had forced his company on her on the way back from church, had been very

rude to her, and had threatened to make mischief between her and her lover by showing the latter a photograph which he had stolen from her. She had it safe, and she would show it to him (for reasons of her own she felt an extreme repugnance to mentioning how she got it back, and was sure he would not hear it from anybody else), and she would explain about the writing on the other side, and then—or, better, first of all perhaps—would beg him for her guardian's sake, and in remembrance of all her past kindness, not to let himself be provoked into quarrelling with his cousin, or—

Hush! there he was.

Breakfast was over, and Mrs. Pentreath had been called out to consult with the gardener about the cutting back of certain plants in the greenhouse; but Hetty was still sitting near the table absorbed in these reflections when a quick, well-known step on the gravel and sharp, decisive knock announced the visitor she was expecting, and almost before she could move he was in the room, having put aside the servant and entered unannounced.

Hetty sprang up, all her troubles banished by the first sound of his voice, and came to meet him.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she said joyfully, and was putting out both hands to him when she stopped short, frightened by a look in his face she had never seen before. Stern it was, assuredly, sterner than she had ever seen it; but that was not all, for it was pale almost to ghastliness, and wearing an expression of pain and even agitation, so different from its usual frank, steady composure, that Hetty's hands fell again involuntarily, and she stepped back a little, asking: "Is anything the matter? I have been so wishing you would come to-day."

"And I should have come in any case, but are you alone—quite alone? There is something I want to say to you."

He had taken her hand and held it as he spoke; but his manner was preoccupied and unloverlike, and he did not kiss her. Hetty's nerves were the reverse of strong that morning, and she began to tremble. Was it possible after all that Captain Pentreath had been beforehand with her? But the vicar had felt the trembling of the little hand in his, and the stern abstraction of his face broke up into anxious concern.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" he said quickly. "You look dreadfully ill. I never saw you so pale, and your eyes—Have you been crying? What is it?"

Great Heavens! has the news reached here first after all?"

"What news?" asked Hetty, bewildered in her turn. "I have not heard any."

But the quick, impetuous questions, and the searching look which accompanied them, had confused her. Her foolish fingers trembled more than ever, and the colour mounted into her face in such a vivid blush that it was little wonder if the keen eyes watching her did not deem her answer conclusive, and grew graver with displeased surprise. Perhaps it was because of this that his answer came so abruptly:

"The news which I received an hour back, and which I came here to ask your assistance in breaking to my aunt, is that Ernest has been arrested on a charge of murder—murder of a brother officer with whom he quarrelled yesterday evening, and who was found shot——"

"Shot!" If the bullet had passed through the girl's body she could not have sprung back with a sharper cry. "Shot—murdered! Oh, George, no! Was that what he meant? Oh, surely—surely, he couldn't."

The vicar looked at her in great surprise.

"Could not mean what? What do you mean, Hetty? Is it possible you knew anything of this?"

Hetty went crimson all over in a moment.

"I? No, no, no; of course not," she stammered, heaping one negative on another in her embarrassment, though her lips were shaking so much they could hardly form the words. "I don't even understand what you are saying. Captain Pentreath murder anyone! Oh, it can't be possible. What would his mother say if she heard you?"

"Say, Hetty Mavors! Why, that it is a lie."

Unseen by both, a third person had entered the room while they were speaking, a tall stately old lady, in black silk, and with soft white hair framing a haughty, handsome face. It was pitiful, the ghastly change that came over it as she spoke, the words coming in hoarse, laboured gasps:

"My son Ernest! George, how dare you! Tell me at once what this is. Some hoax. My son——" And there she broke off, and, before either could prevent it, she staggered and fell heavily, like one stricken through the heart and dead.

It is easy to imagine the consternation of the two thus interrupted, and for the moment all thought of themselves, aye,

even of Ernest Pentreath and the terrible tidings respecting him, were forgotten in the more terrible doubt as to whether the shock of those tidings had not in very truth brought death to the mother who gave him life. It looked like it. George Hamilton raised her carefully, and laid her on the sofa; and Hetty hung over her, chafing her hands, fanning her, and applying restoratives; but all seemed in vain, and by the time the lady's-maid had been summoned, and Hickson sent off in hot haste for the doctor, the news had somehow leaked out (as bad news invariably will in the most reticent of households) that something dreadful had happened to "the captain." He had murdered somebody, or he had been murdered himself (Hickson held one story, and the cook the other), and he or some other body was in prison and going to be hung for shooting the other body: worst of all—and this was the only certain part of the whole matter—the shock of hearing about it had nearly killed his mother.

Nearly, but not quite. It was only a fainting fit, though an unusually severe one; and as Hetty knelt beside her, gazing on the marble features and watching with streaming eyes the doctor's efforts at restoring consciousness, every memory of late unkindness faded out before the thought of all that she owed to the woman so sorely smitten; and while she grieved from the depths of her innocent heart for having ever given her either trouble or annoyance on Captain Pentreath's account, she felt thankful at least that she had not added to it by complaining of the latter's conduct on the previous day.

By-and-by, however, Mrs. Pentreath began to revive. The eyelids fluttered, the lips lost their livid ashen hue; and after a time she was even able to look about her, and, true to herself, to force a faint smile on recognising the doctor, as she murmured:

"It is nothing—nothing at all; some foolish joke. I hope they have not told you."

"Told me what? That you tripped and fell over one of those stupid Persian-rugs of yours? Indeed they did then, and how often have I told you that I couldn't bear such mantraps in the house!" said the doctor cheerfully, all the more so, indeed, that he had already extracted the true history of the seizure from the vicar, and was anxious above all things to prevent her own mind from recurring to it. He thought he had succeeded, for Mrs. Pen-

treath smiled again a little less feebly, and answered that they were not as safe as carpets. She must have the corners tacked down.

"The fact was," with a small forced laugh, more pitiful to those who saw it than any tears, "she had been up very late dissipating the night before, and that always made her sleepy and stupid in the morning. If they would not think her very lazy, she should like a little nap." But when the doctor had gone, declaring that nothing could be better for her, all Mrs. Pentreath's assumption of playfulness and composure vanished in an instant. Her face seemed to become suddenly haggard and livid, like that of a woman of eighty, and she sat bolt upright, clutching Hetty's hands in hers so tightly that the girl almost cried out, as she bade her tell what there was to tell at once, or, better still, send for the vicar to do so. Was it all madness or a dream, that they had ventured to speak of Ernest in connection with a murder, or what—what had happened to him?

Alas for the poor mother! it was no dream, though all that George Hamilton could tell either her or Hetty were the bare facts he had learnt that morning from a telegram sent to him by Ernest's solicitor, and which ran as follows:

"Captain Pentreath arrested on charge of murder. Club quarrel last evening. Other man found shot two hours later. P. denies charge. Break news to family."

But as the day went on more tidings came in rapidly, and, despite all the efforts of the family to keep them a secret, became speedily known to the household in general, and even diffused about the neighbourhood, with every detail and amplification which the proneness of human nature to gossip and exaggeration could suggest.

Divested of these latter embellishments, however, the story, as even the heart-broken mother and the shuddering girl who waited on her with a daughter's sympathy, were forced to hear it, was as I shall briefly tell it below.

Captain Pentreath had arrived at his club about lunch-time on the previous day, and in a mood which was noticed even then as being the reverse of amiable. Perhaps his irritability was increased by the fact that one or two men to whom he attempted to talk appeared too much engaged in their papers and magazines to be able to afford him anything but the briefest answers, while one or two others, known to be rather special chums of his in general, went

out almost as soon as he made his appearance. Anyhow, he left the club himself very soon afterwards, but returned again early in the same evening, and at a time when it happened to be rather full of men who had either dined there or dropped in immediately afterwards. Amongst the company was a middle-aged officer, who had just returned on sick leave from India, and who was known to belong to Captain Pentreath's late regiment there. Possibly for this reason several of the visitors drew on one side, as if to facilitate the meeting between the two, and it was observed that Pentreath looked very red and excited—some said embarrassed—as he went up to his old comrade and offered him his hand. Whether Major Hollis did refuse his altogether in return, or whether, as another version of the story went, he only gave the younger officer two fingers and then turned on his heel, was not clearly known, and is not material; but almost immediately afterwards high words were heard between the two men. Captain Pentreath accusing the new comer of slandering him and undermining his character; and Major Hollis retorting that a man who had caused a married lady's name to become a common theme for club gossip of the most disrespectful nature, had no character to undermine; and further accusing him of having plumed himself on favours he had never received; or which, if he had received, would have been as disgraceful to himself as they were ruinous to the donor.

The quarrel grew so hot at last that several of the other gentlemen were obliged to interfere, and the antagonists were separated, but not until Captain Pentreath had told the major that he should answer to him for his language; to which Major Hollis had answered that he was perfectly ready to do so at any time, and could easily be found at his rooms, the address of which he mentioned.

A few minutes after this Captain Pentreath was persuaded to leave the club in company with one gentleman who appeared to stand by him; but he did so still in a violent rage, and even the hall-porter testified to the excited language used by the young officer as he passed through the vestibule, and his threats that he would be even with Hollis yet, and either make him apologise or shoot him like a dog.

This was all that was known of his doings at the time; while with regard to Major Hollis it was easily ascertained that he went home to his lodgings in Albion

Street less than half an hour after his antagonist's departure; that the little servant-maid there heard him let himself in, and came to the top of the kitchen-stairs (her mistress being out at the theatre) to make sure that it was he; that she saw him standing on the doorstep, apparently in angry colloquy with another man; and that being satisfied of his identity, she went downstairs again and to bed; that when there she was startled by a loud noise "like a bang," but being half-asleep paid no attention to it; and that it was left to her mistress on returning home, a couple of hours later, to find Major Hollis stretched across the hearthrug in the front parlour with a bullet through his brain, and stone dead.

This woman, for a wonder, showed presence of mind. Most of her class would, on receiving such a shock, have either executed a faint, which in the lower orders is apt to be a strangely noisy seizure; or have gone into hysterics, a still noisier proceeding requiring much brandy and all the attention from outsiders that ought to be paid to the injured party. Mrs. Jagers, however, was a sensible person, and neither did one nor the other; but within five minutes of ascertaining the state of affairs had roused the dazed and sleepy servant-girl and sent her off, first for a doctor—by good fortune there was one living only two or three doors off—and next for the gentleman whom poor Major Hollis had given her as his reference only three days before.

By good fortune, this individual—also a military man—had but just walked home with a friend from the club, where they had been spending the evening over the whist-table; and, horror-stricken as both were at the girl's news, they lost not a moment in jumping into the cab which had brought her, and going off to Albion Street as fast as the driver would take them.

And now comes the most terrible part of the story to the Pentreaths—the damning part as regarded Ernest.

The cause which took Major Hollis's landlady into his room at all was this—she saw the parlour-window lighted up, and being in want of change for half-a-crown to pay her cabman with, knocked at the door to ask her lodger if he could oblige her with it. At first sight, she thought the room was empty, and when a second glance showed her the body lying in a heap between the table and

the fireplace, she only waited to ascertain that life was really extinct, and was rushing out to call in the cabman to assist her, when, as she afterwards deposed, she became aware of the presence of a stranger, previously unseen, in the passage, as also that his back was towards her, and that he was making for the door; that she prevented this by seizing hold of him and shrieking for help, till not only the cab-driver, but a couple of passers-by came to her assistance; that they all saw that the man, who was a gentleman, and made no resistance, was deadly white and shaking like a leaf; and that she then and there exclaimed:

"It's about my lodger—he's lying murdered in his room, and here's the man as done it. For the Lord's sake don't let him escape!"

That on this, one of the bystanders ran for a policeman, and one being brought, the man was handed over to him, despite his protestations of innocence and assertions that he had only entered the house behind the landlady, having come there to call on Major Hollis, and that horrified by the sight that met his eyes, he had lost his presence of mind, and staggered back into the passage; that he called on the cabman to corroborate the first part of this story, but that the latter declared himself unable to do so, having been too busy looking in his vehicle to see if "the lady" had left anything behind her, to notice who else went in or out of the door; and finally that Colonel Patterson, the deceased man's "reference," had no sooner entered the house and seen the prisoner, over whom the constable was then holding guard, than he started back, exclaiming:

"Pentreath! Then it was you! Good God! have you killed him?"

After which, and a few further words between the prisoner and the same gentleman, the former was taken off in custody to the nearest police-station and detained till the morning, when he was brought before the magistrate and committed to prison pending the coroner's inquest, bail being refused.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XIV. A PEACE-MAKER.

JENIFER went in as Jack came rushing, boy-like, out of the sitting-room to meet her. He was glad, sorry, delighted, mortified, all at the same time. That his sister had come, was what he now told himself, he "knew she would do" all along. But he had not prophesied concerning the meeting between his sister and his wife, and, now that this meeting was imminent, he felt ignobly powerless to take possession of the situation, and make it subservient to his will.

"You dear old girl, you darling Jenny," he began nervously, grasping his sister's hands. "Here, Minnie, come and take my sister's cloak. I mean, ask Jenifer to take off her cloak, and—and we don't want much fire these spring evenings, do we, Jenny?"

He spoke eagerly and bustled about. He longed to get the first awkward collision between his wife and Jenifer over. Then Jenifer's tact would assert itself, and there would be no more jarring.

But Mrs. John Ray was disposed to stand upon her rights. That Jack's sister had been antagonistic to her from the first she knew. That Jack's sister had no power to either harm or aid her now she knew also. Accordingly she felt that it behoved her to show something like a haughty demeanour to Miss Ray, and, as her only conception of hauteur was rudeness, she said:

"As you've come, pray walk in and make yourself at home; I s'pose that a room that's warm enough for me, is warm enough for you."

Mrs. John Ray was dressed consistently and well, and her house was well-ordered

and comfortable. Evidently she held the housewife's power, and would make things pleasant in a way at home for Jack. All these truths Jenifer took in at a glance, and they made her not only tolerant, but conciliatory. Dirt and untidiness around him would have made Jack's hard lot harder still.

"I ran nearly all the way, and I'm quite warm, thank you, Minnie," Jenifer said, trying vigorously to speak in exactly the same tones she would have used in addressing Hubert's wife. But the task was a difficult one, and Mrs. Jack was sharp enough to see the difficulty of it.

"I'm not going to let her think she's doing me any kindness or favour," Mrs. Jack thought. And then, by way of asserting her sense of perfect equality, she said:

"So you're off to-morrow to try to make your fortune in London, we hear. Jack and I were saying just before you came in that we'd rather have heard you were going to get married down here to some one who'd keep you a good home, and give you all you wanted without your having to work for it."

"I didn't say all that, Jenny," Jack laughed. "Minnie did practically paint a picture of what she thought would be the best life for you, but I only ventured to remark that I thought you'd soon be as big a swell on the concert-boards as any of them."

"So I should be if I had an audience of Brother Jacks," Jenifer said affectionately.

"Well, I can only say, if you ever do come back into these parts, and none of your grand friends want to have you, you'll always find a welcome here, if we're good enough for you," Mrs. Jack put in aggressively.

"I think I can safely say that under any circumstances I should always prefer

being with my brother to being with strangers, Minnie."

"One wouldn't have thought it from your goings-on of late," Mrs. Jack said, tossing her handsome head. "As I say, if Jack had picked any one's pocket, or 'listed for a common soldier, he couldn't have been more slighted by his own than he have been lately. Not that I care; I don't want to be picked up by folks who think the earth not good enough for them to tread on. And as for Lady Impidence, her pride will have a fall before long."

"You needn't bully Jenifer, because Mrs. Hubert was rude to you the other day," Jack said in tones of vexation that went straight to his sister's heart.

"Minnie has the right to be angry," Jenifer said quietly. "Effie told me about her rudeness to you, and I told her what I thought of it. Don't suspect me of wishing to put you in a false position. Trust me to this extent at least. Never think I am going to try to hurt or annoy you in an underhand way, and believe that I am as friendly exactly as I seem to be."

"You'd have given your eyes to stop Jack from marrying me, though," Minnie went on with an uneasy sense that it behoved her to stand on the defensive.

"Not my eyes, but a good deal, I own, but that's past; you're Jack's wife, and my sister now, and I will never forget that you are both while you remember it."

"Ah, perhaps you wouldn't have spoken so fair as that if you hadn't had a come-down yourself," Mrs. Jack said sneeringly. "Now that you've got to go and work for your living, you begin to understand that a poor girl may have a heart, and feelings, and proper pride, just as well as her betters. But there! I don't want to make strife. Your pride has had a fall, and I'm sorry for you, and I'm sure I wish you well."

"Thank you, Minnie. Jack and you must come up and hear me the first time I sing in public."

"Father and mother have always set their faces against play-acting, and everything of that sort," Mrs. Jack said with her most insufferable assumption of being on the same level now with Jenifer; "if it hadn't been for that I might have been an actress over and over again; more than I can say have told me what a good one I should be, and what a fortune I should make; but I was never one of those bold pushing girls, who think they can do anything."

"Jenny dear, you're not going yet, are you?" Jack put in pleadingly.

The tone his wife was assuming towards his sister was nearly maddening him. Still, Jenifer's presence in his house was something bright in the midst of the shadows in which he had enveloped himself.

"I must, dear boy. Walk back with me. It's late, and we start early to-morrow," Jenifer said as she held her hand out to Jack's wife.

There was a momentary struggle with her own sensitiveness; then she conquered herself, bent forward, and kissed Minnie on the cheek.

"Take care Lady Impidence doesn't come and tell you she'll have your life for trespassing," Minnie said jeeringly to her husband.

But he turned a careless ear to her words—he had to do it often—and prepared to escort his sister home.

"I don't like her a bit the better for it, but I'm glad she's been and called me her sister, and kissed me," Mrs. Jack said to herself confidentially when Jenifer and Jack had gone. "It mayn't mean much, but it'll do to talk about, and mother won't go on nagging so much at me when she hears the family are coming round."

From which little soliloquy it may be inferred that Minnie's was not altogether a bed of uncrumpled rose-leaves, though she had married a gentleman, who was a handsome young fellow, and loved her into the bargain.

"Do you mean me to go quite home with you, Jenny?" Jack asked, as they shut the garden-gate behind them and turned into the Moor Royal grounds.

"I do. Perhaps we shall both be a little hurt and disappointed with the result of my experiment, for whatever happens to hurt and vex you will hurt and vex me too; but I think I'm right. Our mother is our mother; we are bound to be patient with her; we are bound to try and win her back to showing her love for you."

"I have forfeited that among other things for ever," he said bitterly.

"No, no, Jack. Our lives aren't meant to be smooth, I'm sure of that. Don't let us try to make them rougher by shutting our eyes, and stumbling against things instead of trying to avoid them. Be patient with our mother to-night. Think of what she has lost and is leaving. Remember that you have erred, and that she is justly offended with you. Bear your part of the

burden, and plead for the show of her love again—the love itself you have never lost.”

“It’s easy enough for you to speak, Jenny; but I feel such a black-sheep. On my word, I’m trembling now at the idea of entering Moor Royal. Hubert will be so deuced civil and cool, and Effie will behave exactly as if I hadn’t a wife, and the servants will look at me as if I were in disgrace. I dread it. Honestly, I’d rather not face it.”

“And I’d rather not face it with you, but we must. You mustn’t let mother go away without giving you a farewell kiss and blessing. Jack, you were always a plucky boy; be a brave man now.”

So she half led, half drove him on.

She flung open the hall-door and sprang into the house fearlessly and rather noisily, for she felt that in action lay her best chance of keeping up herself and keeping others up. As Jack followed her, Hubert and Effie crossed towards the bottom of the staircase, carrying a few trifles that had been scattered about the different rooms, and that now had to be smuggled in any way into various portmanteaux and trunks.

“Jenifer, how sensational you are, careering about at this hour of the night in the woods and fields,” Effie said, coming to a pause. “How you’re blown about! Ah, Jack, how are you? Funny the house looks, doesn’t it? You should just see what a clearance we’ve made in the drawing-room and dining-room.”

“I don’t think I could bear to see it,” poor Jack muttered.

“Couldn’t you, really? Now, I feel quite delighted at having performed the tedious task of selection. Hugh and I are going to sell nearly all the old furniture. It’s old enough to be old-fashioned, and not old enough to be antique, so it’s to go, and if we ever come back to Moor Royal I shall be able to have decent things about me. You can have a bed here to-night, Jack, if you like to stay and see the last of us to-morrow.”

“Thank you. I must go home to my wife,” Jack said with a gulp and a ghastly effort.

“Oh, you must go back to the farmhouse, must you? Jenifer, I wish you’d take a last look round and see if any of my wedding-presents have been forgotten. Good-night and good-bye, Jack. Come, Hugh.”

“Good-bye, old fellow. I’m sorry for

all this, but can’t help it, you know,” Hubert murmured as his wife bounded upstairs and he obediently prepared to follow her.

“Never mind, I can bear it,” Jack said doggedly.

And then Jenifer touched his arm and whispered:

“Come to mother now,” and he followed her to the little sitting-room where old Mrs. Ray spent most of her time.

Jenifer’s unwonted absence this evening had perplexed her mother sadly. She did not conceive it possible that Jenifer could so derogate from her dignity, as to go down to the house of which the keeper’s daughter was now mistress. And yet to what other house could she have gone? In her heart she was yearning for tidings of her son Jack. But she would not ask for them. He had wounded her sorely. He had perilled the honour of his father’s house. His children, who would be Rays, would have the low intriguing blood of the Thurtles in their veins. Jack had indeed made her life a heavily shaded one!

But now Jack came in, looking sad enough, Heaven knows, to soften any human heart, let alone a mother’s, but manly enough withal to make any mother proud of him.

“My boy come back to me!” she cried.

And she rose and fell upon his neck, and, though she wept blinding tears, there was more peace in her heart than had been there for many a week.

To be quite honest, there was a great deal more awkwardness than serene peace and happiness in this reconciliation-scene for Jack. His mother began by taking him so entirely as her own once-lost and now happily-restored child, without any reference to a wife or any encumbering matter of that nature, that for a few bewildered moments he scarcely realised that he belonged to himself. Then he pulled himself together, as he phrased it to himself, and said, as he hugged her:

“Mother darling, you’re not angry with me any longer, are you? I’ve been an awful ass, I know, but I can bear anything if you will forgive me and be just the same as you have always been to me. Mother! mother!” and he clung about her as he had been in the habit of clinging all his life.

“Oh, Jack, Jack! it’s too late! You can’t give her up and come back to us,” the poor lady wept.

"Give her up! Mother, she's my wife, and I wouldn't give her up even for you," the young fellow said, standing more erect, and unintentionally making his mother prouder of him than ever.

Then he bent his head a little, and told his mother that if she despised his wife, she must despise him also.

"It is bitter!"

"Yes, mother, awfully bitter for you, I know, and bitter for me, too, to be cut off from you all; but what can I do now? Having done what I have, what can I do now?"

"Nothing more than you're doing now, Jack," his sister cried, coming forward with hope and gladness in every look and gesture. "My dear boy, you're doing your best now to be loyal to your wife and grateful to your mother, and I feel for you, Jack, and will struggle with you if a struggle——"

"Oh, Jenny, don't distress me by pledging yourself to any rash course," her mother cried.

And Effie came in at the moment, saying:

"What dissipated people you are! Hugh and I were looking forward to the house being undisturbed to-night, when we heard that you were holding high jinks, Mrs. Ray; so I thought I would come and see if there was any prospect of a speedy dissolution of the family parliament."

She stood in the doorway as she spoke, holding the door open at arm's-length, a bright figure, full of confidence, success, and self-satisfaction.

"I will not keep your house open a minute longer. Good-night, Jack, good-bye, my son," his mother said brokenly, but Jenifer drew her sister-in-law aside a little, saying:

"Jack is a son of the house, Effie; you are the mistress here now; make him feel that you know it."

"Oh, pray sleep here if you like, Jack," Effie said lazily. She had a good deal of the artist about her, and she was conceiving quite a pretty little "separation scene" as she stood there. But the others did not know this, and so they thought her entirely heartless.

It was impossible for either the mother or son to say anything further that might lead to a fuller understanding between them, now that Effie was presiding over the interview in her usual dictatorial way. She appeared to be perfectly good-tempered and entirely at her ease, but she made

them feel that they were selfishly keeping her up, when it would be for the good of her health that she should retire to rest. Her cool presence iced all Jack's melting endeavours to win his mother to award him a more perfect forgiveness, and that mother found herself nervously shrinking from the probability of hearing her eldest son's wife use words of biting scorn and contempt of the wife of the younger son. Jenifer was the only one of the trio who felt unabashed and unawed by Effie's presence.

"Jack and mother want to be alone for a few minutes, Effie; come down with me, will you?" she said, but Effie did not mean Jack to be reinstated if she could help it.

"I dislike these scenes and mysteries, and midnight meetings," she said angrily. "If I am mistress in my own house, I have the right to object to family intrigues going on in it."

"You shall never have to object to my presence in your house again," Jack cried.

Then he flung his arms round his mother for a moment, kissed Jenifer on the forehead, and went his way from among them, leaving his mother shattered by the force of her contending feelings, and Effie singing merrily on her way to her own room.

AN ITALIAN PRINCE ON HIS TRAVELS.

IN the second half of the seventeenth century His Serene Highness Ferdinand the Second was Grand Duke of Tuscany, a generous, liberal-minded man, with a cultivated taste for music and poetry. He was unfortunate, however, in his wife, Vittoria delle Rovere, Duchess of Urbino, a proud suspicious bigot, wholly influenced by the priests. He was not less unfortunate in his son Cosmo, in the fulness of time his successor, a weak sensual prince, a puppet in the hands of the Jesuits. Like his father, Cosmo made an unhappy match. He married, very much against her own wishes, Margaret Louisa, eldest daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, a vivacious and accomplished princess, but equally averse from Spanish haughtiness and Italian gravity. She was, moreover, passionately in love with Prince Charles of Lorraine, who afterwards won great renown by defeating, in conjunction with John Sobieski, an Ottoman army under the very walls of Vienna.

Cosmo, it seems, was as deeply enamoured of his young and beautiful bride as anyone

could be who demanded much and yielded nothing, and whose cold unsympathetic temperament was calculated to repel rather than to attract the sprightly clever Frenchwoman, who was untroubled with a conscience, and madly in love with another man. In the hope of curing his son of his infatuation for his unworthy wife, and of averting violent scenes of domestic discord, the Grand Duke Ferdinand sent him off on a tour through Tyrol and down the Rhine to Amsterdam. The experiment having utterly failed, Cosmo was despatched on a longer journey through Spain, Portugal, England, and Holland. A detailed narrative of the illustrious traveller's journeyings, illustrated with numerous bad drawings, was prepared by Count Lorenzo Magalotti, afterwards Secretary to the Academy del Cimento, and a much respected correspondent of Lord Somers and Sir Isaac Newton, by the latter of whom he was designated "Il Magazino del buon Gusto"—the Magazine of Good Taste.

It is only with Cosmo's wanderings in England during the year 1669, and with the narrator's comments on English society at that period, that we need trouble ourselves. It may, however, be remarked that if absence did not make his heart grow fonder, it failed to render him callous to the misconduct and perversity of his abominable wife.

In consequence of bad seamanship on the part of the captain and pilot, his highness found himself one day in St. George's Channel, and took advantage of the opportunity to land in Kinsale Harbour. He does not appear to have been favourably impressed with the architectural beauties of that town, and was evidently shocked that the Roman Catholics, who, to the number of two hundred families, were scattered over the surrounding territory, should be living miserably "in mud cabins, badly thatched with straw, sleeping on short mats, and subsisting chiefly on fish and cockles." Bread to them was an almost unknown luxury. They were treated as a conquered people, even as serfs, being compelled to surrender to their landlord three-fourths of the produce of their tiny farms, besides paying a guinea and a half a year for the rent of a cabin and a few square yards of land. They paid six shillings each towards the maintenance of a priest, who ministered to their spiritual wants clandestinely. Throughout the province of Munster provisions of all kinds, and particularly fish and game, were abundant and cheap,

with the exception of French wines. Money was so scarce that the currency mainly consisted of Spanish coin. The viceroy drew annually forty thousand pounds from the Government, his appointment being the most valuable "in the gift of the kings of Europe." The revenue derived by the Crown from Ireland did not exceed three hundred thousand pounds a year. The antipathy entertained by the English towards the Irish was so bitter and unreasonable that intermarriages were prohibited, as likewise the use of the native language. It is undeniable, we learn, that in Ireland "the waters stagnate on the very highest mountains, so that even on the tops of the hills is found land soaked in water, producing in greater abundance than any other grass and wild sorrel. In descending the hills on his return to the ship, his highness passed near some cabins which served to shelter poor people, the native rustics of Ireland, who have no place to rest upon but the bare earth; and, having caused them to be reconnoitred for curiosity, he discovered that within they lived like wild beasts."

Although travelling in the strictest incognito, the unfortunate prince was never suffered to pass through the smallest town that boasted of a municipality without being worried with speeches of congratulation, and all manner of civic pomposity. On landing at Plymouth he was not only encountered by the mayor and aldermen "in their habits of ceremony," but had besides to walk between a double line of soldiers "under arms, with colours flying, trumpets sounding, and drums beating," while the sailors on the numerous ships in the harbour manned the yards, and the people filled the streets and mounted to the very roofs of the houses. Such a rare sight in those days was a foreign prince on his travels!

Not that the lower orders of Englishmen were at all partial to foreigners. Indeed, they entertained a great prejudice and cherished a profound hatred towards all other nationalities, especially the French—Count Magalotti is our authority—"treating such as come among them with contempt and insult." The nobility, on the other hand, particularly those who had visited foreign parts, had picked up a few lessons in good breeding in their travels, and displayed "a certain degree of politeness and courtesy towards strangers." Nearly all of them spoke French and Italian, the

latter language in preference; but, do what they would, they failed altogether to shake off their characteristic stiffness and uncouthness, and were never able to "get the better of a certain natural melancholy, which had the appearance of eternally clouding their minds with unpleasant thoughts." In truth, thoughtful men had only too much reason to be grave, and even melancholy. Not only had they and their fathers passed through fearful trials, but there was the constant dread that the levity of Charles and the bigotry of his brother might again involve the nation in the horrors of a civil war. As for the people at large, they hated the French for being Roman Catholics, but still more for the sufferings they had themselves undergone, as they believed, through the sinister influence of the queen-mother, Henrietta Maria.

Within the space of a hundred years Plymouth had grown out of a poor fishing-village into one of "the best cities of England, having between twelve and fifteen thousand inhabitants," as against seventy-five thousand at the present day. Dorchester, "a simple town," seems to have been better peopled then than now. The Italian diarist puts down the population as between ten thousand and twelve thousand, whereas now it barely exceeds seven thousand five hundred. Salisbury, also, has declined from over sixteen thousand inhabitants to fourteen thousand five hundred. Cambridge, however, has risen from twelve thousand souls, including two thousand five hundred collegians, to thirty-five thousand; Ipswich from two thousand to fifty thousand seven hundred; Northampton from sixteen thousand to nearly fifty-two thousand; while Rochester has increased from between sixteen thousand and eighteen thousand to only twenty-one thousand five hundred. London and Westminster, of course, stand out conspicuous. In 1669, although these two cities covered a considerably larger area than Paris, their united population fell short of half a million, or some tens of thousands less than the French capital. It was said that six hundred thousand Englishmen slept every night in ships and boats, and this report seemed to the Italians not incredible.

Although Dorchester is described as "a simple town," the district was so much infested with robbers that his highness was escorted by a detachment of mounted militia until he was out of all danger. Near Basingstoke he was met by a troop of the royal regiment of the Earl of Oxford, the

officers of which wore a red sash with gold tassels. It was "composed of eight companies of seventy men each; they receive from the king half a ducat a day. This is paid them every two months, which being of twenty-eight days each, they have seven payments annually. In each of these companies the colonel has the privilege of keeping two places vacant, and of appropriating the emolument to himself, which amounts to more than fourteen pounds sterling every week." Compared with the salaries and allowances which were then drawn by officers of the royal household, this rate of pay must be thought considerable. The Lord Steward, for instance, at that time the Duke of Ormond, had only one hundred pounds a year "and a table." The Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Manchester, was similarly required for his services; but the Duke of Buckingham, as Master of the Horse, had six hundred and fifty per annum, "and a table." It is written of him, "He has the management of all the king's stables and studs, and of the posts throughout the kingdom. The persons who serve in the stables, in whatever situation, are dependent upon him; in public processions he goes immediately behind the king with a led horse in his hand." The gentlemen of the bed-chamber were chosen by his majesty from among his peers, and deemed themselves fortunate in drawing salaries of one thousand pounds per annum each. "They attend in the chamber in rotation, a week at a time, sleeping all night upon a mattress." Although the Viceroy of Ireland was the highest paid officer of State, the Duke of York, as Postmaster General, held a more enviable office, for he did nothing whatever in return for his twenty thousand pounds a year, but left "the management of the business to the king's secretaries."

The population of the entire kingdom being estimated at five millions of human beings, it was judged an easy matter to raise an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men "well suited, both by their valour and discipline, to the purposes of war, both on foot and on horseback." The navy consisted of about one hundred vessels of war, belonging to the king, or the different trading companies of England. An income of two thousand pounds a year derived from land was judged a handsome fortune, but there were occasional instances of country gentlemen who were worth double that sum. The Dean of Westminster, who was also Bishop of Rochester,

received in the latter capacity only four hundred pounds per annum.

English gardens were not remarkable for their floral attractions in the reign of Charles the Second. They are described as being "usually walks of sand, made perfectly level by rolling them with a stone cylinder, through the axis of which a lever of iron is passed, whose ends being brought forward and united together in form of a triangle, serve to move it backwards or forwards; and between the walks are smooth grass-plates covered with the greenest turf, without any other ornament." Most country houses were provided with a bowling-green, a rubber at bowls being the fashionable pastime of the day. Nearly in the middle of the race-course at Newmarket there was a spot set apart for this now disused amusement, and mention is made of the king stopping and diverting himself with "seeing my Lord Blandford and my Lord Germain play at bowls." Lord John Paulet's garden, by the way, at Hinton St. George, differed from the common type in being "a meadow divided into several compartments of brick-work, which are filled with flowers."

The almost universal hour for dinner was noon. Stools were commonly used, though an armchair might be assigned to a distinguished guest. At Wilton, Lord Pembroke's country seat, an armchair was placed at the head of the table for his highness, but he insisted upon resigning it in favour of his host's unmarried daughter, "upon which the earl instantly drew forward another similar one, in which the serene prince sat, in the highest place." Hospitality was largely practised by the English nobles, and their banquets are acknowledged to have been superb, though deficient in elegance. They would last a couple of hours, or longer, and a good deal of wine was drunk, especially in toasting the ladies, who "in their turn replied in the most affable manner to the polite attentions which they had experienced." Toasts, indeed, were "considered an indispensable appendage to English entertainment." On one occasion at a splendid banquet given by the Duke of Buckingham; at which the king and the Duke of York were present, together with the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth and other notable personages; the Italian prince set the ball rolling by proposing the health of his majesty and the royal family, "which was three times followed up with loud cheers by all present. His highness, to do honour to the toast, would have given it standing, but this his

Majesty would not allow, absolutely compelling him to keep his seat." By way of acknowledgment, "the King pledged his Highness and the Serene House of Tuscany in an equal number of rounds, and at the same time accompanied this act of kindness by taking hold of his Highness's hand, which he would have kissed, but the Prince, anticipating him, with the greatest promptitude and address kissed that of his Majesty. The King, repeating his toast, wished to show the same courtesy to his Highness, but he, withdrawing his hand with the most delicate respect, would not permit it, which his Majesty perceiving, immediately kissed him on the face."

His highness, before his departure from London, had the honour of entertaining the king, his brother, his illegitimate son, and several of the nobility at supper, at which the most exquisite dishes and the rarest Italian wines taught English courtiers the difference between feeding like animals and supping like human beings. Not only so, but a knife and a fork were set before every guest, "arranged in a fanciful and elegant manner." "The supper was served up in eighty magnificent dishes; many of which were decorated with other smaller ones, filled with various delicious meats. To the service of fruit succeeded a most excellent course of confectionary, both those of Portugal and other countries famous for the choiceness of their sweetmeats, which was in all respects on a par with the supper that preceded it. But scarcely was it set upon the table, when the whole was carried off and plundered by the people who came to see the spectacle of the entertainment; nor was the presence of the King sufficient to restrain them from the pillage of these very delicate viands; much less his Majesty's soldiers, armed with carbines, who guarded the entrance of the saloon, to prevent all ingress into the inside, lest the confinement and too great heat should prove annoying; so that his Majesty, to avoid the crowd, was obliged to rise from table, and retire to his Highness's apartment."

It is not surprising, after such an exhibition of English manners, that Count Magalotti should consider his own nation as superior in refinement. He also disapproved the pastry, as being "grossly made, with a great quantity of spices, and badly baked." He remarked, too, the absence of forks, and of "vessels to supply water for the hands, which are washed in a basin full of water, that serves for all the

company ; or, perhaps, at the conclusion of dinner, they dip the end of the napkin into the beaker which is set before each of the guests, filled with water, and with this they clean their teeth and wash their hands." Whence we gather that finger-glasses were unknown in Florence.

The consumption of butchers' meat was much greater in London than in Paris, either because fast-days were not much observed, or because of the voracity of the English, who eat meat in preference to aught else. Every day three thousand oxen were slaughtered in London, and large joints were served up on every table. In the northern counties the people were more saturnine and somewhat less lively than in the southern. The lower and middle classes were much addicted to snuff and tobacco, and the artisans were prone to neglect their work in order to waste their time in discussing political questions in public-houses. The common people, it is stated, lacked reverence and affection towards their sovereign, which is not inexplicable when it is remembered that that sovereign was a Charles the Second. They ventured, while smoking their pipes, to censure the king's conduct, and to regret the masterful rule of Cromwell, whose head, by the way, the count affirms was then to be seen upon a pike over Westminster Hall. He also professes to have seen on the threshold or sill of a particular window at Whitehall drops of Charles the First's blood "so deeply imprinted that they have not been able to obliterate them from the spot, though they have frequently washed it in the hope of doing so."

Whitehall had not then suffered from fire, but is described as a mean habitation for a king, being divided into two thousand halls, lodges, galleries, and chambers, so that Cromwell had no trouble in changing his bedchamber every night without the knowledge of his servants. None of the apartments had a door. Anyone whose demeanour did not betray a military profession was free to enter the king's ante-chamber, on the floor of which stood a clock which indicated the direction of the wind as well as the time of day. In the gallery formerly enriched by Cardinal Wolsey with choice paintings, were hung up some vile daubs of battle-pieces by sea and land in the reign of Henry the Eighth. The other gallery, in front of the king's ante-chamber, was devoid of ornament, but looked out upon "a beautiful meadow, laid out like a garden, planted with trees and beau-

tiful hedges of roses, and having four rows of statues in the middle, part of which are of bronze and standing, part of white marble and, for the most part, in a sitting posture." In the centre stood a structure encircled by iron rails consisting of several dials of different shapes, so that the sun's shadow, when there was any, fell upon more than one. That event, however, was of more frequent occurrence than it would now be, because the air was then "almost always clear." True, a thick cloud seemed sometimes to hang over London, but it was not "caused by corrupt vapours," being, in fact, produced by "the smoke from the mineral coal of Scotland, which issues from the chimneys, and which the coal, being an oleaginous substance, produces in great quantities." Within the precincts of the Whitehall Palace were several small courtyards or squares, in one of which was the king's bowling-green. Near at hand were the apartments of the Duchess of Richmond, the beautiful Frances Stuart, looking upon the river and the garden of statues, and close by those of the Countess of Castlemaine.

Upon the whole the Italian tourists were pleased with the English drama. The King's Theatre was nearly circular, with tiers of boxes furnished with rows of seats for the accommodation of ladies and gentlemen, who sat together promiscuously. A large space was left on the ground-floor for the less fashionable audience. The scenery was light, frequently changed, and embellished with beautiful landscapes. Before the curtain rose upon the comedy some delightful symphonies were played. The defect of the English comedy was the confusion in the plots, and the absence of unity and regularity. The actors, however, were excellent, and did their best to illustrate the playwright's delineation of the passions by appropriate action and clear enunciation.

Horse-racing was coming into vogue with the nobility, the king and court going to Newmarket to witness the pastime. At a certain point his majesty and the Duke of York, accompanied by sundry lords and gentlemen, set off after the racers with the utmost speed, and were very nearly up to them. Newmarket owed whatever celebrity it possessed to Charles the Second, having been previously known only as a market for provisions. The land was owned by Baron Arlington, who let it on a twenty-one years lease, at six shillings an acre, the rent paid half-yearly, the tenants being free to use the land for pasture, or to plough it up, or to sublet it.

Another and more barbarous amusement, dear to all classes from courtier to costermonger, was cock-fighting, concerning which no opinion is expressed in the diary. Count Magalotti, however, does not hesitate to condemn what he calls exhibitions of gladiators. In reality, the affair was not so very atrocious. A fencing-master, by way of advertising himself, would offer, for twenty or thirty jacobuses, to fight any one with sword and shield. The weapon was blunt, and point was never given, so that no great harm was done beyond drawing a few drops of blood. The dancing-masters, or at least their pupils, were more to the taste of his highness, who went to see one of the principal dancing-schools, where married and unmarried ladies practised, "with much gracefulness and agility, various dances after the English fashion." Ladies, especially citizens' wives, were much addicted to this entertainment, and "his Highness had an opportunity of seeing several dances in the English style, exceedingly well regulated, and executed in the smartest and genteel manner by very young ladies, whose beauty and gracefulness were shown off to perfection by this exercise."

Prisoners had the choice of two evils. They could claim to be tried by God and their country, or they could appeal to the judgment of Heaven. In the latter case death was certain, but disgrace was averted from their family, and their property was not confiscated. The appellant was laid on his back with his limbs stretched out, and a stone placed underneath him to raise his loins. He was then covered with a board loaded with heavy stones, the weight being gradually increased until death terminated his sufferings.

His highness was disappointed in seeing St. Paul's Cathedral only in ruins, as nothing had yet been done to restore the sacred edifice after the Great Fire. He visited, however, a construction of a different kind, the proportions of which appeared to him to be truly stupendous. The Sovereign man-of-war, then lying in the waters of the Medway, was the largest and most powerful ship in the navy, but was seldom sent to sea, because its bulk and weight impaired its swiftness. It was built in 1637 by Charles the First, "at an incredible expense," for not only was it one hundred and twenty paces in length, but the cabins had carved-work ceilings, richly ornamented with gold. The outside

of the stern being similarly decorated. "The height of the stern," it is written, "is quite extraordinary, and it is hung with seven magnificent lanthorns, the principal one, which is more elevated than the rest, being capable of containing six people." The Sovereign carried one hundred and six pieces of brass ordnance, and a crew of one thousand sailors.

In those days salmon were caught at low water above Rochester Bridge, but it is more important to note the number of heretical sects which scandalised the conscience of his otherwise tolerably serene highness. In addition to the Ecclesiastical Establishment, there were Puritans, Presbyterians, Atheists, Brownists, who believed in "Tom Brown," Adamites, Familists, Anabaptists, Libertines or Free Thinkers, Independents, Anti-scripturists, Millenarians, Arians, Antinomians, Arminians, Seekers or Expecters, Sabbatarians, Fanatics, Fotinians, Antitrinitarians, Deists, Tremblers or Quakers, Fifth Monarchy Men, Socinians, Latitudinarians, Origenists, Ranters or disciples of Alexander Ranta, who professed free love and nothing else, Levellers, Quintinists, who averred that the Deity takes as much pleasure in a variety of religions as a man does in a variety of dishes, Memnonists, and many others. All these sects and only one sauce! was Voltaire's sarcasm.

MARJORY MAY.

MARJORY MAY came tripping from town,
Fresh as a pink in her trim white gown.
A picture was Marjory, slim and fair,
With her large sun-hat and her sunlit hair;
And down the green lane where I chanced to
stray

I met, by accident, Marjory May.

Marjory May had come out for a stroll
Past the grey church and round by the toll,
Perhaps by the wood and the wishing-stone,
There was sweet Marjory tripping alone.

"May I come too? now don't say me nay."
"Just as you please," laughed Marjory May.

So it fell out that we went on alone,
Round by the wood and the wishing-stone;
And there I whispered the wish of my life—
Wished that sweet Marjory May were my wife,
"For I love you so dear. Is it aye or nay?
Come, answer me quickly, sweet Marjory
May!"

Marjory stood; not a word did she speak,
Only the red blood flushed in her cheek;
Then she looked up with a grave, sweet smile
(The flush dying out of her face the while),
"I like you so much, but not in that way.
And then there is John," said Marjory May.

Years have rolled on since that fair summer's
day,

Still I'm a bachelor, old and grey.
Whenever I take my lonely stroll
Round by the wood, and back by the toll,
I pass by the house where her children play.
For John has married sweet Marjory May.

NARCISSUS.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"NEITHER is it impertinent that this flower is said to be consecrated to the infernal deities, because men of this disposition become unprofitable to all human things."

The words, spoken in the sweet, clear voice of a woman, floated softly down the side of the valley—the spring air, warm as summer, without its languor, carrying them to the listening narcissus flowers.

The whole side of the long, low hill was covered with the yellow bells of the daffodils as they rose out of their beds of soft mosses, shaded from the heat of the sun by the delicate green foliage of the trees that fringed the upper edge of the hillside, and grew here and there in scattered, slender beauty down to the valley beneath.

There was the sound of birds singing their love-songs, the ripple of some hidden stream, the gentle rustle of the fresh new leaves overhead as they whispered to each other the stories they had heard of the glories yet to come. But the daffodils heard nothing but the low, soft voice with its touch of hidden mockery.

"Are they consecrated to the infernal deities—they who are so fair and so full of promise, fresh as spring itself?"

A second voice put the question the flowers were asking each other as they stirred restlessly among their tall straight leaves; and as the voice was mortal, like the first that had spoken, it was understood by the mortals to whom it was addressed.

It was a pretty voice, too, but there was something lacking in it that the first possessed—an indefinable something that made its sweetness, softness; its clearness, languid slowness; its well-bred repose, indifference.

When you saw the face of the girl to whom the voice belonged, you understood what it lacked.

She was standing half-way down the hillside now, the narcissus-flowers springing up all round her feet, the foliage of the slender larch against which she was leaning casting flickering shadows upon her beautiful face. She was looking with a slightly puzzled expression, though she was smiling too, down into the face of a young man who lay on the fern-mosses a few yards from her.

There had been a listless, languid air of perfect contentment in the man's attitude;

an indolent satisfaction in things as they were; that the half-sleepy eyes showed was a habit of thought, at least, customary to him, though at times those same eyes could flash with earth's most generous enthusiasms, and grow earnest and true with the best human ambitions.

As the first girl spoke now, he made a little restless movement, as though her words had touched some hidden thought.

"Is it true, Maurice?" asked the second girl again, as an almost imperceptible pause followed her question. "Is it true that they are dedicated to such sad gods? You know everything. Tell me why."

There was no mistaking the perfect confidence in her voice, nor the genuine admiration in her beautiful eyes as she waited his answer. A man could scarcely excite such feelings in a young and beautiful woman and remain unmoved. Certainly not Maurice Landon, even though he might have suspected that any other man, put in the same position towards her as he was, could have roused the same feelings. Yet, as he sat up, and with a restless movement passed his hand over a cluster of daffodils, the troubled self-questioning that had so suddenly disturbed the lazy content of his eyes grew deeper.

"Ask Miss Marlow, Belle," he said gently, without looking up at her. "It is she who knows everything, not I. How does the quotation go on, Miss Marlow?"

Standing at the other side of the tree was the other girl, her tall slight figure held with a certain graceful erectness that seemed to give it some subtle connection with the young larches and pines round her.

She started and flushed hotly as the young man suddenly addressed her; but she answered steadily in the same clear, sweet voice as before:

"Whatsoever produceth no fruit of itself, but passeth and vanisheth as if it had never been—like the way of a ship in the sea—that the ancients were wont to dedicate to the ghosts and powers below."

She did not look at the other two as she spoke, but stood with her eyes bent down on the handful of daffodils she was loosely holding in her fingers.

There was a silence.

The girl called Belle looked half enquiringly, half wonderingly at the daffodils as they stirred softly in the breeze, trying to see more clearly the connection between the pretty narcissus-flowers and the gloomy gods.

Maurice Landon looked at them too, but the shadow in his eyes had grown so deep that it seemed as if in the yellow flowers he saw the hem of the dark queen's garments.

Belle was the first to break the silence. She laughed lightly, dismissing the thought with a little gesture of amused disdain.

"I am very glad that I don't know as much as you two," she said. "It would make me quite gloomy, if I saw connections between everything and those ugly old stories which used to make me so miserable at school. You and Grace are always talking of sad things. I am sure I don't know why you should. It is only the poor, and the unhappy, and the ugly who ought to be dismal, and yet you two never begin a conversation without, after a little, making me feel as if one of those sudden mists we have in these parts had been gradually rising. You don't notice them till you suddenly feel chilled all over. I shall not stay and be made miserable. You are so terribly earnest. I shall go and gather the daffodils. It is nearly five already, and we have not begun to fill our baskets yet."

She caught up a large one that was lying on the moss, and with a smiling nod to her companions, moved away down the hillside, turning once or twice a mischievous, laughing face in their direction.

Maurice Landon had risen to his feet as she took up her basket, and he and Grace stood silently watching the beautiful lithe figure as it moved among the trees.

"You never told me last season, when you used to talk so much of your old home, that you had anything so beautiful as that so near you."

Grace spoke with a curious abruptness, withdrawing her eyes from the retreating figure and fixing them on the young man.

His face reddened hotly, and there was a confused look in his eyes.

"No; I did not, at first, because she seemed to have grown up as part of my own life. Almost the first thing I began to think seriously about was how to take care of her, she having no brothers of her own, and so when I talked of my life at home, I included her too. Afterwards——"

He stopped suddenly, and looked away.

She did not press for the end of the sentence. Perhaps it had not satisfied her any more than it had him. For a moment her eyes grew dark as Persephone's own, when the light of earth was first shut out

from their sight. Then into their fear and pain stole a curious light. It did not make it easier for the young man to face them. It was so different to the old glad look that he used to watch and wait for last year in London, when the acquaintance, commenced in a ball-room, had deepened by constant meetings during the season, into—friendship! He had called it so at first. Now?

He glanced down the hillside to the valley below, where Belle, singing some soft song to herself, was lazily gathering the narcissus-flowers. Then his face seemed to grow sterner as it paled a little.

"Miss Marlow," he said, "you have grown very hard upon me. I told you long ago in London that you expected too much of me."

"What do you mean, Mr. Landon?" she asked, her voice a little uncertain, while the mocking questioning and doubt died out of her face. "I——"

"You are judging me, and condemning me, and finding me wanting. I know you are. You have been doing it ever since that night when you met us for the first time together—Belle, and my mother, and myself. Once, I used to think that of all things I wished the most, it was to have you here. Now, there are times when I could almost wish you had not come."

There was a ring of bitterness in his tones that made the girl tremble and grow paler.

"I am very sorry," she began in a troubled voice. "I did not know that I was growing hard and mocking——"

"No, you are not!" he exclaimed, interrupting her with the same passionate earnestness. "You are all that is sweetest and best in a woman: all that might make a man stronger and truer and better. I sometimes think that the time I spent in London so near you was the only real part of my life. I know it was the best; a man could not be with such as you and make it otherwise——"

She put out her hand to stop him, flushing crimson.

"I did not do anything like that. I only believed in your best," she said, her lips trembling a little, but her eyes full of the glad light his words had brought there.

"Believed in my best!" he echoed slowly. "You were my best. Even when sometimes I used to pretend to laugh at you, at your earnestness and your quaint, high-

souled notions of honour, I was only growing to reverence you more. Grace! Could a woman have a better name?"

At the sound of her name, spoken for the first time by Maurice Landon, the girl moved a little away, the lingering tenderness of his voice as he spoke it making her flush and grow pale again, and then shiver from head to foot.

As the young man looked at her, gazing into her proud sweet face, troubled now with a shy shame that yet had no pain in it, a thought of what she really was, of what she might be to his life, came to him with a prophetic force.

He seemed to be standing looking at the spirit of his better self, his indolence changed into earnestness, his careless self-pleasing life into noble self-renunciation, his contented indifference to things as they were into great ambitions, striven for and accomplished.

It was only a fancy, but at that moment it was strong enough to make him forget all earthly considerations, all prudent advice of worldly advisers, all the temptings of the lower part of his humanity.

"Grace," he said in passionate pleading; "Grace!"

She turned and looked at him, while into her eyes flashed all the sweet shame and glory of her answer to his voice, all her pride and reserve vanquished by the love his appeal had forced her to acknowledge.

With an eager passion he stretched out his hands to touch hers, and then they fell again to his side, and the two stepped swiftly apart.

Belle, unnoticed by them, had gradually mounted the hill a little way above where they were standing, and now came running towards them.

"You two lazy people, you haven't helped me a bit, and now I must really go home. Mother will think I'm lost. Just look at my basket, I can hardly carry it."

She stood between them, holding in her two hands the basket full of its golden treasure. They looked at it, and tried to answer lightly. At least Maurice said something. Grace dared not trust her voice, lest it should betray the gladness which had come so suddenly into her life. All through that season in town it had been foreshadowed by his voice and his looks, his eager seeking her out from amongst the others wherever they went. That had been an earnest of the thing that one day might come; but, now that it had come, all those days of foreshadowing

seemed to fade before the glory and delight of the reality.

She scarcely dared raise her eyes to his as she bade him good-bye, it having been arranged that he should accompany Belle Calverly to carry the basket for her, and so she did not see how all the light and the passion had died out of his face, and left it careworn and remorseful.

CHAPTER II

"WHATSOEVER produceth no fruit of itself but passeth and vanisheth as if it had never been——"

The hillside seemed full of voices. The narcissus-flowers rustling and whispering together, seemed to mock and reproach her with the truth of her own words as they repeated them over and over again till all the hillside murmured with their echoes:

"As if it had never been! As if it had never been!"

Grace Marlow sank down on the mosses and pressed her hands over her ears, as if to shut out the mocking sounds.

"What does it all mean?" asked the mosses, as the hot bitter tears, scorching the girl's cheeks with their shame and their pain, fell thicker and faster upon them. "What does it all mean?"

"It means," said the daffodils, "that the man who told her of his love here yesterday, and who made her betray the secret of her own, asked the other girl to be his wife last night."

"Her heart will break," said the mosses in pitying sorrow, trying to press more closely against the burning cheek of the sobbing girl.

"No; she is too strong. He was not worthy," said the narcissus-flowers again. "He has been false to himself and to her, his better life. He has been spoilt and petted, and made much of all his days by his mother and everyone around him, and Belle is but the echo of all he says and thinks. With this girl by his side, he might have risen above the life he is leading and will lead now, but he has failed. It is as if it had never been."

"May I speak to you for a moment, Miss Marlow?"

Grace had risen to her feet and was standing, her hand resting on a slender larch, her eyes fixed on the valley below, where yesterday afternoon Belle had gathered the daffodils. As the voice fell on her ears, she started, and turned white.

Then with a slight straightening of her figure, a little upraising of her head, she moved and faced him.

If he had not known that she had heard he would have known then.

There was a silence between them.

"I am not going to make any excuses. There are none." He spoke at last, for she made no effort to break the silence.

It was curious how all the clearness and strength had gone out of his voice, just as the pride and the dignity of his manhood seemed to have deserted him too. He looked like a man weary, tired, shamed, who had just come out of some great struggle—defeated.

"I could never find any. I will not now tell you what I think of myself. I could not if I would. There are no words on earth to express a hundredth part of what I feel. May I go on?"

She seemed to move her head in assent, but it might only have been the movement caused by a quicker indrawing of her breath. He took it for the former, and—his voice hoarser and slower than before—went on again:

"Yesterday, when I went home, my mother asked me when I was going to fulfil the great desire of her heart, as it had been that of my dead father's. All this," he made a gesture indicating the hillside and the valley below, "belongs to the Calverlys." That it was costing him a terrible effort to explain was seen by the flush of shame that reddened his face, but he went on steadily, apparently determined not to spare himself. "This part of their property runs straight through the middle of ours, and for generations it has been a source of trouble and vexation. The Landons and Calverlys have always wished to make some arrangement, but could never agree. The only way seemed to be to unite the two estates by a marriage, but there was never any opportunity for doing this until"—he stopped and hesitated, then went on again—"my time. I was the only son, and Belle the only child on the side of the Calverlys. We were brought up with this idea. We never thought of any other arrangement, but that we should one day marry. It was so much a matter of course, that it was not even thought necessary to have an engagement. We were both perfectly contented that it should be so, and we were fond of each other—in a way. How different to what it might be I only found last season in town."

For the first time the white calm of her face was troubled, but she made no attempt to speak, and with a heavy sigh he went on again:

"I don't know what madness possessed me then, but I think at first the very fact of holding myself so bound, made me careless. Then one day I found out what an awful mistake I had made!"

"And still you did not tell me, nor go away." Grace spoke at last in a curiously quiet voice. Then a sudden vivid consciousness of it all—of those days in London when she had learned to look so for his coming, believing him from his conduct to her to be a free man; of yesterday, when, still in that belief, she had let him see what his love was to her—came upon her, and with a faint cry of passionate shame, she hid her face in her hands.

"Grace, Grace! I loved you so—I love you so!" He took a swift step to her side. "If you could only guess what I felt all the time! I hated and despised myself, yet every day put it off, until at last I could not say anything. It is what I have done all through my life, this putting off, and it has brought me to a miserable pass now. Then I went away at last, to think it all out quietly. I loved you so dearly that I thought it could not be really right to marry another woman, even though that other was Belle. But down here, with all the old influences at work again, I began to trouble and worry about it all. I had not yet told you in plain words that I loved you, though you must have guessed it long ago. Then last week you came to the rectory, and——"

"I thought you were abroad, or else I should not have come; but my cousin begged me so hard to come and stay with her as soon as they were settled in their new home, that I came. I thought you had forgotten me, and that I had been foolish like so many other women."

"Forgotten you, Grace! I can't give you up! It is all foolishness, this fancied engagement of mine. What does it matter about the land? I would let it go a hundred times over now. It will not hurt Belle. She is one of those girls who would love anyone who is kind to her. I was mad last night, when I listened to my mother. I was so bothered and worried that when Belle came in just afterwards, I said the word that made the arrangement binding to put an end to the trouble. Grace, I don't know what possessed me. What I thought was honour was only dishonour."

There was nothing righteous or binding in the arrangement. It was only a case of pure worldly ambition." He had caught her hands in his, and at last was giving free utterance to the passion and love that had so tormented him for the last few months. "Grace, you must listen to me."

He would not yield up her hands, but held them fast locked in his, as if to compel her to listen. He would not appeal to the love she had so simply betrayed yesterday. Bad as he had been, he could not do anything so cowardly as trade on the knowledge his own miserable deceit and treachery had gained.

He was nobler at that moment than he had ever been, or would ever be again. He saw what this girl's love really was and what it might be to him, and he would have sacrificed all earthly advantages to be worthy of it—to be able to claim it as his own.

"I would have listened to you yesterday, if you had told me this. I listened and trusted too much as it was, for you betrayed me."

He would not loose her hands, and a flush of burning shame dyed her face, but she forced her lips to speak steadily, though with his eyes gazing straight into hers, with the knowledge of her confessed love between them, it was almost more than she could do.

"I have nothing more to hide from you. You learned everything, and then, knowing what it would be to me, after what you had discovered, you went away and asked another woman to be your wife. Why did you not leave me alone? at least you might have spared me that shame. For it is a shame"—he had made an effort to interrupt her passionate outbreak—"it is a shame for a girl to let a man know that she cares for him, when she can never marry him. No, never! no, never! everything is over as if it had never been. You knew all along what you know now. Whether it were honour or dishonour, you might have decided last year as well as now—yesterday afternoon, as well as the evening. I would not marry you now if you were free. You are dead to me."

"You shall not go like this, Grace," he said, drawing her closer to him, and bending down, till his face almost touched hers.

It seemed as if in another second his kisses would be on her lips.

For a moment she trembled before his strength and his passion. Then womanly

courage and dignity came to her aid, and the frightened look passed from her eyes.

"No, you will not touch me; you will not kiss me," she said steadily, looking up into his face. "If you did, the remembrance of it would go with you, and shame you through all your coming life."

He dropped her hands and let her go.

For a second she stood still, looking away from him, afraid to move because of a strange quiver that seemed to run through all the narcissus-covered hillside, as if all the world had become suddenly unstable and changing.

Then she turned, and, without another word, left him.

He might think her pitiless, hard, cruel. She only knew that one single word more would have been choked with a sob.

He stood watching her as she moved away from him, and as he looked, the full meaning of the words, "It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make an help-meet for him," came to him. He would marry Belle. She would make him a comfortable home and add to his wealth, but to be a wife, a wife in the sense that Heaven meant the word—husband and wife, two souls made perfect in one, living and loving on through all eternity—the fulfilment of that dream vanished with the figure which the trees had already shut out from his view.

So Maurice Landon, too, went his way.

Like Narcissus in the old-world myth, he had preferred to sink down by the cool fountain, contented with what he saw in its depths. The love that might have lifted him to higher things, failed to call him away, and his best self died on the day that came at last, when Belle and her lands satisfied him entirely.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART VII.

IT was a fortunate chance that separated the passengers of the *Sea Mew*, and sent some to wander along the coast while others remained on board—fortunate for me, for otherwise I should have had no opportunity of explanation with Hilda; fortunate for the rest, as not a little enhancing the pleasure of the trip. People get tired of each other even in a few days' sail; they quarrel, form cliques, set up grievances. But with fresh arrivals and temporary departures these little symptoms cease. It is pleasant to meet again, to retail little adventures afloat or ashore,

to discuss plans for the future. Stéphanie never had appreciated her Alphonse half so much as when she was separated from him by the cruel sea. And yet, in another way, there was disenchantment. With the arrival of the yacht, the Chancellor influence became paramount. Hilda resumed her place as a kind of queen-bee over the swarm. There was a whole budget of letters and telegrams for her. Mr. Wyvern and she were presently discussing business matters earnestly together. That something grave and disquieting had occurred I could see by Hilda's face, but she did not seek counsel of me.

Then our director came to the front, taking up a prominent position on the yacht's bridge, and waving his programme energetically.

"Ladies and shentlemen," he said when we assembled about him, "I propose that we should take a little historic promenade. We shall visit the battle-field of Formigny."

"Connais pas!" remarked Tom, who had picked up a little patois on the way.

Things historical had a depressing effect upon Tom, and he naturally fought against them. But the director bristled up indignantly and cried:

"Yet, sir, we hear very much of your Crécy, of your Agincourt."

"Not from me," murmured Tom; and very justly, for he was quite innocent of any such allusions.

The director went on, disregarding the interruption:

"Yes, we hear very much of the battles you win, but now I shall like to tell you a little of our battle of Formigny. Come!" Here the director dropped his sternness and assumed a wheedling manner. "We shall go to the battle-field, and I shall deliver you one little lecture upon the spot."

But people did not respond heartily to the invitation. The place was a good way off—six or seven miles—the day was hot, and the means of conveyance primitive. And Madame la Directrice secretly dissuaded us from the expedition. She had visited the place some years before, and there was really nothing to see. A little village, with its church, and a broad white road, blazing in the sunshine, with a chapel dedicated to St. Louis, dismantled at the Revolution, but restored by Louis Philippe; and above the chapel on the hill a modern monument, recording that a battle was fought here, on the 15th of April, 1450,

when the English lost heavily, and were forced to abandon Normandy, of which they had been masters since A. D. 1417. But madame had an excursion to propose that was really far more interesting—to the ancient seigneurial castle of Argouges, celebrated on account of its Fée, and distant only a short two miles along a pleasant wooded lane.

To the director's great discontent the Fée carried the day.

"And you listen to children's stories rather than the grand facts of history."

But he recovered his good temper when he saw preparations being made for carrying luncheon to the ruins; the sailors gallantly slinging hampers and baskets on their shoulders and starting off at a run towards Argouges.

"Aha, a pique nique!" he exclaimed. "Yes, that too is good. I adopt your Fée; she married the respectable Sieur Clicquot, and is again a widow."

The country lane proved cool and pleasant, with happy-looking homesteads showing here and there among the trees, and sometimes a roadside well, with a venerable-looking superstructure, the stones all covered with ferns and moss—conical structures, like Buddhist topes on a small scale, peculiar, it seems, to this part of Normandy. And presently through the thick foliage, retired and tranquil, appeared the grey old château, with its little chapel all overgrown with trees and shrubs; its placid moat, dark and still, and almost covered with weeds; the low battlemented wall with its platform for culverin or cannon; and its machicolated bastion for the harquebusemen; while above rise the gabled roofs, the mullioned windows richly carved, the corbie-stepped gable of the high tower, that is half watch-tower and half grenier. All is ruin and quiet soft decay, but wrapped up in such luxuriant verdure, that it seems as if ruin and decay brought their own consolations. But as we approached the ruined gateway, overthrown and desolate, the loud barking and baying of dogs announced that the place was not altogether deserted. One end of the building has been repaired, and is occupied by a farmer. A young woman came forward to calm the fury of the dogs, and to open the gate for us; and so we entered the court of honour, and admired the fine carved windows and doorways; the banqueting-hall, with its carved roof, where horses and cows were munching their provender.

"Yes, it is very fine to look at," admitted

the farmer's daughter, "but rather dull to live in, with the water all round and the trees, and all these great empty rooms; while there is none too much room for the family."

"And the *fée*? " asked someone. "Is the *fée* at all troublesome?"

"Oh, as for the *fée*," said the girl, laughing, "she does not concern herself with people now."

It is said that at times the *fée* may be seen flitting about the deserted rooms, and that her cry "*La Mort!*" may be heard on stormy nights.

According to the story the seigneur of Argouges was one day engaged in mortal combat with a giant and getting the worst of it, when a fairy, who was secretly enamoured of him, came to his rescue, and brought him off in safety. The knight, full of gratitude, offered heart and hand to the fairy, who joyfully consented to share his home, but on one condition inspired by a higher power than hers. The knight must never mention the word "death." A charming wife proved the fairy, and the seigneur of Argouges led a happy life with her; till one day, when they were going out together hawking or hunting, the fairy, not above human weaknesses, occupied an unconscionable time over her toilette. There was a popular saying then in use—sometimes still to be heard in the district—when anyone was slow about a business that he or she would be good to send to look for death, that being an affair that people are not supposed to want in a hurry. And the knight of Argouges unfortunately hurled this saying at his dilatory wife, who at the word "*mort!*" gave a despairing shriek and disappeared.

"All this nonsense," cried our director, "springs from the fact that the family shield bore the motto '*à la fée*,' which means '*à la foi*;' " at the same time he admitted that there was a certain interest in the story, for fairies are not common in the popular mythology of the northern nations, and when they occur, are suggestive of Celtic influences. According to an early tradition, indeed, the fairies abandoned Normandy when the Scandinavians invaded the country, gathering together at the ancient castle of Pirou, on the other side of the peninsula, whence they all took flight over the sea in the form of wild geese.

And then somebody recited another fairy tale still current in the district. This related to a *fé*, a male fairy, and these male fairies are not much relished in the popular

mythology, and are represented generally as crabbed old men. But this one perhaps is an exception. Anyhow, this fairy fell in love with a pretty peasant woman as she sat spinning in the sunshine, and paid his court to her. The young woman's husband found this out, and resolved on revenge. Dressed in his wife's garments, he seated himself at her wheel, and began to spin, having first made red-hot the baking-pan. The *fé* approached, but looked dissatisfied. "Where is the fair one of yesterday?" he asked, "who would spin, spin, spin! but twirled all the time. As for you, you turn, turn, turn; but never twirl at all." The artful peasant made some excuse for his awkwardness, when the *fé* approaching softly demanded the name of the presumed spinster. "*Moi même—* myself," replied the man, and springing up he laid the red-hot baking-pan about the fairy, who thereupon flew away howling. The *fé*, being a person of consequence in the fairy world, summoned an assemblage of fairies, showed his burns, and demanded revenge. "Who did it?" asked the others, full of indignation at their comrade's wrongs. "*Moi même*," cried the foolish fairy. And upon that he was flown upon, pinched, and kicked by all the fairies present.

"And served him quite right," pronounced Mrs. Bacon, who had no patience with people who made mischief between man and wife—nor between engaged couples neither. And here I thought that Mrs. Bacon looked rather fiercely towards me. But then Mrs. Bacon had the old-fashioned habit of always pointing a moral when possible, and on this occasion nobody took any notice of her remark, which indeed was dictated rather by hunger than ill-nature; for when the pique nique, as the director persisted in calling the meal, was served on the grass outside the moat, in the shadow of a fine old barn of solid masonry, and with an interested audience of ducks and geese and poultry of all kinds—then Mrs. Bacon became good-tempered again, and even jolly.

In the general expansion of mind caused by our *al fresco* festivities, the question was mooted. Where should we go next? Not back to Port, it was decided, but along the coast to Arromanches, a watering-place we hoped to find more lively and populous than any we had come to as yet.

It was hot when we started, with but little air stirring, and, as we reached the more open country towards the coast, we

were attacked by swarms of horse-flies. Why these tormenting creatures should have massed themselves at this particular spot it is hard to say. We soon got out of their dominions, but while we were passing they took toll most vigorously. All along the coast is a range of limestone cliffs, and the villages lie back a mile or so from their edge; villages with an entirely agricultural population, thinking as little of the sea as if they lived a hundred miles away from it.

What with the heat, and some little dust, and the flies, thirst came upon us before we were half-way to the end of our walk. We passed sundry cool and shaded houses, at each of which we cried: "Oh; if this only prove to be a café!" But no café appeared, and attempts for milk were unsuccessful. If you don't arrive at the very moment of milking in these parts, the milk is put away for butter, and must not be disturbed. The sufferings of the ancient mariner were nothing to ours. Not only had we the sea to tantalise us with notions of big drinks, but there were the cows also diffusing a milky odour in the air; and yet there was not a drop to drink. Then we came to a shady little village with an ancient church, but again no café. But there was a jovial-looking shoemaker hammering away in a little open shed, and we put the case to him, and suggested cider. The shoemaker comprehended in a moment. He had a fellow-feeling for us, being, no doubt, himself a thirsty soul.

The shoemaker ushered us into a big roomy kitchen, cool and shaded, with a look-out through the back-door into a rich garden, where the bees were murmuring, and everything was growing and ripening as fast as it could in the sunshine. And there he left us to the care of his wife, an anxious-looking woman, who wore a white conical cotton nightcap, and was sitting in the window busily sewing, with two children beside her. There was a bed in the room piled half-way to the ceiling with mattress and eider down; a clock with a huge brass pendulum; and plenty of rush-bottomed chairs. Presently the shoemaker re-appeared with a huge jug of cider, gallons of it, cool and fragrant, and with some body in it, too. Tom and I punished that cider badly, for it seemed to evaporate like water poured upon a red-hot plate. As we sat there resting, there came a gleam of happiness over the face of the anxious mother—there was a footstep on the threshold, a shadow, not an extensive one, in the doorway. The little daughter had

come home from afternoon school, and ran to kiss her mother and the rest with all the joy of one who had been long absent. And then she makes her little curtsy to strangers. With her coming all the house brightened up. The sister who was ill took a turn for the better; the little boy who was fretful just now became radiant. The mother brought out a bag of biscuits with the air of one who celebrates a fête.

"It is the *fée*," said Hilda with a kindly glance at the anxious mother, who replied with a look full of meaning, but was too quiet and shy to say anything.

Our shoemaker having taken a modest gratification for his cider, showed us a foot-path that led over the cliffs along the border of the sea to Arromanches—a narrow track used by the douaniers who keep a vigilant outlook all along the coast. We met a pair of these as we started, in their faded blue uniforms. They always go in pairs, with their chassepots over their shoulders. And here, in a little shallow dell, where a tiny brook tumbles over the cliffs, the douaniers have built a small shelter-hut, covered with turf, and undistinguishable at a little distance. This hut commands a ridge of broken, crumbling rock, that stretches from the top of the cliffs down to the sea, the one point along this coast for miles and miles where it would be possible to land anything even in the calmest weather. The cliffs are dark and gloomy in colour, of a light friable limestone which breaks off in great patches every now and then, where the cliffs are undermined by the sea.

Under these cliffs, it is said, were wrecked such vessels of the Spanish Armada as escaped the English ships of war and the terrible rocks of the Hebrides. The scene is not so grand or imposing as the jagged, splintered rocks of the northern isles; but to a sailor's eye, at least as menacing, with its sharp sunken rocks running far out to sea, and its inhospitable iron-bound coast.

Soon, however, we approached more civilised regions, a kiosk appeared on the slope of the cliff—a restaurant with an awning in front, and people taking their beer in full view of the ocean.

The gap between the two lines of cliffs is just big enough to hold the little town, with its irregular pointed roofs, its long sea-wall, and the mixture of rock and sand below. There were tents on the sands, and huge many-coloured umbrellas, and girls playing croquet on the smooth flat sand.

And then we found ourselves in the one narrow street of Arromanches.

The omnibus had just arrived loaded with our baggage, and we all met in front of the Hotel Chrétien.

And here is Mère Chrétien herself, portly, stout, and rosy, coming out to welcome us. Her house has wonderfully grown and increased of late years, and besides the pleasant old-fashioned auberge, with its balcony over the street and a pleasant nook below in its shadow, inviting pipe and glass on the hot summer afternoon, all kinds of buildings have grown up about the place, and Madame Chrétien shows with pride her long *salle à manger* that will seat a hundred and twenty guests.

"They have not all arrived as yet—oh no," says Madame Chrétien. "But some to-day and more to-morrow, and soon not a place will be vacant. And Auguste the waiter from Paris is sunning himself on the terrace looking over the sea; and the chef has just arrived by omnibus; and altogether—yes, the season has commenced—it has well commenced, and—— But it is all labour and sorrow," sighs madame, dropping suddenly her song of triumph; "more work and more worry, and so on to the end."

But Arromanches pleases us; there is an atmosphere about the place that is decidedly agreeable. There is no fuss, no parade, but there is a good tone about the people who come here. Then the sands are good, and the country landwards pleasant and diversified. Altogether it is a place where one feels inclined to unpack the big valise and settle down for a while. With dinner comes twilight and a fine glow of sunset over the sea, the tide dimpling out in long lines of ripples, and a few sails touched with rosy hues shining here and there. Dark figures are out among the rocks, shrimping, while on the sands and all about, people are sitting, walking, talking, with a general cheerful buzz of life, which pretty well ceases while the world in general is dining, and which bursts forth with increased power as the evening is more advanced. Quite in the distance lies the Sea Mew, to be distinguished by her anchor-light; and now by an occasional sparkle in the dark waters we can make out that a boat is coming ashore. It is a long pull, and the men have to wade some distance, the tide being so low, but presently there appears the sailing-master of the yacht, who brings word that there is something wrong with one of the

engines, and that the Sea Mew will have to run across to Portsmouth to get the thing put right. The night is fine and the sea calm if anybody would like the run. But everybody seems quite comfortable at Arromanches, and not inclined to move. Certainly Hilda and her father have no fancy for the voyage; Miss Chancellor has resumed her interrupted flirtation with Tom; Wyvern and his sister have gone over to Bayeux for the night; the director and his wife are congratulating each other that there is no parting in prospect; and Mrs. Bacon is quite taken up with the Mère Chrétien and her cuisine. So there is no one to go on board, and the master retires with a sigh of relief, being a lover of solitude, happiest when there is not a soul on board but the crew.

When the boat has put off from shore, and we feel that we have done with the Sea Mew for a few days, I think that everybody is more or less relieved. Hilda is certainly more bright and joyous. She is no longer under the influence of Mr. Chancellor, and can give me a little more of her time and attention.

The evening is so pleasant that a walk is proposed along the sands, which are firm and dry. Asnelles is there in full view upon a long low promontory beyond the next range of cliffs. It seems close at hand, but perhaps it is farther than it looks; anyhow it will be an object for a walk. And we start, Hilda and I, and Miss Chancellor and Tom, along the firm yellow sands, the sea murmuring restfully in the distance.

The walk certainly proved longer than it looked; but it was not a very long one after all; and we mounted the sea-wall by a flight of steps like mariners advancing to explore a strange country.

There are three signs, says a Welsh triad, by which you may know an inhabited country: the barking of dogs, the crowing of cocks, and the cries of children. Well, all these signs were wanting at Asnelles, and so far the Welsh saying proved truthful, for certainly there were no inhabitants. Houses there were in plenty of every shape and size, mixtures of Japanese, Chinese, and Swiss in style—pretty houses and curious houses, with gardens all in trim and full of flowers; the houses all completely furnished and waiting for tenants, but not a soul to be seen. On each of these deserted houses a board was to be seen—Apply to the Hôtel de Repos. Well, we reached the Hôtel de Repos. Happy name! never was

repose more complete. The house itself seemed to sleep, with all its persiennes closed like eyelids over sleeping eyes. If there is a tide in the affairs of men that tide had not yet reached Asnelles. Arromanches was fairly afloat; but high-water was later here it seemed. Next week, perhaps, all these houses will be filled with life and animation. Bathers will be ambling over the sands, children playing, dogs barking, all the world astir. But to-day the town is like an enchanted palace buried deep in repose. The feeling grows quite uncanny as we make the circuit of the town and meet with not a soul, so that it is quite a relief at last to come upon a woman seated on the parapet of the sea-wall, with a cat in her arms, looking out to sea.

But the woman was not an inhabitant after all, but lived at the village a mile or two away, and had come down to look at her house—she had one to let if we were looking for a furnished house. But to speak accurately, the place was, after all, not quite uninhabited. Behind a sandy knoll were lying sundry fishing-boats, and two or three fisherman's cottages were in the background. And there was even a fisherman's café, where beer was to be had.

But we had no time for further investigations, for darkness was coming on, and we descended upon the sands, still with the feeling of mariners who had landed on a strange coast and found it deserted. Tom proposed to fix up the Union Jack somewhere, as first discoverers, but no one happened to have a Union Jack handy, and so the proposal fell through.

As we returned, the murmur of the sea had become louder and more ominous. According to our reckoning, the tide should hardly yet have turned; but it had not felt itself bound by our reckoning, for turned it was, and speeding in with a quiet vengeful determination. And then it had come over quite dark, and we could hardly make out where we were going, only we found that patches of sand that had been dry enough as we came, were now just covered with water. We had a quick breathless race under the cliffs that frowned over us, dark and inexorable. I supported and encouraged Hilda, while Tom did his best with Miss Chancellor. It was a near thing, for just as we reached the foot of the sea-wall, with steps leading up to safety above, a broad line of dark water came with gathered force and dashed after us. Nobody had missed us, it seemed, and it was quite strange to see everybody so

calm and unconcerned, while we had felt for a moment that the cold hand of death was plucking at us.

"Hilda," I whispered, pressing her hand, "it would not have been so bad, after all, to die with you."

Hilda looked doubtful, as if she thought it would be difficult to make drowning pleasant under any circumstances; but Miss Chancellor looked at Tom with quite a soft dewy look in her large grey eyes.

As for the dripping skirts that Justine grumbled over, they caused no remark, for dripping skirts were everywhere. They dripped on the staircases, on the landings, and you heard them pit-a-patter on the floor above your head. And with that, innumerable prints of wet feet in all the passages. For everybody was bathing with great punctuality and regularity. You met figures in white sheets with gleaming ankles at every turn.

And so for a time we followed the customs of the place. We went out shrimping in the morning when the tide served. Capital fun was this, the rocks swarming with crustaceans, of active and vigorous habits, however, that were not easy to catch. In the afternoon we bathed, walking in solemn procession from our rooms across the sea-wall and over half a mile of sand. In the evening we chatted on the terrace or took walks into the pleasant inland country. There was Ryes, a pleasant little village with a good church and an old manoir, and on the way many pleasant lanes, footpaths, and bridle-paths, with here and there glimpses of the sea through the trees, and Douvres, that was farther afield, but still accessible with Contango's help—Douvres with its fine church and some few remains of the château of the bishops of Bayeux, the two places causing mild astonishment and speculation as to the why and wherefore of a Rye and Dover on this side of the Silver Streak.

But altogether we enjoyed ourselves amazingly at quiet Arromanches, and it came with quite a shock—that letter to Hilda from Mr. Chancellor, announcing that he could manage to get away from Friday to Monday, and that he was coming across in the Sea Mew from Southampton to the port of Caen. I caught a quick glance from Hilda as she read out the news. Evidently matters were coming to a crisis now, and the future must be arranged either for good or ill.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER VII.

THIS, then, was the story of the accusation against Ernest Pentreath, as it reached his family through Mr. Hamilton's lips on the evening of the day after his arrest.

It was a Wednesday, and the vicar had been in town all day, for the district coroner having been notified of the death, an inquest had been opened on poor Major Hollis's body, and Mr. Hamilton had, of course, been present at it; but on this first day the jury had not been got together in time to do more than view the corpse and take the deposition of the landlady as to the circumstances of her finding it, after which the proceedings were adjourned till Friday. Having only waited till this was settled, George made haste to return to Kew, knowing well the devouring anxiety with which the news he had to bring would be awaited there.

There was one item, however, to which I have omitted to refer in the last chapter: an important one, seeing that it related to the weapon with which the murder, if murder it was, had been committed. No such weapon had been found on Captain Pentreath when he was arrested; but as an open pistol-case lay on the table with, not far from it, a pistol loaded in both barrels, and in such a position as to be within reach of Major Hollis's hand had he been standing upright, it was at least presumable that, instead of being a cowardly murder as was at first supposed, there had been a duel between the two gentlemen, and that the second pistol had been either flung away by the survivor in a fit of frenzy at the sight of his own deed, or hidden in a hasty and foolish attempt to conceal the same.

It was terrible for the poor mother to sit and listen to all this, longing the while to be with her son, to hear his own story from his own lips, and refute, if it might be, the accusation against him, yet unable to leave her couch owing to the nervous prostration which, following on that seizure of yesterday, had obliged her doctor to warn her that any fatigue or over-exertion during the next twenty-four hours would almost certainly be followed by severe illness.

"And I cannot be ill now, just when my boy is in trouble and wanting me. Oh

yes, I will keep quiet. I must not risk being ill," she said; but, all the same, quietness seemed of all things the farthest from her. She could not even lie back, but sat upright on the couch, her head and shoulders stooping forward, one hand nervously clenched round Hetty's, as though conscious of some sustaining sympathy in the warm touch of the soft young fingers, the other twisting and untwisting the fringe of the white cashmere shawl she wore round her shoulders, while she listened to the vicar's story, and tried by a thousand pitiful interruptions and questions to suggest some exculpatory point, or extract some comforting assurance with regard to the son who was both the one anxiety and idol of her life.

"I cannot understand it," she said more than once. "One might forgive their suspecting him. I suppose it is natural for people of that sort to suspect anyone who had the misfortune to be present at such a moment; but to put him in prison after they had heard his explanation, and even refuse him bail—a gentleman and a man of honour like Ernest!—it seems incredible."

"You forget the quarrel at the club just before, and the unfortunate threats Ernest used," George Hamilton answered gently. "We must not blame them for suspecting him after those. The thing is to try and prove his innocence."

Mrs. Pentreath lifted her head with a little of her wonted haughtiness.

"It ought not to need much trying to do that. What does Ernest say himself? Yes, yes" (interrupting herself), "I know what you have already told me about his only entering the house behind that horrid woman; but what took him there at all? What could have induced him to go there after the man had insulted him as he had done?"

The vicar shook his head.

"That is one of the unfortunate parts of the matter," he said, "and I wouldn't tell you, but that you must hear it later. He owns, however, that though he left the club and came down here at the urgent entreaty of his friend, he was in too excited a state to either rest or remain in the house, but went back to town by the very next train, with the intention of calling on Major Hollis, and extracting some sort of apology or retractation from him before he retired for the night."

Mrs. Pentreath wrung her hands in silent anguish. The natural question in

sequence, "And what if either were refused?" was as present to her mind in all its terrible significance as to those of the other two. Before Mr. Hamilton could even say anything in consolation, however, another thought struck her, and she interrupted him, a puzzled look on her face.

"But you said he came down 'here,' Did you mean to this house, or only to Kew? The former would be a mistake certainly, for he never came home at all that evening; and yet I can't understand his going anywhere else."

The vicar was looking puzzled too.

"Well, I certainly understood him to speak of this house; but I only saw him for a moment or two. Lorton, your old solicitor, sent me off to find that friend of his, and I also wanted to try and see the doctor before the inquest opened. I am going back now. I promised Lorton I would. There is a great deal to do, and I must get Ernest to give me every particular, but I had hoped that you would be able to show that he left here in a conciliatory spirit, and more bent on explaining matters with regard to Mrs. — than on provoking a worse quarrel. If you or Hetty could have testified to that much——"

He looked at the young girl as he spoke and stopped short, startled by the ghastly pallor of the face that met his, and which, as his eyes rested on it, was almost instantly succeeded by a burning crimson blush. Mrs. Pentreath did not notice his pause, however, her own eyes had filled with tears.

"But we can't; how can we, when he was not here, and when, if he had been, we shouldn't have known it?" she said piteously. "I was out at the Morrisons, you know; and Hetty had gone to bed hours before with a sick headache, and was fast asleep when I left; but I asked Hickson when he came for me with the carriage, if his master had returned, and he said no. I did so because Ernest had been called up to town by a telegram so early in the morning that no one but Hickson saw him before leaving, and I felt nervous lest anything should be amiss. George, will it be too late for you to see him to-night, and ask him? Pray don't delay. There is some mistake, I am sure."

For a second the vicar did not answer. He was still looking fixedly at Hetty, but after that momentary meeting of their eyes hers had drooped, and while his aunt was speaking, the colour mounted higher and higher in her face, and she turned away her

head as if unable to bear the scrutiny which, without looking up, she felt was upon her. George Hamilton averted his own eyes with a sigh, and rose up, taking his aunt's hand in a close, kindly pressure.

"Yes, there must be some mistake," he said, "but it will soon be cleared up; and you are right, I ought not to delay. Now, my dear good auntie, don't lose heart, or look so unhappy. Remember, it is far better that you should be able to say nothing about him, than one word which could be used to his detriment."

"That would not be possible, George."

"It might be if you had seen him when he was in a passion and talking foolishly. Those hasty words at the club are the chief items against him now. It is one blessing in a sad business that neither you nor I can be called upon to bear witness to any others, and we must be thankful for it."

He bent down to kiss her as he spoke, and then, with a momentary hesitation—too slight indeed to be noticed—held out his hand to his young sweetheart, who, crouched on a stool at her guardian's knee, with one trembling hand still clasping the invalid's chilly fingers, had hardly moved or spoken during the interview, and said:

"Good-bye, Hetty."

The girl started, and looked up at him piteously.

All through this long, long day of excitement and suspense, she had been conscious of one strong desire, mounting even to sickness at times, to see her lover alone and exchange a dozen words with him, if no more; and it had not been possible. On his previous visit their brief tête-à-tête had been interrupted by Mrs. Pentreath's entrance and fainting-fit, and all thought of themselves had had to be banished in solicitude for her. She had hardly been able, indeed, to show signs of recovery before the vicar had had to hurry up to town to ascertain further particulars about the affair, as to which he then knew no more than was told him by the lawyer's telegram. And now he was going away again, and Hetty had not had a word, scarcely a look, that she could call her own.

It was more than she could bear. She wanted to see him dreadfully. Not for any mere sentimental or selfish reason. Perhaps the poor child had never in her life felt more free from idea of love or love-making; but she wanted help, advice, guidance, and she had no one to give them. All day long Mrs. Pentreath had kept her at her side, and, nervous and weakened

herself, seemed to cling to the girl as a stay. She would hardly suffer her out of her sight, and during most of the time had sat holding her hand, sometimes in silence, sometimes crying the quiet, hopeless tears of later life; but ofteneast talking of her son, of his merits, his weaknesses, of all he was to her, and of the wickedness of the accusations against him. Over and over again she said, "If they go on with it, if they make him out guilty, it will kill me—it is killing me now." Over and over again she appealed to Hetty for assurances that it was not likely he would be convicted, or that any proof would be brought against him beyond the fact of his presence in the house; over and over again she broke into railings against the unfortunate woman who was the cause of her trouble.

Hetty felt at times as if her brain would turn, as if she could not stand the grasp of those cold white fingers, the hard pressure of the rings against her soft flesh, the feverish, appealing eyes and mournful voice, pleading for assurances she knew not how to give.

She was agitated and unstrung, not only by the event which had crushed her companion, but by what had preceded it. She was quivering from a terrible experience, oppressed by a terrible knowledge. She knew not what to do about it; whether to give it words or hide it,—as she was doing now—in her own bosom.

All the warmth and tenderness of her loving, grateful nature was strung up to intense sympathy with the woman who had been a mother to her in her orphanhood, who had protected and befriended her, and who now, broken down by sudden and unexpected affliction, clung to her as to a daughter. Yet all the while she had no sympathy for the cause of this affliction. The very thought of him made her shudder. The vision of him returning to the house, and of having to look in his face or touch his hand, sickened and revolted her. In her heart she firmly believed him to be guilty, guilty of a cowardly revengeful murder, the fit sequel to a cowardly, sensual life, and deserving of the worst punishment that the law could inflict. She did not wish that the law would inflict it, rather she prayed from the bottom of her soul that, for his mother's sake, he might escape; but her cheeks grew hot and her breath came thick and short, as she listened to that mother's encomiums on him. She almost felt as if she should suffocate when the poor woman

suffered herself, with a mother's natural injustice, to speak acrimoniously of the dead man who had dared to insult her son.

"But he was right, he did well to do so," Hetty thought with a girl's passionate disgust for things base and ignoble. "And does Mrs. Pentreath forget that he may have a mother too? George does not. I saw it in his face when she was speaking of poor Major Hollis. Oh, what would he say if he knew—— I wonder if I ought to tell him—if it would do good or harm!"

The question was in her mind when the vicar rose to depart—a question mingling strangely with a memory of a dark airless closet full of old boxes and portmanteaux, whose sharp angles she could feel (though she could not see them) whenever she tried to move; of a cramped unnatural position; and a great sickening dread that she should not be able to bear it, but should scream, or faint, or do anything to betray her presence; of trying to subdue this, and hold herself more firmly pressed against the door; and of hearing through that door the sound of a man pacing to and fro in the room without, and seeming to come nearer and nearer to her hiding-place with every restless step; of——

It was all in her mind, mingling with the question, distracting it, forcing it to her lips when the vicar rose to depart; and the sense that he was indeed going, that it must remain unanswered, that she should not see him for another day, and that then it might only be in the same manner: that others might question, and she should not know how to answer, crushed her with a veritable sense of despair.

When he said "Good-bye, Hetty," in that grave, tender tone, which yet told her in some indefinable way that he was not satisfied with her, she could not even answer him for the sob which rose in her throat and choked her. She let him drop her hand and go; and then the door closed, and Mrs. Pentreath put up her hand to her head.

"My poor boy!" she said sorrowfully, "if only I could go to him instead. Hetty, do you think——"

Hetty could bear it no longer. She sprang up, pulling away her hand.

"I am going—going to ask Mr. Hamilton what time he will come for you to-morrow," she said breathlessly, and then she made her escape.

She made up her mind. She would speak to him, even if it were only for a moment.

The vicar was just letting himself out of

the front-door when he heard her utter his name, and turning, saw her hurrying down the corridor to overtake him. Her hands were outstretched, and she was gasping for breath, so that her voice was hardly audible; but he stepped back gladly, and came to meet her, taking her into his arms in a close, sheltering embrace as he said:

"My darling, this is good of you! I thought I was not to speak to you at all; and it seemed rather hard, though my poor aunt's trouble makes one ashamed to think of anything else."

"Yes, it was about—about that I came," she answered quickly, for even in her hurry and agitation she could not bear him to think her forward. It shocked her shy young maidenliness that she should seem to run after him now, often as she had done so in her more juvenile days; and yet how delicious the touch of that encircling arm was to her, and with what a strong and tender clasp it seemed to uphold her slight trembling figure. "I wanted— Will you tell me what you think about this?" she said a little breathlessly. "His mother of course believes him innocent; but you—do you think so too?"

"I wish with all my heart I did," said the vicar, "but unless he can get some witness to prove his assertion that he entered the house after the landlady, I do not see, the evidence on the other side is so terribly overwhelming, how anyone can do so. Not, of course," as he felt the girl start and shiver, "that I think for one moment it could be called murder, or that any degree of passion could have made a man of honour, like Ernest, fire unfairly; but I believe that there was a duel, and that, in his heat and excitement, he pulled the trigger too soon. The worst part of it is his denying it."

"Why? Oh, do you think—"

"I think that, as there were no witnesses, if he were to own frankly to it and give all the details of his own accord, that, though a jury would be obliged to bring in a verdict of manslaughter, they would take into consideration the intense aggravation of the insult he had received, the soldier's exaggerated sense of honour, and the other soldier's readiness to meet it; besides the fact that, though the pistol which did the deed has not yet been found, the remaining one and the case were both proved to have belonged to Major Hollis. All these things might be made to show that Ernest did not come prepared to commit the deed

with which he is charged, but was worked up to it by some repetition of the affront he had already received. To me it seems so clear that I can only hope that Ernest will be induced to drop his present story. He must see that no one believes it, and for my own part I felt only too thankful to hear his poor mother confirm what Hickson had already told me as to his not having been here that night, for if it had been so—"

"Well?" Hetty had been standing still, her hands clasped together, her face lifted to his, listening eagerly. When he paused for a second, she broke in in a quick jarring voice. "If it had been? What were you going to say? Go on, please. Do—do you mean that it would hurt him?"

The vicar looked down at her in some surprise. He could not see her face. The house was all in confusion, as houses are apt to be when the heads of them are in trouble; and Hickson had forgotten the hall gas. Only a faint red glow came through the open door of the dining-room, where a fire was burning, and touched the girl's white dress and the startled turn of her head.

"Of course it would hurt him," he answered. "Think! a journey from town and back again takes time, and so also does an altercation or argument. He would not have had enough for both. Nay, he would barely have had time enough to go to Albion Street, make his way into the house, and shoot his victim then and there if that part of his story were true."

"But—but the pistols?" She said the words almost in a whisper, as if holding on to the plea the vicar had already put forward.

"In that case he must have brought one with him, or Major Hollis might have been cleaning his when interrupted; or— But what is the good of discussing probabilities? I don't want to believe my own cousin a liar, but for his own sake I hope no one will be able to prove the contrary unless they are also able to testify that he was in a far milder and more conciliatory mood than when he left the club; for if they couldn't do the latter they might—"

"What?"

"Hang him!" said the vicar abruptly.

Hetty started back, a low sharp cry breaking from her lips. She put up her hand as if to silence him.

"Oh, don't, don't say such things," she

stammered, "No one would. How could they? And there would be no need to ask them when Hickson and Mrs. Pentreath can both swear that he wasn't here. Why, if anything happened to Captain Pentreath it would kill his mother; she said so. But he is quite safe—quite—quite safe there."

She smiled a little as she said it, even though still shivering all over with agitation. The vicar could see the gleam of her pretty white teeth in the dim light. He did not understand this passionate emotion, this almost incoherent assertion of his cousin's safety. It recalled something else to him, and his brow darkened a little.

"I forgot to tell you," he said suddenly, "that Ernest sent his love to you."

"To me!"

"Yes. He was very angry, perhaps not unnaturally, at my not seeming to believe his story. He would hardly speak to me, indeed; but, as I went away, he called out: 'Give my love to little Hetty, and tell her not to fret for me.'"

Hetty was speechless. It seemed to her as if someone she was trying to help had dealt her a mocking blow in the face, and the blood rushed up into it in a quick tide of outraged resentment. Only a moment back she had felt sorry for this man, anxious lest she might injure him by some imprudent word; and in the midst of his own danger, in the remorse he must have been feeling for his crime, he could yet find time to insult her, and, through her, her lover, his rival.

"Oh——" she said in a shaken, gasping tone, and then stopped short.

She was afraid of herself, of what she might be tempted to say, and there was no time for explanations, for thinking what to tell and what to leave untold. At that moment Mrs. Pentreath's voice could be heard calling from the library:

"Hetty! Hetty! where are you?"

The vicar started and went to the door, holding up his watch to the moonlight.

"I must go," he said quickly. "It is later than I thought, and I may miss the train. Good-bye, Hetty!"

He put his arm round his betrothed and kissed her, but not as he had done before. In truth, he was feeling irritated and puzzled. Ernest's message, which had annoyed him at the moment, annoyed him more when he saw the disproportionate effect it produced, and, naturally, he did

not understand the latter. Things he had forgotten—the view from the choir window of those two walking side by side along the frosty road; Hetty's hurry to get rid of him a little while before; her insistence on their engagement being kept secret; and her unaccountable silence just now when she heard Mrs. Pentreath adduce what she knew to be a mistake—all these things came back to him in a rush, and he was a man who hated anything like deceit or double-dealing. As the girl put up her innocent lips to him, he held her face a little away, looking down on it in the faint white moonbeams with sudden sharpness, as he asked:

"That is all, then? You have nothing else to say, nothing else you want to tell me before I go?"

"Hetty!" Mrs. Pentreath called again, and then the library-bell rang.

Hetty pulled away her face with a quick, nervous impulse. The moonbeams made it very pale.

"I? Oh no, no, no! I must go now, and so must you. You have stayed too long already. Oh, pray don't delay," she said hurriedly, and then she wondered if she had offended him by her vehemence, and felt half-inclined to run after him and say "Good-bye" again, he was gone so quickly and without another word.

Some shadow had fallen between them at the moment of parting, and dimly she recognised that Ernest Pentreath was at the bottom of it; yet what could she have done? It would have seemed to her beyond all things petty and revengeful to choose this moment, when he was in peril of his life, and needed all the aid friends or kindred could give him, to bring forward her own small wrongs and accusations against him. What did they matter, after all? He could not hurt her now, and some day, when he was out of danger, she would tell George everything.

She closed the door softly and went back into the house, glad and thankful she had not spoken.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. FENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XV. A GENEROUS CAT.

THE journey up to London the day following that unsuccessful attempt Jenifer had made to restore Jack entirely to his mother, was a doleful and weary one to old Mrs. Ray.

It was not only that she was leaving the home of her whole married life for ever probably, but she was leaving it under circumstances that were peculiarly painful to her. If she had been going forth from it in poverty and disappointment, and still had the right to mourn for it "as its mistress," it would have been less galling and hard for her. But Effie monopolised the luxury of the lament of ownership entirely to herself.

"Jenifer, do get your mother to start the very minute the waggonette comes round," she said, coming restlessly into Jenifer's room. "I want to see the house cleared before I take my last leave of it. Isn't it awful for me to lose my own home, and have to go back to my sister's house, when I'm such a young wife, little more than a bride still! Hugh was just saying he can imagine nothing more pathetic and touching than the situation, and he pays me the compliment of saying that I play my hard part very gracefully."

"I must confess I've been thinking more about the way my poor mother bears and endures these changes," Jenifer said, keeping back her tears, and strangling a sigh.

"That's the worst of you, Jenny," Effie said calmly, shutting a portmanteau which Jenifer was packing, and seating herself on it. "Oh, get up, must I? How

you fidget and fuss about your packing, to be sure; mine was all done yesterday; Flora and I never have a fuss at the last when we're travelling."

Jenifer strapped her portmanteau, and held her peace.

"I hear the waggonette; do get your mother away without any scene; scenes destroy my nerves, and if I break down what will become of Hugh? He has no one to consult or help him in any way but me. His mother gives herself up to grieving about Jack's stupidity, and you seem to think Hugh ought to have remained unmarried all his life. Oh, don't dawdle so, Jenny; it's so unkind and selfish when you know how much I want to get the house cleared."

With every nerve strung up to its highest tension, Jenifer went with a steady step and a quiet face to take her mother away. Hubert, to cover his own natural agitation, was rushing about giving confused orders, and the two or three servants who were left were crying. But poor Jenny did not dare to be either agitated or tearful. She had her work to do.

"Come, mother darling!"

There was no verbal response from old Mrs. Ray to her daughter's address. But she got up from her chair and came out from her room at once. Effie could not complain of any undue fuss or delay. The widow walked swiftly through the hall, looking neither to the right nor the left, giving her hand to each of the servants as she passed. Without a word she got into the waggonette, and as it turned to take her to the station, she threw back her deep crape veil and took one long, wistful, hungry look back at the old home.

"We shall never see it again, Jenny; we're driven out of it for ever," she whispered.

And Jenifer had only this comfort to offer her mother :

"Another home will be a happier one than Moor Royal for us now."

Jenifer could hardly tell whether she was glad or sorry when they reached the station to find Mr. Boldero there waiting to see them off. It gave her a sense of support and sympathy to see him settling her mother in the carriage, and arranging around her all the comforts and luxuries that were necessaries to her on the long journey. It gave her something more, and that was a sense of boundless gratitude when he said :

"I happened to be in town a day or two ago, and having heard from Mrs. Jervoise that you wanted lodgings within easy distance of the potent Madame Voglio, I ventured to secure some that you can have, if you like, in Upper Hamilton Place ; at any rate, it will be better for you to go to them to-night than to go to an hotel, and if you don't like them on trial, you can still look for others. This is the address."

"They must be cheap, Mr. Boldero," Jenifer said earnestly. "I am going to be so expensive in the matter of lessons that we must economise in lodgings."

"They are cheap," he assured her ; and then he went on to say that their lodging with the mistress of the house would be a boon to her.

"I happen to know that you will be doing a good woman a great service by taking these lodgings. She is a gentlewoman, and she has had more than her share of suffering and sorrow. She has been a mother, and is now childless."

"I know what it is to lose children," Mrs. Ray said weepingly.

"No, no, madam, you do not ; you have your children left to you."

"To love and forgive while you can," Jenifer put in ardently, backing up Mr. Boldero's words with all the force of her young loving spirit.

But old Mrs. Ray was suffering from the throes of contending emotions, and could not be merciful.

"Let me depart in peace," she sobbed, breaking down at last. "Let me go hence, and be no more seen."

"Jenny," Mr. Boldero said, calling her by the pet, household, familiar name for the first time, "may I write to you, and will you write to me ?"

"As often as you like."

"I knew you would answer in that

spirit. Here come the others. Heaven bless you, Jenny ! Trust Mrs. Hatton, your landlady. She's a good woman, and she knows how much it is to me that you should be happy, under her roof or wherever you are. Halloa ! here's Edgecumb."

His tones were not exactly those of pleased surprise. Captain Edgecumb came up by the side of Mrs. Hubert Ray with an air about him of belonging to the party, which gave Mr. Boldero novel sensations. Was it for this—to see a careless debonair young fellow slip into the nearest place by Jenifer—that he, Mr. Boldero, was holding back till he could come forward with honour ?

A light, ringing voice roused him from an unpleasant reverie.

"Mr. Boldero, you're the one person I was pining to see before I left, but I find I have to pine in vain for most things ; therefore I'm both surprised and glad to see you here. Hugh tells me we can't get rid of Moor Royal altogether yet. Now, can't you manage to accommodate someone with it—someone who will pay a good rent without telling everyone that we're letting the place ? I've no sentiment about it, you know. Moor Royal is by way of being a white elephant to me. Do, like a good man, get rid of Moor Royal and put money in our purse."

"Effie, you're talking nonsense," her husband whispered angrily.

"Jenifer and you always say I am talking nonsense when I tell the truth," she laughed out dauntlessly ; and then she took a graceful leave of those on the platform, and got in unruffled to the carriage. The railway officials tell to this day the story of how gracefully she went away, and how pluckily she bore the ruin that was partly of her own making.

In the confusion at the last moment, Effie had managed easily, and apparently unintentionally, to slip into another carriage than the one in which old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer were already settled. She had invited Captain Edgecumb to follow her—invited him with one of her most artistically-rendered winning smiles ; and he had disregarded the invitation, and got himself into the carriage with Jenifer and her mother.

It was only a trifle, but it was one of those trifles which Mrs. Hubert Ray could not bring herself to regard as being light as air. In very truth, she did not at all dislike the prospect of being thrown upon her

husband's sole companionship throughout the whole length of the journey; but she did not desire that he should believe her to be satisfied with this prospect. An uneasy sense pervaded her that he might get to think that they were to take each other for granted, and be perfectly satisfied with the arrangement. She recalled some of Flora's counsels. Flora had always told her that it wasn't wise to let a husband feel that his society was all-sufficient.

"If you once do that you may be stuck down in any cheap and convenient hole in which he may find it easy to bury himself for a time," the astute Flora had said.

In her innermost heart Effie did not suspect, much less accuse, her husband of any such ignominious design against her. She had to confess that Hubert was really very liberal and tolerant to her caprices and cravings for society. And in her innermost heart, it may be added, she liked her husband's society better than that of any of the many men she knew.

At the same time, she liked homage. And as Captain Edgecumb had once offered it to her freely, it seemed to her an unpardonable affront that he should prefer the companionship of "dreary old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer" to her own.

Not that Effie wanted to detach Captain Edgecumb from Jenifer if he were already attached in ever so slight a way. But it seemed to her that they ought to subordinate their own feelings and attachments to her will and pleasure. Then if she liked—as she would like—to smile upon them, she would still occupy the graceful and powerful position.

Meantime, while she was arranging, and rearranging, and disarranging fanciful situations, Captain Edgecumb was dealing manfully with realities and facts.

"Miss Ray," he began, when old Mrs. Ray had sunk into a deep slumber from sheer nerve fatigue, "you can't suppose for a moment that I am here by accident to-day."

"I thought your going up with us a very happy accident."

"Not at all; it's a deep-laid plan between my mother, my sisters, and myself that I should go up now, and introduce them to you in a few days—if your mother and you will permit me to do so."

"You mustn't make them a social snare to me," poor Jenifer said, feeling, as she spoke, that she already belonged to the great army of working martyrs.

"I hope they may help you," he said rather nervously. "My eldest sister is a pupil of Madame Voglio's——"

Jenifer listened with intense interest.

"She may be of use to you; she's a good-hearted, strongly prejudiced kind of girl, but she's fond of me, and if she can help you she will."

"A fellow pupil; perhaps we may come out together," Jenifer said indifferently.

"Perhaps so. I don't know much about such matters; I'm an awful oaf, in fact," Captain Edgecumb said hurriedly. Then he added: "But oaf as I am, you will let me see you sometimes, and you will let my sisters call on you, and try to know you, won't you?"

"Ah, you don't know, or you don't realise, what an unimportant person I am," Jenifer said, half laughing at his eagerness. "Let your sisters get to know me without any pressure from you."

"And until you know my sisters you will let me call on you sometimes?" he asked.

"I don't know. 'Calling' will probably be a thing of the past with us," Jenifer said. "I'm not regretting the fact, I'm only stating it. I shall be always at work. I don't mean to recognise a single social obligation that will interfere with study. Still, if when I'm at work, you like to come and see my mother, I think I may promise for her that she will be glad to see you."

"I shall prove but a poor substitute for my daughter," Mrs. Ray said abstractedly. "At my time of life to have to encounter changes of every kind is a hard thing; strange faces will be about me, bewildering me, and making me feel that I am merely a poor old homeless waif and stray."

"All the more reason that you should welcome one face that won't be strange whenever that face will show itself at our lodgings," Jenifer said pleasantly. "Do you know, I've an idea that our lodgings will be very homelike. Mr. Boldero knows and likes the landlady, so there will be a link between us at once."

"Will the landlady be the link between you and Mr. Boldero, or Mr. Boldero the link between you and the landlady?" Captain Edgecumb asked, suffering a qualm of jealousy to render him spiteful for a moment or two.

"They'll both be links, and I shall be one between them; in fact we shall be a perfect chain," Jenifer laughed. "Oh, mother, a

fixed idea has come into my head. You heard the way Mr. Boldero spoke of Mrs. Hutton; she may be the past romance of his life. I feel convinced that she is, and our being there will give him the opportunity of seeing a great deal of her, and of teaching old love to wake again."

"What idle imaginings, Jenny," her mother said reprovingly.

"I hope they're not idle," Captain Edgecumb muttered to Jenifer; and then in a still lower tone he went on to tell her that he should feel considerably more at rest if he could believe that Mr. Boldero would frequent their lodgings for the sole purpose of seeing their landlady. "But, to my sorrow, I give him credit for better taste," he added significantly.

"You mean that you believe he will come to see me," Jenifer forced herself to say. "I won't tell you whether I wish he would or not; but I'll tell you that I don't think he will." Then she remembered what Effie had said to her about the favourable chance which she would have on the journey up, of "bringing Captain Edgecumb to the point," and she longed to tell him that she had compared herself to a cat and him to a mouse.

Over and over again he reverted to the subject of his mother and sisters, and though Jenifer would not allow herself to evince the slightest interest in them, for fear of that interest being misconstrued, he persisted in giving her little bits of information about them, and making rapid bold sketches of their ways and characters in a manner that showed her he was anxious she should understand them.

"My father isn't what is called a fashionable doctor; he's a regular old-fashioned type of 'good families' physician; they've lived in Chelsea for the last thirty years, and my mother thinks that the real region of the blest is the one in which she lives."

"That's lucky, as she lives there," Jenifer said.

"It is for her; but the belief, pressed to its bitter end, makes her a little doubtful of everyone who's outside the magic circle. Mayfair is too fast and worldly for her; the suburbs she holds to be wild and doubtful; in fact, she thinks all rightly-constituted people ought to take houses in the squares around her."

Jenifer thought that Mrs. Edgecumb must be a disagreeable, narrow-minded woman, but she did not feel impelled to preach a crusade against prejudice and intolerance.

"My eldest sister, Isabel, married last year. Did I ever tell you about it?" he asked after a long silence, during which Mrs. Ray had fallen asleep, and Jenifer's thoughts had travelled toilsomely over the events of the last few months.

"I don't remember your ever saying anything about any of your family till to-day."

"No! Well, I've often wanted to speak of my sisters, but I was afraid of boring you. Now I want you to know them, so I shall risk the possibility of your finding me a little tedious. Isabel is my favourite sister. She has married a very clever fellow; he's a journalist and a dramatic writer. By the way, you must have seen notices of his last play, 'Audacity.' It made a tremendous hit, and he struck oil with it to a considerable extent."

Jenifer thought she had seen notices of "Audacity," but could not be quite sure.

"My mother wanted Isabel to marry my father's partner, and live a second edition of her own life, but Bell preferred adventuring with Archibald Campbell, and she has been rewarded. He was poor enough when they married, and now, after this short time, she tells me they're quite as well off as she ever wishes to be. Hers is a very jolly house. I hope you'll like going there."

Jenifer left this remark unanswered; and after a prolonged silence she effectually changed the subject by saying:

"Let me lend you a book? Yes, do. I'm afraid that our talking will wake mother again, and it will be such a blessing if she can get two or three hours' sleep." Then she pressed a book into his unwilling hand, and settled herself cosily in a corner with another. Against his own desire she would spare and protect the mouse.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART VIII.

ALL Arromanches turned out to witness our departure—all the resident population that is; the shopkeepers, who deal mostly in sand-shoes, in spades and buckets for children—and why young England should always use a spade with a grip for the hand, while infant France prefers the long straight-handled variety, is one of those minute differences the root of which perhaps lies deep in national character—but anyhow, the dealers in spades and buckets, and work-baskets with "Arromanches" embroidered in red worsted on

their sides, were all deeply interested in our departure. And with these there were the fisher wives and daughters, and the female population generally, with the bonnie brown-eyed girls, and the mothers exuberant in form, at the head of whom is the stout and jolly dame who supplies the hotel and the town generally with fish, and who, in virtue of this official connection with our party, became as it were the herald and guide-general of the affair, explaining to the rest of the townspeople the affinities and relationships of the whole party.

Last night a thunderstorm broke over the place, with grand masses of black clouds, bringing out the little town in its nook, the dark cliffs, the gleaming sands, and the foaming sea in lurid light and portentous shade; but this morning all is crisp and calm, with light fleecy clouds in the deep blue sky, and a sun that smiles and dimples in pure light-heartedness. A morning this in which it is enjoined upon all the world to feel light-hearted, under penalty of complete disaccord with all surroundings. For all about—in cottage and hamlet, in the fields where the corn is ripening for the harvest, and on the roads where sometimes we meet a team of great strong horses with melodiously-tinkling bells upon their arched necks—everything seems full of the joy and pleasure of existence, of the delight of breathing and living in this sunny perfumed air, yes, and even of working where sun and sky are fellow-labourers, and where people can sing at their work as they do in the villages, where the young people are already beginning to sing the pleasures of the approaching harvest.

Voilà la Saint Jean passé,
Le mois d'Août est approchant,
Où les garçons des villages
S'en vont la gerbe battant.
Ho! batteurs, battons la gerbe,
Compagnons joyeusement!

Our road takes us through a pleasant land of pasture and cornfield, with sometimes a stream crossing the road, and every now and then a village and an old church among the trees. And after a while we come to the little river Seullles, and follow its course down the rich valley; and presently, through an opening in the low spreading hills, we come in sight of Courseulles and the sea again.

At Courseulles we must breakfast in sight of the oyster parcs from which we derived the most delicious part of the meal.

Our old squire grows quite young again

over his oysters and chablis, and begins to tell his stories of the palmy days of the Second Empire, and of the merry days he had in Paris, with his old comrade, the Count de St. Pol, and that reminds him: Where is the young Count de St. Pol, and how is it we have not seen him lately? a question which comes upon Hilda and myself with a rather chilly feeling. We had almost forgotten the count, and now there comes another reminder of the unpleasant episode with which he is connected. This is in the form of a huge pair of curling horns and the coal-black nose of a Pyrenean sheep which appears over the edge of the table as we sit at breakfast in the open air, and presently we hear the bang of a tambourine and the shrill piping note of a tin whistle, as two brown and dusty men with ragged garments and big leather wallets make their appearance, with the gipsy girl and the second sheep close behind. The men are rather clamorous in their demand for backsheesh, and directed their attentions especially to Hilda; making signs of intelligence, and as it were of secret understanding with her, to her great annoyance and indignation.

I jumped up to send the men off, but Madame la Directrice interfered in their behalf.

"Let us have one little performance," she cried. "They are so amusing, those beasts, when they stand upon their hind legs;" and she threw the men a small silver coin, which they picked up and examined with some contempt.

But they had been promised, said one of the men, speaking in his nasal patois, fifty francs by the young English lady there, pointing to Hilda, when they saw her last by the old abbey of Cérisy.

"How dare you say so?" cried Hilda indignantly.

"Why, this is a case of blackmail," said the director; "it demands the interference of the authorities. We will tell our host to fetch the gendarmes."

"No," cried Tom, "I object to the gendarmes, who put everything down in those confounded note-books; perhaps they have got my name down as it is. Let us deal with these rascals ourselves."

At the sight of Tom and myself advancing with warlike intentions, the men sheered off sullenly, muttering many threats, while the more valiant sheep protected their retreat by menacing us with their horns. The girl remained behind,

and when her companions shouted to her to come on, she threw herself on her knees before Hilda.

"Mademoiselle," she cried, sobbing, "you look kind and good; will you save me from these men, who do nothing but beat and ill-treat me? They have been worse than ever since the day I showed your friend where to find you, and I am sure they will kill me now."

"Don't be afraid, little one," said Hilda, taking her hand kindly; "no one shall take you away against your will."

"Unless indeed," interposed the director, "unless one of these men is her father. We can't dispute parental authority, you know."

"Oh no, monsieur," cried the girl, "I am not of their country at all. They bought me for a few sous of my father, promising to teach me a trade, but they have taught me nothing."

"That might be a binding contract, however," said the director, "but still, if there has been ill-treatment"—snapping his fingers—"that for the contract. The child looks docile and intelligent. Stéphanie, my angel, wilt thou take her for thy little maid?"

Stéphanie shrugged her shoulders expressively.

"I have not the time, mon cher, to superintend her education."

The girl brightened up at this, for she had evidently fixed upon Hilda as her protectress, and looked askance at Madame la Directrice.

"Mademoiselle," she faltered, "I do not think I am fit to be a femme de chambre. I would be an artiste, like my mother. I can dance; I can sing a little. Let me follow in your train, mademoiselle, and perhaps I can amuse you a little sometimes."

Since the days of his youth, Tom declares, when he projected a private Punch and Judy show for his own amusement, he has conceived of nothing so refreshingly naïf as the plan of this brown gipsy child.

In her eyes, Hilda was a great lady, with her yacht and her troops of followers, among whom the poor saltimbanque might find a place for the amusement of a spare moment. But Hilda was touched and yet embarrassed by the girl's appeal.

"How can I make your future, my child," she said, "when my own is so uncertain?"

"Speak for me, monsieur," said the girl, appealing to me. "Mademoiselle will refuse you nothing."

"What do you say?" I asked of Hilda in a whisper. "Shall we adopt the child?"

"Oh, if I could! I should dearly like to," replied Hilda. "But what would he say?"—"he," no doubt, being the redoubtable Mr. Chancellor.

"Well, leave it to me," I said. "Tom and I will arrange matters, only Justine must take care of her."

Tom's skill in a bargain stood us in good stead on this occasion, for we thought it best to come to an arrangement with the Pyrenean shepherds, who, when they found that the little girl was in question, demanded extravagant sums for her release. Finally, however, we beat them down to fifty francs, the very sum they had demanded as hush-money. The tambourine was thrown into the bargain, and Tom, emboldened by success, was going on to make a bid for the sheep, but this I put a stop to; for apart from the inconvenience of travelling about with a couple of curly-horned sheep of fighting propensities, it would certainly be wrong to deprive the men of their means of livelihood. For our Pyreneans would certainly soon drink out the purchase-money of their flock, and then would be left as a scourge upon the country, for certainly there was the making of bandits in these truculent fellows.

"You have paid money for me. Oh, you were wrong to give anything to those wicked fellows!" cried our little ward—her name was Zamora, by the way, a name I remembered once to have heard called by gipsies across a river with a sound wonderfully pathetic and tender, and the name had dwelt in my memory ever since. And here was the real Zamora at last—a regular little gipsy, to whom both Tom and myself at once took a wonderful liking.

We took her to see Contango in his stable, when the gipsy nature of the child burst forth in her delight in the horse, his satin coat, and powerful frame. The dream of her life, she acknowledged with glittering eyes, was to ride a horse like that, bare-backed, round some arena—she, all in spangles and diaphanous muslin, to dash through hoop after hoop amid the maddening plaudits of the crowd.

The girl acted the scene with such fire and life that Tom involuntarily cried

"Houpe là!" as she gathered herself together for each daring spring.

"Hang it, Frank!" cried Tom at last, "put your money in a circus, and bring out our little Zamora as the flying wonder."

The child looked at us eagerly, full of enthusiasm, and then she saw, or fancied she saw, that we were laughing at her, and her eyes filled with tears and her lip quivered.

"Zamora," I cried, "you shall follow the bent of your talent. Come, we will find some kind master for you who will teach you all the mysteries of the manège. You shall ride three horses at once—six if you like."

Zamora seized my hand and kissed it gratefully.

"But I should have liked you for a master," she sighed. Those other masters, indeed, from whom we had delivered the child, had been so cruel! Zamora could show the marks of the stripes they had given her upon her shoulders. "Ah, they were wicked men, and they bore no good-will to monsieur!"

Zamora knew that the pair had been employed by M. de St. Pol, after he had received that blow, to follow me and trace all my movements. And they had followed the trail as far as Arromanches, but there they had been deceived by the talk of the fishermen, who had reported that the yacht had sailed for "Suthanton" with her whole party. And the count, informed of the sailing of the yacht, had concluded that I was running away from him, and had started for England at once to pursue his revenge, and he was probably running after the Sea Mew at this present moment.

We laughed heartily, Tom and I, over this happy contretemps. There was the possibility, indeed, of De St. Pol meeting with Mr. Chancellor and somehow bringing him into the quarrel; but this was a bare possibility hardly worth consideration. For it would certainly be against the code of honour to bring a lady's name into the dispute. The count would no doubt seek some other mode of revenge—probably by passing upon me some public insult that would almost compel me to fight him.

However, we had nothing to do in the matter but to wait events. And in the meantime Wyvern was in search of us, anxious to get the party together for a start. Wyvern was rather excited by the

immediate prospect of meeting his chief, and he had prepared a kind of muster-roll of the whole party ready to lay before him.

"Chancellor will be sure to want to know who everybody is," Wyvern explained apologetically. "You see I have got a column here for the purpose. I've got you down, Tom, here as 'Miss Chudleigh's cousin;' and your friend—I'm afraid I've made rather a muddle of his name—'Lam' something."

"Put down my real name, please, if you must put it down," I interposed. "The other was just a purser's name. Put down, 'Mr. Frank Lyme, of Lyme.'"

"Hallo!" cried Wyvern, "that makes rather more of a muddle of it, doesn't it? You see, I send the chief a weekly return of his guests, and I'm sure I put Lam something down, and he'll have it to show against me if there's any mistake. But never mind, here goes; let him find it out—'Mr. Lyme, of Lyme, friend of Miss Chudleigh's cousin'—eh?"

In one way or another Mr. Wyvern got his list completed, and had the satisfaction of finding his muster complete at the railway-station. Tom had undertaken to drive Contango by the direct road some ten miles to Caen, taking Justine and Zamora as companions. But the rest of us preferred the railway, quite a toy-line recently opened, with stations at all the little watering-places on the coast. Bernières comes first, with its fine church-tower and tall graceful spire; then St. Aubin—a favourite saint this with the Normans. We can reckon up seven St. Aubins in their country. St. Germain, however, heads the poll with thirteen villages owing his sway, while St. Georges is a good third, and the rest are nowhere. As to what Albinus had done, or what Germanus, to make them thus respected, no one seems to be informed. Our director discards the saints altogether with a contemptuous wave of the hand. But St. Aubin-by-the-Sea is nice because the houses are ranged close to the sands, and people can pop out of their own doors and into the sea without further ceremony. Then comes Lagrune, with another tall spire a good deal battered and disfigured, and after this Luc-sur-Mer, the most popular and lively of all these little bathing-places. But these places are all just now in full enjoyment of the benefits of the season, the sands dotted with bathers, with chairs, with tents, with gay umbrellas—and every-

thing to be seen to the best advantage from the railway, especially from the tops of the cars, which are utilised for outside passengers. A pleasing novelty this last, and yet not a novelty so much as a revival, for on our English railroads we had outside passengers to start with, after the model of the stage-coach, till some of these were decapitated in passing under bridges. But here there are no bridges to fear—nothing to give alarm overhead; but a pleasant smiling plain all about, and a level crossing here and there, where a woman signals our approach upon a horn.

The railway turns inland by Douvres, and passes close by the locally-famous chapel of La Délivrande, whence every year pilgrims flock in crowds, whole parishes sometimes marching thither in procession, with the curé at the head, to visit a famous image of the Virgin. But the church is almost new, and is surrounded by various buildings of a conventual character, all new and in excellent repair, and therefore not exciting much interest among us. But the veneration of the people for the site is not an affair of to-day, but dates from ages far remote, from the days of Saint Regnobert, one of the earliest Christian missionaries in these parts, at a time when Rome was still mistress of the world; and even then, no doubt, the worthy Regnobert only hallowed to Christian use a site already dear to popular superstition.

The railway winds quietly into Caen without affording us any general view of the city, and at the station we find ourselves the centre of quite a crowd of well-dressed people drawn up to receive us. It is our director, however, who is the object of this ovation, our director—quite transformed by the occasion—distributing bows, salutes, pressure of the hand, in every direction, while his wife is equally the centre of all kinds of flattering attentions. Of all people our director is most welcome at Caen at this moment, for the whole place is in high fête with its Concours Régional; its exposition, its public banquets, and private entertainments; and in all of these, as the representative of his "Bureau," will our director be in the greatest request. Our whole party, too, is illumined by the radiance that shines upon our director. It is a happy occasion for cementing the cordiality which should unite two great and friendly nations, whose only rivalry should be in the path of a

beneficent progress. And the visit of the distinguished Mr. Chancellor and his party is another proof of the friendship that binds the two countries.

"Has Mr. Chancellor then arrived?" is asked with some anxiety.

"Well, no, not yet; but his yacht has been signalled at the mouth of the river. It will take two hours, perhaps, to make the intermediate transit."

"We have just two hours," I said, turning to Hilda; "two hours in which our fate must be decided. Let us get away from this crowd, and spend the last two hours together."

It was not difficult to get away from the rest, and we wandered away from the station, at haphazard, towards the town. All the streets presented a gay and holiday aspect—the houses festooned with flags, and the shop-windows dressed out with the most attractive wares. All this had been going on for weeks and weeks, and yet nobody seemed tired of it; the flags fluttered just as gaily, the people made holiday just as freely—with a severe eye to business all the time—as if this were the first day of rejoicing. But altogether there was so much noise and hubbub, that we could hardly hear ourselves speak; and so, following the slope of the ground, we made our way out of the town and towards the meadows by the river. Turning one way we found the meadows occupied by a horse-show, a circus, and the outbuildings of the exposition, but in the other direction there was comparative quiet, with solemn reaches of the river passing out into the country, among avenues of stately trees, while cheerful country-houses, with gay gardens, brightened up the scene. Behind us stretched the city of Caen with its long line of spires set against the evening sky, the Conqueror's church mounting guard at one end, and his consort Matilda's at the other. The soft tinkle of bells came pleasantly over the meadows, with the murmur of voices and the neighing and whinnying of horses from the shows close by, and the shrill cries and laughter of children at play.

We sat down upon a bench under the trees, Hilda seating herself at the end of the bench, so as to leave a space between us—just as the whole length of Caen divides William the Conqueror from his faithful Matilda. It is true that I did not feel like the conqueror at all, but rather as one defeated. Hilda looked nervously at her watch; already half an hour had passed.

The Sea Mew was now steaming up the river, I could see her in the mind's eye dashing along between the long avenues of trees, setting all the fishing-boats dancing and twirling with the swell she raised in passing, while her owner paced the deck impatiently and urged "full speed." The thought was maddening.

"Hilda," I cried, "I am not going to stop here to see that fellow claim you as his property. If you don't make up your mind in ten minutes to take me, and throw Chancellor over, I shall go right away somewhere."

"Listen, Frank," said Hilda, giving me an appealing glance. "Have a little patience and wait. I own that I dread this meeting. I have tried hard to do my duty, and drive you out of my heart, but I am not strong enough. It is a humiliating confession," and Hilda knit her brows, "but there it is. Only he must decide."

"My darling Hilda," I cried, and the space between us had now come to a vanishing point, "if you are of a mind to have me, there is nothing in the world that can come between us."

"Oh yes, indeed there is, Frank," cried Hilda, putting back my arm that had begun to encircle her waist; "plenty of things may come between us. A whole peck of family troubles come between us. But listen, Frank, I have written to Mr. Chancellor."

"I know you are always writing to him," I replied savagely.

"But this time, Frank," continued Hilda gently, "it was a letter that I am afraid must have hurt him very much. I told him about you—he knew a little about you before—just that there had been such a person. But this time I told him all. That you had been my first and my only love, and that I could never, never forget you. No, Frank, you mustn't take advantage of this confession, which has been wrung from me by circumstances, for I still belong to somebody else, till he releases me from my promise."

Hilda was resolute upon this point, she would not forfeit her word to Mr. Chancellor, or allow me any of a lover's privileges till he had absolved her. And Hilda confessed that she feared his influence would be too strong upon her, and that he would talk her over and carry everything his own way after all. As we were talking we heard the shrill whistle of a steamer, that was no doubt just entering the basin.

It must be the Sea Mew by that long dolorous shriek, that the French boats could not come near in the way of sound and shrillness.

Hilda turned pale as she made me hurry towards the town, but half-way across the prairies we met Wyvern hurrying to meet us.

"The Sea Mew has arrived," he cried, "but no Chancellor. However, her master has brought a despatch for you that will no doubt account for Chancellor's absence. But I assure you that our French friends are very much excited about it. They will have it that Chancellor, being a member of the Administration, is prevented from coming over by national jealousy. Perhaps there is something to be said for that view, but it must not be countenanced, you understand." And with that Wyvern hurried off to talk to the préfet, whom he recognised in the distance.

Meantime Hilda had devoured her letter, and at the end of it gave me a gentle pressure on the arm.

"He has forgiven me, Frank," she said, "but not quite freely. You may read the second sheet of the letter, for it is about business matters."

I read as follows, the writing being very neat and firm:

"I have spared no pains, no expense, as you are aware, to make you happy. The Sea Mew I bought principally for your amusement, although, as you know, I don't personally care for the sea. I did not grudge all this, but still I think I have cause to complain. The yacht is still at your disposal, however, for the present, but as I shall try to sell her at once, before the season is over, you must not complain if she is suddenly recalled. Of course I can't do anything more in your brother's business, the probable odium to be encountered in providing in the public service for such a worthless person is too serious to be encountered, except for the sake of one very near and dear. But the purchase of the Combe Chudleigh property is so nearly completed that I cannot now recede, although the possession of the estate will be, in some respects, painful. However, it affords me the satisfaction of assuring you that you and your father are welcome to remain there till you find a suitable abode elsewhere."

There was a mixture of assumed benevolence and genuine rancour about this letter, that was rather amusing. But Hilda looked very grave over it, after the

first feeling of thankfulness had passed over.

"You will repent, Frank," she cried, "when you have heard all I have to tell you."

Hilda began with the death of her aunt, Miss Chudleigh, our dear old friend of Weymouth. A few days before, the old lady had sent for her and told her how she had disposed of her property.

"And you and Frank can marry and be happy upon my money. I had much rather that, than that it should run down the gutters after Redmond."

And thus the property was tied up so that she could not touch the principal. And Hilda had intended that, somehow, I should be informed of her aunt's benevolent intentions, when she heard the report of my having married the Indian princess. At that time, too, had occurred her father's collapse, when he was obliged to leave Combe Chudleigh, and to take to economical living in London. And then Redmond, whose extravagance had ruined the old squire, in his straits for money had resorted to some questionable practices in raising loans, and had been threatened with a criminal prosecution. Mr. Chancellor, however, had arranged matters with the creditors, who had agreed to take an assignment of Hilda's income, excepting some two hundred a year she retained for pocket-money—an assignment for ten years, Mr. Chancellor having generously acceded to this disposal of the fortune of his future wife. It was over these papers that Hilda had been so engrossed with Mr. Wyvern, when we rejoined the yacht at Port. It was all settled now, and Redmond was personally safe, but his prospects of public employment were at an end, very much to the advantage of the public, as I thought.

"And this poor little two hundred a year of mine," said Hilda, "is all we shall have to depend upon, for I don't suppose you have made your fortune abroad, have you, Frank?"

I could truthfully reply that I had not made my fortune, indeed I had lost half the little capital I started with, in tea-planting out in India. But then the other half was still intact, and I told Hilda that would be something to start with, and we had youth and health on our side, and working together surely we could make some kind of mark in the world.

"Well, I am willing to try, Frank," said Hilda cheerfully, "if you are. Only it

strikes me that our holiday ought to end here, and that we ought to begin this work, whatever it is to be, as soon as possible."

Of course it was out of the question to accept Mr. Chancellor's offer of the loan of the Sea Mew till he could sell her. But I had a plan of my own about that, which I only wanted Tom's help to carry out.

And as we walked up the Rue St. Jean towards the hotel, we met Tom driving Contango, and a good deal embarrassed, for he had not been able to find us out, and Zamora attracted a good deal of attention, from her outlandish appearance and vivid gestures. But having deposited his feminine charge at the hotel, and attended to Contango's comfort at the stables, Tom was all ready to execute my commission, which was no other than to purchase the Sea Mew as she stood, or floated rather, with all her fittings and belongings. And Tom soon found out from the master what price he thought the yacht was fairly worth, and then he telegraphed an offer to Mr. Chancellor, somewhat below this amount. The reply came in a few hours. It was an acceptance of the offer, provided the money was deposited at Rothschild's within twenty-four hours. There was no difficulty about this, so that the yacht was now mine to all intents and purposes.

But as Tom came back from his last journey to the port about the yacht, he took me aside, with a grave look upon his face.

"Frank, who came across in the Sea Mew, with Mr. Chancellor's permission, can you guess? Why, the Count de St. Pol. I met the man just now."

ABOUT BANK NOTES.

EVERYBODY knows that a bank-note is an unconditional promise to pay the bearer a certain sum of money on demand. Everybody, too, is familiar with the advertisements regarding lost notes, that they have been stopped at the bank; and few, perhaps, would think of disputing the power of the issuers to act upon such notification, although the question was raised and disposed of long ago.

We have often heard Mr. Hume credited with having settled the matter by obtaining payment of a stopped note, through simply threatening to proclaim that the Bank of England had stopped payment. The tale

is but an example of the fondness for making new stories out of old ones. In Hume's time, it would have taken more than the economist's asseveration to convince people that the Bank of England wanted the wherewithal to satisfy all claimants. The story really dates from the early days of the famous corporation, before the reputation of the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street was so firmly established, that "as safe as the bank" had become a proverbial phrase. As told by Mr. Francis, in his History of the Bank of England, it runs thus: The chief clerk of a London bank departed for Holland, with twenty thousand pounds' worth of Bank of England notes belonging to his employers. Unable to realise his plunder himself, he sold the notes to a Jew. Every publicity was given to the theft, the numbers of the notes were advertised far and wide, but for half a year nothing was heard of the lost property. Then the purchaser boldly presented himself with the whole of the spoil, and demanded payment, which was curtly refused on the ground that the notes had been stolen, and payment of them stopped by the owners. Thereupon the Jew proceeded to the Exchange and informed the merchants congregated there, that the Bank of England refused to honour its own notes, showing the notes to corroborate his story. He declared they had been remitted to him from Holland, and as he was known to have extensive transactions in that quarter, credence was given to his statement. He then announced his intention of advertising the suspension of the bank. The news was carried to the directors, and they, after a brief consultation, sent a messenger to inform the holder of the notes that they were ready to give him gold for them.

The story may be true, but we have our doubts, for in 1724, and again in 1731, the Postmaster-General directed all persons sending bank-notes by post to write their names upon them, and add upon the face of each note: "Upon notice that the mail is robbed, stop payment at the bank until further advice from—," directions that would scarcely have been given, unless that official had supposed the bank could refuse to pay notes so endorsed. In 1758 the mail was robbed of a number of bank-notes. One of them the thief changed at the post-office at Hatfield, at which place he then procured a post-chaise and four horses, and so took the road, getting rid of the rest of his booty at the several stages of his journey.

The owner of the notes duly notified the bank of his trouble, and when they came back to that establishment, Mr. Rice, the cashier, stopped them, and declined to pay the holders. Finding remonstrances of no avail, they went to the Court of King's Bench for redress, and after very learned pleadings on both sides, the judges pronounced that any person paying a valuable consideration for a bank-note payable to bearer in a fair course of business, had an undoubted right to recover the money from the bank.

In 1764, we find it written: "One of the bank-notes stolen some time ago from Lord Harrington was stopped at the bank, and the person who brought it; but being a man of character, he was released and the money paid." After this one would suppose that notes presented by a firm of such character as Messrs. Jones, Loyd and Co. would have been accepted without demur. Not so, however. When, in May, 1826, those eminent bankers paid a number of notes into their account at the Bank of England, the latter refused to give the firm credit for one particular note, on the plea that it was one of two of which a stockbroker had been robbed; a fact of which the bank had been notified by the police, and requested to detain either note on presentation. The directors, therefore, insisted upon keeping the note in their possession, relying apparently on the courts having declared that if a note were lost by felony, fraud, or accident, no property in it passed to the thief or finder, or any other person having a knowledge of the circumstances, who did not receive it in the customary way of business. The stolen note had been paid in to Messrs. Jones, Loyd and Co. by a French gentleman of undoubted respectability, and not being inclined to submit to the loss, the great private bankers instituted a suit against the Bank of England. At the hearing Lord Tenterden told the jury the only question they had to consider was whether the note had been obtained by the holders according to the usual method of dealing in the place where it was printed, and the twelve good men and true found it had been so obtained, and judgment was given in favour of Jones, Loyd and Co.

A hundred and thirty years ago Bank of England notes were not appreciated abroad. Had they been readily negotiable beyond the seas, Sylvanus Urban would not have had to record that, in June, 1751, there

came by the French mail, under cover to Messrs. Fuller and Honeywood, bank-notes amounting to two thousand nine hundred pounds. "Though nothing was wrote with them, it appeared that they were taken by the French in 1745, in a Dutch vessel, and were the property of persons here and in Holland, who had advertised them a reward of fifteen pounds per cent., and no questions." Even fifteen per cent. and no troublesome enquiries could not bring about the restoration to a disconsolate London shopkeeper of a bank-note, which was lost by his son while passing through Duke's Court, St. Martin's. The careless lad carried the note in his hand, and stopping to play with two goats, "belonging to the Muse"—meaning the Mews, we suppose—one of the playful creatures nibbled the note out of his hand, and swallowed it—a clear case of "eating money." Not so utterly irretrievable was the misfortune of a Bristolian who a year or two back lost a couple of fifty-pound notes. His wife was inspired with the happy thought of searching the ashes in the dining-room grate, and found some particles of tinder which, submitted to a microscope, were ascertained to contain the numbers and traces of the water-mark of the notes. The ashes were sent to London, and subjected to further examination there, and the bank made good the hundred pounds.

On one occasion the bank proved much too accommodating for its own interests. Somewhere about the year 1740, one of its own directors, a man of wealth, and of unimpeachable honour, bought an estate for thirty thousand pounds, and for convenience sake obtained a note for that amount. On returning home, just as he was about to put it under lock and key, he was called out of the room, and placed the note on the mantelpiece. On coming back a few minutes later no note was to be seen. No one had entered the room in his absence, and after an anxious search he came to the conclusion that the precious bit of paper had fallen into the fire, and been consumed. Hurrying off to Threadneedle Street, he told his colleagues what had happened, and they gave him a second note upon his undertaking to restore the lost one if it should come again into his hands, and in case of its being presented by anybody else, repay the amount to the bank. Thirty years afterwards, when he had long been dead, and his estate distributed among his heirs, the supposed non-existent note turned up at the bank counter,

where it was presented for payment. All explanations of the circumstances connected with it were lost upon the presentee—the note had come to him from abroad in the course of business, and it must be honoured without delay. There being no help for it, he was paid the thirty thousand pounds. Application was made to the representatives of the defunct director to refund the money, but they promptly disclaimed their liability, and the bank perforce had to put up with the loss. The story goes that it was discovered (how or when we are not informed) that the builder employed to pull down the dead man's house, preparatory to rearing a new one on the site, had found the note in a crevice of the chimney, and kept it and his own counsel until he thought it was safe to reap the reward of his patience and unscrupulousness, and so become a rich man at a stroke.

The above story is not to be dismissed as incredible on the score of the unlikelihood of the original possessor of the thirty thousand pound note, or bank-bill, displaying such heedlessness in its disposal. The executors of Sir Robert Burdett found no less than two hundred and seventy thousand pounds' worth of bank-notes scattered here and there about his house, some slipped into bundles of old papers, some between the leaves of books, without a memorandum anywhere to apprise them of the existence of such valuables, much less of their whereabouts. A little better advised were the executors of the gentleman who left behind him a scrap of paper marked "Seven hundred pounds in Till," although they failed to interpret its meaning until they had disposed of all the dead man's belongings. Then one of them recollected that his library had contained a folio edition of Tillotson's Sermons, and wondered if "Till" had any reference to it. The books had been sold to a bookseller, who luckily had not found a customer for them, although he had sent them on approval to a gentleman at Cambridge, who had returned them as not answering his expectations. The executor bought the Tillotson back again, and going carefully through the volumes, recovered notes to the amount of seven hundred pounds.

The watchman of a factory at New Haven, America, afforded the administrators of his estate no clue whatever as to the hiding-place of the savings of which they believed him to have died possessed.

Overhauling his clothes, preparatory to selling them by auction, one of them threw an old overcoat aside, when a dirty piece of cloth dropped out of one of the pockets. On examination this was found to be wrapped round a large cartridge shell, within which lay notes of eighteen hundred dollars value, which but for a mere chance might have unexpectedly enriched a purchaser of secondhand clothing. No one belonging to De Quincy would have been surprised at his pockets being furnished in the same fashion, the opium-eater was so incorrigibly careless where money was concerned. One night he knocked up a friend, at an unconscionable hour, to inform him that it was absolutely necessary he should be provided at once with the sum of seven shillings and sixpence. Mistaking the disturbed one's astonishment for distrust, De Quincy hastened to explain that he had a document in his possession, the transference of which to his friend's care would probably obviate his hesitation to accommodate him, and then, after much rummaging in his pockets, and fetching a miscellany of small articles out of them, he produced a crumpled piece of paper which he tendered as security. It was a fifty-pound note, and it was his friend's impression that if he had taken it in exchange for the three half-crowns, De Quincy would never have reminded him of the transaction, and he shrewdly suspected that before troubling him De Quincy had been trying to negotiate the exchange at a series of shops, and had failed only through scepticism as to the genuineness of the note on the part of the shopkeepers.

Some sixty years since a Bank of England five-pound note was paid into a Liverpool merchant's office in the ordinary course of business. On holding it up to the light to test its genuineness, the cashier saw some faint red marks upon it. Examining them closely, he traced some half-effaced words between the printed lines and upon the margin of the note, written apparently in blood. After a long and minute scrutiny, he made out the words: "If this note should fall into the hands of John Dean of Longhill, near Carlisle, he will learn hereby that his brother is languishing a prisoner in Algiers." The merchant immediately communicated with Mr. Dean, and he lost no time in bringing the matter before the Government. Enquiries were set on foot, and the unfortunate man discovered and ransomed. He had been a slave to

the Dey of Algiers for eleven years, when the message he had traced with a splinter of wood dipped in his own blood, reached the Liverpool counting-house. Liberty, however, came too late; the privations and hardships of the galleys had sapped his strength, and although he was brought home to England, it was but to die.

Strangely endorsed notes have, from time to time, found their way back to the Bank of England. An American journalist professes to have seen a number of such curiosities in the possession of a gentleman who had been in the service of the bank for many years. On the back of a ten-pound note, issued in 1809, was written:

"Ah! who can tell, with clear account,
The ebbing of the glass;
When all its sands are diamond sparks,
That glitter as they pass?"

And this is the last—this poor rag! It glittered for an instant, and then—Hush, my soul! Begone, thou vain regret! I have sowed, and I must reap!" On a five-pound note was inscribed: "Good-bye, thou tantalising child of the Threadneedle Dame! Thou payest the first debt I have honestly paid for a year—a debt for a few poor luxuries furnished to miserable Me in prison! Go, tell to the world that though hand join in hand, the transgressor shall not go unpunished." On another note was written: "Did the world ever know a man to be blessed in the inheritance of princely fortune, I wonder? This ten-pound note is the last of thousands of the same denomination left me by a father who had slaved all his life to win the store. Go, miserable remnant, and with this parting I begin the world anew! God give me strength to help myself."

We are not inclined to dispute the genuineness of the above, but we cannot imagine that our American friend copied them from the originals, the rules of the Bank of England regarding returned notes hardly admitting any clerk to appropriate such things. Our doubts in this respect are strengthened by the statement that the first note put in the journalist's hands was one for a thousand pounds, bearing the protest: "My health having failed, and my body shattered like an old hulk, by long and close imprisonment in the land of my fathers, and my oppressors being determined to deprive me either of property or life, I herewith submit to robbery to protect myself from murder. in the hope that I may yet

live to bring the calumniators to justice.—**COCHRANE.**” But, writing in 1861, the gallant hero who wrecked his fortunes on the treacherous sea of politics, brings his autobiography of a seaman to an end thus: “Amongst the curiosities shown to visitors of the Bank of England, there was, and no doubt is still, a thousand pound bank-note, number eight thousand two hundred and two, dated the 28th June, 1815, on the back of which are endorsed the following words: My health having suffered by long and close confinement, and my oppressors being resolved to deprive me of property or life, I submit to robbery to protect myself from murder, in the hope that I shall live to bring the delinquents to justice.—Signed, **COCHRANE**, King’s Bench Prison, July 3, 1815. This is the reward bestowed on me by a ministerial faction, memorable only for its political corruption. With that protest I close this book.”

LEGEND OF THE ROCK-BUOY BELL.

“Thou hast done nought but ill on earth,” sadly the angel said,
 “Thou hast given thine evil passions rein, and followed where’er they led;
 “Thou hast profaned the talents that Heaven in mercy gave,
 And lived as man had never a God, and earth had never a grave.
 “And worst and blackest of it all, from honour’s fair white way,
 From the paths of peace and purity, thou hast led young feet astray!”
 Shivering ’neath the stern hard truth, the sin-stained spirit bowed.
 “Is there no place for penitence? No hope?” it cried aloud.
 “I have no plea for pardon. I have done with strength and pride.
 Only—it was for sinners our Saviour said He died.”
 There was a pause in all around, as the mighty Name was spoken,
 There was a pause at the judgment seat, a pause by the angel broken.
 “In His name who is Love and Mercy—the name never sought in vain.
 Thou may’st win to the great white throne at last, by the road of patient pain.
 “Where over the sweep of the great North Sea, the bell at the rock-buoy swings,
 Where under St. Hilda’s Towers grey, for the mariner’s guide it rings.
 “Go, deepen its solemn warning—go, join thine own sad wail
 To the shrill appealing cry it makes in the teeth of the rising gale.
 “Thou hast led thy kin to evil—go, warn thy kin from death,
 When the wild winds wake, and the deep seas break, and the fog veils all beneath.
 “Tell them of storm and tempest, and in calm and sunshine say;
 Though the noontide’s high, the night is nigh, in peace, as in peril, pray!”

Thankfully and meekly, the soul its sentence heard,
 Thankfully and meekly, it went at the angel’s word.

And as the changing seasons their ordered hours keep,
 Whether in beautiful Whitby Bay, the ripples laugh and leap;

Whether the surf calls threateningly, mid the boulders on the Scar,
 Or the rollers gather, and heave, and crash over the harbour bar;

Whether the fierce nor’easter summons the storms that rest,
 Where Kettleness holds gloomy ward, or Saltwick rears her crest;

Whether the “cruel crawling” mist hides reef and rock from sight,
 While the barque drives on to ruin, in the depth of the winter’s night;

Always the toll of the rock-bell, through shadow and shine will steal;
 Always the spirit’s pitiful cry blends with its warning peal.

Ye, who safe on the rock-bound coast, hearken its solemn toll;

Pray for the storm-tossed mariners, pray for the sinful Soul!

A PLAIN GIRL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

MR. LANGLEY was tying his cravat before the glass, and meditating rather grimly on the future. The immediate future was Mrs. Willing’s party, where, as he perfectly knew, he was anxiously expected at that very moment. The more distant future was vague, with the curious sudden blankness of a prospect abruptly blotted out. For weeks he had shaped that prospect in his mind, had dwelt on its details, had travelled towards it with definite purpose, and now in an hour it had vanished. He knew exactly what Mrs. Willing’s party would be like, and it was the dreariest of certainties; but, nevertheless, he was going to it. He was going onwards to the future, too, and he did not know what that would be like, but its uncertainty was just as dreary.

That very afternoon, if he had been questioned concerning his plans, and if he had chosen to reply, he would have said that he intended to marry Miss Willing. Miss Willing herself had been contemplating much the same picture of the future, but while Mr. Langley’s vision was glittering with golden splendour, hers was flushed with rose-colour. She saw a sentimental paradise, where Mr. Philip Langley was eternally to adore Mrs. Philip Langley, while envious women were to gnash their teeth outside. The rose-coloured vision still swam before Miss Willing’s eyes, but

Mr. Langley's golden prospects had faded to the dullest grey.

Money was absolutely needful to convert such dreams into reality, and Mr. Langley had so little that the amount of his fortune always seemed to him ridiculous. Miss Willing, however, was an heiress. It is true that he had always understood that her mother and she had but a limited income till she should be of age, though as that involved no long delay he had not troubled himself about the matter. That afternoon he had learned that an uncle had the property, and though it must come to her ultimately, she would not succeed to it till after his death. He received the unwelcome news with a slight, significant compression of his lips. It might not have been final. Uncles are occasionally old and infirm, and sometimes even actually dying; but in this case the subject of the lady's prospects had been introduced by the fact that this particular uncle was paying a visit in the neighbourhood, and just as the talk was finished, a man strolled along the opposite pavement.

"Why, there is Willing!" his informant exclaimed, pointing to the passer-by.

Mr. Langley could only see his back, but it was not an encouraging back. He looked at it gravely and calmly, the compressed lips relaxed into a scarcely perceptible smile of self-congratulation, and he began to speak of something else with easy indifference. But in that moment he had recoiled from a precipice.

And now, while he stood, tying his cravat, and surveying himself with a kind of melancholy interest, the faint smile came back as he realised the narrowness of his escape. Until the uncle died it seemed that Miss Willing would have very little, and of course the uncle would not die. People died of love—at least, so people said; Mr. Langley was hardly prepared to affirm it—but he was quite sure that they occasionally lived out of sheer spite; and, if ever he had seen a maliciously unpromising back, it was Mr. Willing's. Rose would be poor for years, and, reflecting thus, Mr. Langley exchanged meaning glances with his reflection in the glass.

His only interest in the matter now was how to get out of it—gracefully, if possible, but, at any rate, swiftly and decidedly. To look back was as distasteful as to look forward. Heiress-hunting was not an ideal occupation at the best, but if the stake were large, and the heiress shv of her

suitors, it might be exciting enough, and even confer a kind of glory on the successful hunter. In this case, however, Miss Willing had been rather too ready to yield, and the value of the prize had been greatly exaggerated. He looked back contemptuously on his easy conquest, and only hoped that the disappointed heiress would not reverse the parts and hunt him.

Marrying money! It was still his one idea, but he saw clearly that the only thing which could give it any dignity would be marrying a great deal of money. To marry a little would be idiotic as well as ignoble. It would be like the miserable beings in old witch stories, who invariably sold their souls to the Devil for so very unsatisfactory a price. Mr. Langley determined that, if he sold himself, it should be for his full value, and with that resolution he turned away to keep his promise to Mrs. Willing. He had debated for a moment whether he would go at all; but since Rose was waiting for him, and since, sooner or later, he must meet her with the change of manner which should mark his withdrawal—why, the sooner it was over the better. The whole business was unpleasant enough to make him decidedly out of temper. Still, with a shrug of his shoulders, and a final backward glance at the mirror, he congratulated himself that his love-making, though it had gone tolerably far, had gone no farther. Things might have been worse.

Mrs. Willing meanwhile was receiving her guests in a drawing-room, which was furnished in a style old-fashioned enough to have lost all freshness, yet too modern to be interesting. The china vases on brackets and chimney-piece; the pictures crowded on the walls; the knick-knacks strewn plentifully about; ugly and ill-chosen as they all were, yet revealed the aspirations of a nature, which, while desiring something better than its uncongenial surroundings, had not force and insight enough to find it. Mr. Willing had possessed a refined mind, which had vainly striven to develop itself in the blighting atmosphere of a provincial town. It had dwindled like a plant in a barren soil, and, at his death, nothing remained to show that he ever had a dream of artistic beauty, except this worthless collection which caricatured it.

Every year had added something of dreariness to the room. The furniture was shabby: the gilding was tarnished on

pretentious frames and cornices; the curtains were dingy, and the carpets worn.

During her husband's lifetime Mrs. Willing had secretly wearied of the society he loved. Such artists and men of letters as the neighbourhood could boast had gathered within those walls. But while she was yet in the deepest blackness of her widow's weeds, the local scandalmongers had dropped in by twos and threes to enliven the monotony of her woe, and, as soon as she could once more receive her friends, she became the centre of a circle as frivolous and insipid as herself. These were the guests who were assembling that night, greeted by their hostess with a little cackling laugh. That laugh served for welcome, for interrogation, for admiration, for sympathy, for appreciation of anything which Mrs. Willing did not in the least understand. To any speech which perplexed her, she made answer with this convenient sound, which was supposed to say: "Oh, how funny, how clever, how satirical, how surprisingly talented you are!" And Mrs. Willing and her laugh were in full force that evening.

The room filled fast, and there was a buzz of conversation. The overhanging pictures looked down on the brightly-dressed figures below: on the young lady in blue who sang English ballads, with an affectation of extreme archness, or pathos, as the case might be; on the young lady in pink, who had a preference for French songs, and a happy unconsciousness of the absurdity of her accent; on Miss Willing, a tall dark-eyed girl, looking upward, and sighing as she spoke of poor dear papa's love of art; on young men who talked of dancing and lawn-tennis; on overdressed matrons and bald-headed men.

To this assemblage entered Mr. Langley.

It would not have needed a very observant glance to see that he was altogether unlike anyone else in the room, and his demeanour showed that he was fully aware of the fact. His hostess hurried to meet him, and laughed a flattering welcome. "So good of you to come!" He bowed, and looked round, taking the whole scene in a moment. He was bored, he was weary of it all, before he had so much as uttered a word. He had been there often before, but his thoughts had been in his golden castles in the air. For the first time he saw the whole thing in its stupidity, its dulness, its dreary absurdity. Miss Willing was at some dis-

tance; she had not perceived his entrance; she stood with her head thrown back talking earnestly to one of her admirers. He knew what she was saying as well as if he heard every word; had she not said it all to him? Everybody was doing what they had always done—Mrs. Willing was laughing, people were chattering, the shaded lamps threw their radiance on the same features, the same gestures. Mr. Langley hated it all. He walked straight to a quiet corner, and sat down.

Mrs. Willing saw her daughter's demonstrative conversation, and it occurred to her that Mr. Langley had noticed it also and was displeased. She hastily pursued him to his retreat, and introduced him to the young lady who happened to be sitting next to him.

"My niece, Miss Harrison," she ejaculated, and then, having, as she hoped, provided him with harmless occupation for a few minutes, she turned to go in quest of Rose, and caught a glimpse of that young person vanishing through the doorway of the next room. At the same moment another arrival claimed her attention, and she was obliged to allow events to take their course.

Mr. Langley bowed to his new acquaintance, but did not break the silence. He saw that she was a mere girl, not pretty, not stylish, wearing a country-made dress of some dark material, which gave her almost a quakerish air, and he saw, too, that, unlike most of the girls at Mrs. Willing's, she was embarrassed and shy. He took a faintly malicious pleasure in her embarrassment. He perceived that she had expected him to begin the conversation, and that she was a little uncertain whether it was her duty to speak if he did not. At last she raised her eyes with a glance, half-courageous, half-appealing, and asked him hurriedly if he liked music?—if he played?

That glance was decidedly the most interesting thing about Miss Harrison, more interesting than the two feeble little questions which came in such haste that the second tripped up the first upon her lips. It revealed a pair of grey eyes, ordinary as far as brightness and colour were concerned, but with a certain peculiar intensity and possibility of passion in them.

Mr. Langley, still with his half-concealed sneer, answered briefly that he considered himself altogether inoffensive, that he was not in the habit of singing or playing

or reciting verse, or torturing his fellow-creatures in any way.

If he had smiled when he said it she would have answered with a ready smile, but he spoke with such a cold gravity that poor Miss Harrison did not know how to take the unexpected reply, and she looked away, disconcerted and abashed. He watched her for a few seconds as if he were studying something quaint, small, and curious, and then with a subtle change of intonation he took up the conversation, and saw her lift her head and look at him again. Judging from her shyness, her unformed manners and impulsive glances, he decided that any glittering paradoxical talk concerning life and love might produce an amusing and novel effect. To a practised talker three minutes will suffice to arrive naturally at any subject, and in less than three minutes Mr. Langley was in full swing, arguing, and supporting his argument with many illustrations, that the sole end and aim of life should be pleasure. The grey eyes, wondering, frightened, fascinated, were fixed upon his face. No one had ever talked to the girl like that before. She could not know how empty and indifferent it was to the man at her side. She stammered such shy answers as were absolutely needful, but her own voice seemed to have a feeble discord in the splendid music of his words. While he spoke she was conscious of a startling rush of freedom, a glow of colour, a throbbing of pulses, an outlook into a new and wider world. Her one desire was that he should not pause.

Her very heart seemed to stand still when Rose Willing appeared upon the scene. Of course he would leave her—of course he would go and talk to Rose. To the poor little plainly-dressed cousin, Rose Willing, with her airs and graces, was a formidable enchantress. But, to her surprise, Mr. Langley was not to be drawn away from his quiet corner. He met Miss Willing's advances with apparent unconsciousness of their meaning. When she was perplexed, and finally piqued, he parried her thrusts with smiling politeness, and, when she retreated, he sat down again by Emma Harrison, who waited in the shadow, silent and palpitating. For a moment he said nothing, but their glances met. There was a changed expression in her eyes, a faint dawning of self-consciousness; she was thinking of herself as well as of him. He would not go away—he would not talk to Rose. Could it be

possible that he found pleasure in talking to her, that for her sake he was lingering there? The mere thought of such a possibility bewildered her.

By a woman accustomed to homage a man's attentions are easily appraised. If she cares for him she cares for them; if not, they are merely a natural recognition of the delightful fact of her charm. But a girl of whom no one has taken any heed finds in them a hint of something in herself which she had not suspected. She is ready to love the man who teaches her that she can inspire love.

When Mr. Langley spoke again his listener was as eager as ever, and yet, paradoxical as it may seem, she scarcely grasped the meaning of his words. Her interest had shifted from his talk to himself; what he said was no longer the question, but why he said it to her. That the most brilliant young man she had ever seen should be drawn to her by an attraction the nature of which she could not divine, was something marvellously like magic. She was afraid to move, afraid to withdraw her eyes, lest in so doing she should unconsciously reverse the spell that held him. She knew she was not beautiful; she knew she was not clever; she longed to avow her deficiencies aloud, and the words would have come hotly from her heart in quick throbs of passionate sincerity. Was it possible that he could care for her, could desire love apart from any charm of grace or talent? If that were indeed possible, she felt that it was not possible that she should withhold the gift for one moment.

The first notes of a waltz broke into the enchanted circle which his companionship had drawn about her. A middle-aged lady had been persuaded to play, and a few couples were about to dance in the next room. The music brought Mrs. Willing, determined to end the ridiculous flirtation which had been remarked by everybody. She would have been uneasy, only that with little Emma Harrison it was too absurd, and she showed angry contempt under a thin veil of playfulness.

She really could not allow it; she was so anxious to introduce Mr. Langley to a young lady who had just arrived. He absolutely must not stay in that corner any longer.

And at her heels came a clumsy youth with a pink face, predestined to be Emma's partner in the dance.

Emma had never dreamed of defying her aunt Willing. She would have obeyed in silence, though her heart died within

her as she looked at the pink-faced boy, had not Mr. Langley interposed. Mrs. Willing's manner irritated him, and he did not care to conceal his ill-temper. He coolly asserted that Miss Harrison was already engaged to him for the waltz, looking straight into his hostess's eyes as he spoke. Emma stood up and put her hand on his arm, trembling with delight and fear.

There is something of mastery in a fearless exhibition of ill-temper, and there are women who find an attraction in it. They have been trained and drilled till they wear their company smiles, as a matter of course, over discontent, angry or aching, as the case may be. They dare not break the laws of good manners in the least point, they are conscious of their slavery, and this man does not care twopence for rules and regulations, and will only smile when it pleases him. If he smiles on them, are not such smiles worth having, smiles from a hero who dares scowl on all the world? They measure his courage by what they would need to emulate his defiance, forgetting that they have been lessoned out of courage.

So Emma Harrison admired her fearless cavalier with the simplest sincerity. She knew, of course, that she herself would pay for it all; that Mr. Langley would presently make his bow and retire in safety; and that she would remain with her offended aunt Willing. But why should he think of that? She was proud to suffer for his careless audacity, though her hand quivered on his arm at the thought of the reproaches which would fall on her when he was gone. She would not even have wished him to consider her. It seemed to her that so small a matter was beneath his notice, and she exulted in his indifference. A woman will not only condone a man's selfishness, she will glorify it.

Mrs. Willing retreated, baffled and more angry than before, gathering back her skirts as Emma went by, and casting a significant glance at the girl, who returned her gaze almost unconsciously, with eyes full of fright and rapture. Emma was trembling at the thought that she danced badly, she had never been properly taught, and the small, brightly-lighted room swam before her dazzled eyes as if she were entering some terrible arena. After a turn or two, during which she was conscious of his arm about her, but conscious also of inharmonious movement and clumsy effort on her own part, Mr. Langley paused. Rose

Willing and her partner stopped also, and Rose, fanning herself, looked contemptuously at her little cousin. Mr. Langley saw it.

"Do you care about this?" he said. "Shall we sit down? I'm tired to-night; to tell you the truth, I'm not much in the mood for dancing."

The girl, who had been standing by him abashed and silent, lifted eyes radiant with gratitude to his face. It seemed to her that all her failures and shortcomings were transmuted to happiness in the sunlight of his presence. He would bear with her still, then, in spite of her awkwardness; he would make excuses for her; he would smile, and take the responsibility of her ill-success; he would stay and talk to her. Ah, how good, how good he was! Her heart was full to aching with the thanks she could not utter, and Mr. Langley thought, meanwhile, how wretchedly the woman at the piano was playing, and how slowly the tedious minutes went. Well, at any rate, his behaviour to Miss Willing had been unmistakable enough, and the perplexed and offended glances which sought him where he sat, ensured his constancy to his companion till it should be time to go.

That time was coming; Emma knew it as well as he did; the heavy certainty burdened her till she could hardly utter a word. She was thinking to herself that it was the most beautiful evening of her life—it was an evening apart from all her life—it was as perfect as a dream, and it was over suddenly. In the midst of something he was saying she interrupted him, speaking blindly and confusedly in a low voice: "Ah, but what does all that matter? I shall never see you again!"

It might have been an outburst of childish impatience, it was so simple, but for the keen edge of pain piercing through it. Mr. Langley had never heard anything quite like the directness with which the words were spoken, with no grace, or strength of voice, and yet with an accent of their own. One would have said that they could not come from the girl's lips—hardly from any lips whatever, lips are too flexible and too much accustomed to speak for such an utterance—but that they came straight from a suddenly awakened heart. It was an intensely real cry breaking into the false, commonplace chatter which filled the room. Mr. Langley felt that he was the only man there who could have elicited it, or recognised it.

"Oh yes, you will, one of these days," he said lightly. "No doubt we shall meet, or if not——" He shrugged his shoulders by way of ending to his sentence.

To that no answer was possible; she was silent, and, for a moment, so was he. The note which he had struck in his careless experiment lingered in his ear, it interested though it could not really touch him. It was the one sensation of his evening, and he dwelt on it curiously.

"Oh, of course we shall meet," he said again, when the silence grew awkward.

"I don't know. I live in the country; I'm only staying here for a week," she answered.

The fire seemed to have died out of her eyes; she was frightened at herself; she drew back into her shyness. The passion which had flung her at his feet in those murmured words, had ebbed like a spent wave, and left her mute and helpless. When Mr. Langley took his leave she bade him good-bye with scarcely a word. She saw, though she hardly seemed to see, how he bowed his ceremonious farewells to Mrs. Willing and Rose, and she heard the closing of the door behind him. Then, left conspicuously alone after the companionship of the evening, she kept her place beside his vacant chair, while the guests dropped off by twos and threes, and while he was walking up the street, in the cool night air, under the stars, smoking his cigarette, and rejoicing in his escape from the Willings. Emma watched the couple who stayed latest of all with a kind of dull fascination. The lady stopped at the door, and came back to make some arrangement with her hostess about meeting the next day, and then went with renewed good-byes. After which Mrs. Willing turned round exactly as Emma knew she would, revealing an expression of face which she commonly reserved for her maids and her near relations.

"Well," she began, "I must say that I never did think that a niece of mine——"

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

By THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER VIII.

HETTY woke early the next morning. There was that sort of stir and unrest in the air which any latent excitement in a household seems to evoke. Servants ran about aimlessly: doors were banged or left

open. There were continual rushes to the kitchen entrance, or even as far as the gate, of three or four print-clad female figures with fluttering caps and eager faces agog for news.

When Hetty came down, the first tidings which greeted her were that the second pistol had been found "down in the grate, wedged in behind one of the fire-brick cheeks and covered with ashes, like as if it had been thrown there on purpose to burn it up," the housemaid said, all in a flutter of excitement at being first with the news. And indeed it was important, as Hetty felt when she reflected on the stress George Hamilton had laid on the point of Ernest having gone to Albion Street unprovided with a weapon. If the pistol now found could be shown to be the fellow of that already known to belong to Major Hollis, so much would have been proved in the prisoner's favour; and in the hope of ascertaining that fact before going to Mrs. Pentreath, Hetty asked eagerly if the morning paper had arrived.

Yes, it had, and had been taken straight up to the mistress, she was told; and rather annoyed at the information, for fear of the effect any piece of bad news might have on the invalid, Hetty made haste to her room. There, however, she was met by a fresh disappointment. Mowcher, the maid, opened the door an inch only, and seeing who it was, said at once that Mrs. Pentreath was busy reading her letters, and did not require Miss Mavors. She had breakfasted already in bed, and begged Miss Mavors would take her own breakfast and go on with her usual occupations without troubling about her.

There was nothing in the message, nor in Mowcher's manner (which was always prim and formal), but it cast a chill over the girl all the same. Yesterday it was only her coaxing that had prevailed on Mrs. Pentreath to take food at all, and the latter had clung to her and kept her at her side as though deriving some comfort from her very presence. There had even been some talk of the girl sleeping in her room at night, and though Hetty had been glad when this was over-ruled on account of the mental and bodily fatigue from which she was already suffering, it gave her a keen sense of pleasure to feel that the old relations between them were renewed, and that now in her day of trouble Mrs. Pentreath was willing to depend upon her for the sympathy and tenderness her young heart was so anxious to bestow.

Was some fresh pain in store for her, or was it only fancy that Mowcher's thin lips had a not displeased smile lurking behind their straight lines? The girl went away silently and eat her breakfast by herself, starting at every sound, and with so little appetite that even Hickson looked at her reproachfully when he came in to remove the things, and to observe for Hetty's benefit that there had been a telegram from Mr. Lorton, the solicitor, to say that he and Mr. Hamilton would be at the Lodge by ten o'clock, and that Mrs. Pentreath had ordered the carriage at half-past to drive into town.

Hetty was prepared for the second announcement. It had been arranged yesterday that if the widow were well enough she and her young companion were to go to town in the morning so as to be near Ernest, and get the earliest tidings of the result of the inquest; and the girl had no sooner been reminded of it than she ran upstairs again to see if her guardian was fit for the journey, and if so to help her to prepare for it.

Once again, however, Mowcher answered her knock, and after a moment's colloquy with someone within, said her mistress was better, and much obliged, but did not require Miss Mavor's assistance; and too hurt and mortified to say any more, or even to ask whether she should get ready herself, Hetty went away to her own room a prey to all manner of bewildering doubts and perplexities.

Did Mrs. Pentreath mean that she was not to go? But that could hardly be. Why, only last night they had talked it all over, and had decided to go to a private hotel in Clifford Street, and put up there for the night at any rate, or till all was settled—which in other words meant till Ernest Pentreath was either set at liberty or committed for trial.

"We sha'n't want Mowcher. You will do anything I want for me, little Hetty," Mrs. Pentreath had said; and if the carriage was ordered for half-past ten, Hetty felt that she ought to be ready for it.

After all, Mowcher, who was never very amiably disposed towards the young girl, might have altered the wording of the message; or Mrs. Pentreath might have received letters or papers which required her whole attention till the lawyer's arrival. It would show miserable smallness and huffiness on Hetty's part if she were not to get her things ready, because

she had received what might never have been intended for a snub.

She got out her dressing things, therefore, and having put them up in a small hand-bag, was just changing her dress for one of black cashmere, which she thought would be more suitable for London wear, when there was a knock at the door, and Mowcher entered.

Hetty's hands dropped involuntarily. Somehow she guessed the woman's message before it was uttered, and blushed up all over her pretty face and neck a hot fiery red.

"If you please, miss," said Mowcher, turning away her eyes with an obtrusive assumption of not seeing what Hetty was doing, "my mistress sent me to tell you that she is going up to town this morning, but she will not need to trouble you to accompany her, so you can make your own engagements just as you please. She has ordered me to go with her instead," added Mowcher primly.

Hetty looked at her.

"Very well," was all she said. She could not have added another word to save her life; but when the lady's-maid was gone she sat down, half-dressed as she was, on the side of the bed, and burst into a very childish fit of weeping.

What did it all mean?

There was an interruption soon. She had not heard any sound of arrivals; but one of the maids—not Mowcher—came to tell her that Mr. Lorton and Mr. Hamilton were in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Pentreath said would she go there at once; and only waiting to complete her toilet as hurriedly as possible, Hetty went.

They were all three in the room when she entered—Mrs. Pentreath dressed for walking, and looking as stately as usual in her rich silk and furs; Mr. Lorton, an elderly, sharp-faced little man whom Hetty already knew by sight, standing close to her; and the vicar some way off at a window. He came across the room and shook hands with her, but the lawyer only turned slightly and bowed, keeping his attention fixed the while on Mrs. Pentreath who was speaking to him, and who went on with her sentence without any regard to Hetty's entrance.

"Yes, Mr. Lorton, my son has been foolish, and I own it. He has a host of good qualities, which I think even his enemies will admit; but among them he has one great fault: he is weak, sadly weak, where women are concerned; and,

being so, he lets himself be made a victim of by any forward unscrupulous young woman who chooses to risk her reputation by throwing herself at his head in the endeavour to secure him as a lover or husband. I assure you I have seen the whole thing carried on under my own roof, and by people who owed everything to my bounty, and therefore I can easily imagine that in India——”

“My dear aunt,” said the vicar, speaking rather hastily, “is not this beside the point? What we are discussing are Ernest’s present difficulties, not his past ones, and the matter in hand now is how best to exonerate him from the suspicion which is resting upon him, and which, unless the coroner’s inquest closes this evening with a verdict of ‘suicide’ or ‘accidental death,’ must ultimately land him in the felon’s dock. His innocence, therefore, must if possible be made clear to-day, and as the duel theory must be given up——”

“But I thought Mr. Lorton said——” Mrs. Pentreath was beginning rather piteously, when the lawyer interrupted her.

“That it was one which, if properly worked, might at any rate get him off with a comparatively light penalty? Certainly, madam, I did say so; but as Captain Pentreath denies it altogether, and not only swears that he never so much as had a pistol in his hand, but adheres altogether to his original statement, we must of course accept that statement as the true one, and try our best to use it to his benefit. The other side will of course endeavour to do the contrary, and as their view of the case is that it was not merely a murder, but a treacherous and vindictive one, they will strain every nerve, and call forward every witness in their power, to prove it so. Now, Mr. Hamilton’s desire and mine—in which, I must add, your son heartily concurs—is that you and—and this young lady,” he glanced slightly but observantly at Hetty, “should be spared the pain of being called as witnesses on either side. He could not call you; for he says himself that he believes neither you nor any one else in the house knew of his presence there; that he knew you and Miss Mavors had an engagement elsewhere that evening, and that, guessing from the large gates being open—that is a point, Mr. Hamilton, and may prove an important one—that you had not returned, he let himself in with a latch-key and went straight to his own room; that, being too unhappy in his

mind to rest, he only remained there for ten minutes or so; and that, as he departed without seeing any one or disturbing anything in the house, you could have no means of telling that he had been in it. Now, is this statement correct as regards you?”

“Quite,” said Mrs. Pentreath. “I was out, as he says, and had no idea till yesterday evening, when my nephew told me so, that Ernest had been near the house in my absence. With regard to Miss Mavors, however, she was not with me; and Mr. Hamilton has probably repeated to you what I stated to him yesterday—I may add, in her presence, and without her contradicting me—that she was in bed and asleep. All that I know of my own knowledge, however, is that I left her in bed and apparently asleep at eight o’clock, and that on returning home at a quarter to eleven, which must have been very few minutes after my son left, my maid, whom I sent to enquire for her, found her in the same condition. Miss Mavors is here, however, and you can question her for yourself. It is quite possible that she may know more of my son’s movements than I do, and on the evening in question may have expected him to return, and have risen to receive him. I should not like, for her own sake, to suppose that it was so, but I say it because on a previous occasion——”

“Aunt Julia, this is wrong and cruel,” cried the vicar indignantly, “and you have no right to say it at all. You would not do so if you were not upset and over-excited by all this miserable business; and I hope Mr. Lorton will understand that, and not dream of insulting Miss Mavors by any such questions as you suggest.”

“Well, Mr. Hamilton, I should be sorry to insult anybody,” said the old lawyer equably. He was used to family quarrels, feminine ones especially; “and as Captain Pentreath himself is still under the impression that Miss Mavors was out with his mother, it is evident that he did not see her, and there is no reason for anyone to suppose that she was not in bed and asleep; unless, indeed,” with a swift side-glance at the girl, “she should wish to contradict that supposition or make any statement of her own accord.”

Hetty turned her head slowly and looked at him. Since entering the room she had not sat down or spoken, but had remained standing by a small table near the door, with one small hand resting on it as if for

support, and her face, from which every vestige of colour had fled before the first words Mrs. Pentreath was uttering, turned towards that lady. She perfectly understood everyone of those words. She felt their application to herself and the scorching insult conveyed in them as keenly and thoroughly as her worst enemy could have desired. She knew now that Mowcher or Hickson (it mattered little who) had told her guardian about her having been out with Captain Pentreath on the morning before the duel; and she knew, too, how the fact, even by itself, but still more with the addition of her guarded silence respecting it—and who knew what else might have been said respecting her?—must tell against her character for integrity in that guardian's eyes. She could read the outraged trust and confidence, the utter contempt for what must seem a callous and vulgar deception, flashing in every line of the handsome, haggard face in which pain and anxiety had worn such deep and piteous lines even in the last twenty-four hours. She felt it all, and knew that she was judged and condemned unheard; that nothing she could say in her defence—if, indeed, she could stoop to defend herself before a quasi-stranger like that little sharp-eyed lawyer—would have any effect beyond that of rousing fresh anger and incredulity in the woman before her. She realised that between them all was over; that even her lover, while standing up in her defence, did so more from a manly sense of honour and chivalry than from his own confidence in her; and, with all this, she felt no indignation, none of the quick passionate wrath which a few weeks back would have stung her to quick denial and recrimination. All that seemed gone from her, everything but a sense of utter, impotent despair, the despair of a child who wonders vaguely at the cruelty which is wreaked on it, yet knows not how to complain or defend itself. Her fair, innocent face grew whiter and whiter, and her eyes large with a blank pitiful stare which looked like nothing but a tacit acknowledgment of guilt to her indignant patroness. Even the one red spot which had risen in either cheek when the vicar spoke, had faded away again before she turned in answer to Mr. Lorton's query, and said, speaking very low but distinctly:

"Certainly not. I have no wish to contradict you, and I have no statement to make of any sort."

It was curious, but the sound of her own

voice seemed to rouse her. She had no sooner spoken than she was conscious of a feeling of pleasure in having done so, and a determination to preserve her secret now at all hazards.

"Thank you," said Mr. Lorton quietly; "then I may take it for granted that you were asleep, as supposed, at the time mentioned?"

"Certainly."

"And in that case, whether Captain Pentreath was here or not, you could not have seen him?"

"No; I never saw him that night at all."

It was easier than she thought, and her eyes met Mrs. Pentreath's bravely.

"I must ask you one or two more questions, however. I have already asked them of the servants. Your room is, I believe, at some distance from the hall. Could you, if you had been awake, have heard anyone enter at the front door?"

"No. I did not hear you arrive to-day, though I was listening for you."

"And your windows do not look out upon the front, so that—supposing again that you had been awake—you could not have seen anyone approach the house by that way?"

"I could not. It would be quite impossible."

"Thank you once more. Mrs. Pentreath, time is pressing, and the carriage is ready, I see. If you will kindly let Mr. Hamilton put you into it at once, I will just make your man take me into his master's room again, and then we will start without more delay."

The lawyer left the room as he spoke, and Mrs. Pentreath rose at once. Hetty had felt rather than seen the sigh of relief which had passed over the widow's pale and rigid lips while she was giving her answers—answers given in defence of her own honour, not of Ernest's innocence. She seemed to care nothing about that now; but her courage had come back, and as Mr. Lorton left the room, she turned to her benefactress in a last appeal:

"Mrs. Pentreath, you are not going yet; you will not go without even speaking to me!" she said, coming forward and putting out her pretty hands in a childish eager way, while the colour flushed to her face. "You are angry and offended with me, or you would not say what you have done; but you had no cause to do so. I have done nothing wrong—nothing, and if you will only wait and let me tell you—"

"Thank you, but I do not wish you to

tell me anything," said Mrs. Pentreath coldly. "Others have done so—others who have no interest in lying to or deceiving a too——"

"Aunt Julia!" cried the vicar.

"George, I beg—I desire you will be silent. You may be a clergyman; but I am your aunt, and this is my house, and I will speak to my ward as I think fit and right whilst she is in it. She has deceived me, and has taught my son to do the same, even making use of a pretended love of religion to trick me, so that now—now when I would give all the world to be able to depend on and assert his innocence against the whole world, I—Heaven help me!—I, his own mother, know not what to think. No, Hetty!" turning on the girl with sudden fire, as, frightened by the anguish in her last utterance, the poor little creature tried to utter some word of remonstrance, "do not speak to me. Whatever you might say now I should disbelieve. George, give me your arm, please. Mr. Lorton is calling, and we cannot delay."

But when the vicar had put her in the carriage he came back for a moment.

"Hetty," he said, taking the girl's hand quickly in both his, "this is terrible—for you and for me; but my aunt is beside herself with grief and anxiety, and she has been deeply wounded. Child, you must know that she has loved you. Why were you not more frank with her?"

"Frank! About what? Oh, you don't think——" Hetty was beginning when he checked her.

"Hush! It is no thinking. You don't know it; but I saw you walking with Pentreath that morning when you would not let me accompany you; and Mowcher has told her mistress that the evening before she was in the inner drawing-room and overheard—— But I can't wait now. Ernest's fate is more important even than this; and I will see you again before night. Only remember this cannot go on. I have only borne it to-day on account of my promise to you; but that must be broken now——"

"Yes, that must be broken now, of course," Hetty interrupted him. She pushed him gently away, pointing to the door where Hickson had just appeared to summon him. "Go," she said, with a strangely woeful smile on her pale face, a smile which never touched the depths of despair in the dark, misty eyes. "They are waiting for you, and I—I can take care of myself. Do not trouble about me."

and then, as he let go her hand and went—for, chafe as he might at the necessity, he knew that, in truth, every moment was of importance—she turned and walked very slowly and deliberately to the window. The carriage was just driving away. Mrs. Pentreath had sunk back in the seat as though already exhausted by the effort she had made; and Mr. Hamilton was bending over her, wrapping the rug more closely round her knees. He seemed to be thinking of nothing else, to have forgotten Hetty altogether. The girl stood there gazing, gazing with distended eyes till the last glimpse of the carriage and its occupants had disappeared in a cloud of dust. She did not move even then. It was a cold raw day. Big black clouds with ragged, wind-torn edges were scudding across a pale, ash-grey sky. A bleak north-east wind swept the tall trees downwards, and tore the last brown leaves from their boughs, to send them whirling over the lawn in a weird and ghastly dance. High over head a flight of birds drove by with a long wailing cry. Then the gardener's boy ran out and shut the great iron gates. The loud, jarring clash smote on Hetty as if it were a knell, the death-toll of her separation from all who were near and dear to her. She put up her hands to her head with a sudden sharp cry, and fell upon her knees weeping bitterly.

All the rest of that day passed like a long feverish dream, in which Hetty crouched over the fire, sometimes crying, but generally thinking, wondering, debating, going over and over again the double round—what was happening in town, and what would happen to her? Now and then a servant came in to attend to the fire; to bring her food, which she could not touch, or scraps of news which she swallowed greedily, only, perhaps, to hear them contradicted next moment. The under-housemaid, who admired Captain Pentreath greatly herself, and believed Hetty to do the same, was particularly zealous in bringing her every scrap of gossip she could collect, and even made bold to express an opinion that it was "downright cruel" to have left her behind that way, and she wondered missis would demean herself to hearken to that there Mowcher, a mean prying thing a listening about at droring-room doors when ladies and gentlemen were talking inside." But though Hetty heard her so far as to take in that Mowcher must have played eavesdropper to Captain

Pentreath's interrupted confidences that evening before dinner, and had kept them to make capital of later on, she never moved or answered except by a faint smile or shake of the head. And so the day dragged on, and evening fell dark and thick with a drizzling rain, which pattered on the window like falling tears. One of the maids came in then to light the lamps, but Hetty begged to be left in the firelight, and when dinner was announced she only shook her head, and said pitifully that she could not eat, that she was not hungry.

"But, oh, miss, you'll be ill. You've not eaten a morsel this day," the maid said reproachfully, and then started and ran off, saying there was a ring at the bell, while Hetty sprang to her feet, roused in a sudden from her trance of wretchedness, and gazing eagerly at the door.

Was it George Hamilton? He had said that he would see her again that evening. Perhaps he did believe in her after all, and was coming to tell her so; or perhaps Captain Pentreath had been set free, and in gratitude for his own escape had had the honesty to clear her. She tried to think of him and not of herself. It seemed horrible to her, when it was a question of life or death for this man, however vile he might be, that she could be thinking only of her own selfish troubles and interests. But, oh, why did not some one come to her? She could hear a great scurrying to and fro, and servants' voices raised high in a clamour of tongues, something like a scream; and then at last the door opened a little, and she started forward to see—Hickson standing respectfully in the entrance! He was still in his great-coat, all spotted and shiny with rain, and his face was so pale that Hetty forgot everything but the news which she saw he had come to bring.

"Oh," she said, trembling, "is—is it over?" and then her voice broke. Hickson came forward. There were one or two of the other servants clustering behind him.

"Yes, miss," he answered, "it's over—the inquest, that is, and Mr. Hamilton sent me out to tell you. He couldn't leave Mrs. Pentreath, she was too ill. They—they've brought it in 'wilful murder' against the captain, miss."

"Murder! Hickson, they could not! Do you mean it?" The girl's voice sounded

like a cry. Somehow, often as she had said the word to herself, she had never realised it before till she heard it so spoken. Hickson was nearly crying too. He had known "the captain" since he was a bright, saucy boy.

"Yes, miss," he said, "and it was all on account of that there latch-key! If he'd only knocked or rung so that someone could have let him in, and so been able to prove that he was here at the time he said, it would ha' saved him."

"But—but I thought," Hetty stopped and put her hand to her head. What was it the vicar had said on the previous day! "If anyone were to prove he was in this house, and in the same mood as when he left the club, it might hang him."

Hickson looked at her compassionately.

"Yes, miss, but you see they made a point of something which none of us had thought of. Everyone seems to have took for granted, you see, miss, that the deceased gent had only just been murdered afore the landlady got home. Indeed she swore as the body was still warm when she found it, but when the two doctors, as were called in, came to give their evidence to-day they both proved quite clear and positive as life had been gone out of the poor gentleman over an hour at the very least before he was found; so if anyone could be brought to bear witness that the captain was here at that time, that would settle the case as far as he is concerned. Even his worst enemies couldn't make him out to be in two places at onst; so it's just a question of time, what they call an alibi, you see, miss."

But Hetty did not see; not at that moment. Her mind had grasped the position before Hickson's slow speech had finished giving it utterance, and before the full view of it and of all that it involved, her strength broke down all at once. She tried to say, "But he was here—I know it," but something seemed to snap in her brain, a black cloud swooped suddenly down between her and Hickson, and for the first time in her life little Hetty fainted away.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XVI. NEW LIFE.

THERE arose a slight confusion when they reached the Paddington terminus. Mrs. Jervoise had sent a carriage and a private omnibus to convey her sister and her sister's luggage in comfort to her (Mrs. Jervoise's) house. Jenifer was quite equal to the task of looking after her mother herself, and all their belongings. But Mrs. Hubert Ray would not let this be done quietly, out of the great fear she had that some mistake should be made, and that old Mrs. Ray should get herself put into the carriage that was intended for Effie herself.

"Hugh, I wish you'd put your mother into a cab at once, and send her off to their lodgings. Jenifer, tell Hugh your address, he wants to send your mother on without delay, it's so tiring for her to wait about while you're seeing after your luggage," Effie cried, moving about with bewildering rapidity from one to the other of the family group.

"I won't trouble Hubert, and I shall put mother into a cab myself when I'm ready to go with her," Jenifer said curtly. Then she saw with satisfaction that Captain Edgcomb was taking care of her mother, and went off herself to claim and collect their luggage with a perfect sense of ability and fitness for the task.

Effie followed her rather nervously, not that Effie was conscience-pricked by the thought of the way she had shuffled her husband's mother and sister out of their old home, and out of her way generally, but she was a little thrown off her balance by discovering that Jenifer was unfeignedly resigned to their paths separating

here at once. Effie had anticipated tearful helplessness at this epoch on the part of old Mrs. Ray, and a certain clinging to Hubert and herself on the part of Jenifer. Instead of this old Mrs. Ray was quiet and composed, and Jenifer evidently had not a moment to waste in vague regrets.

"I hope your mother and you quite see the impossibility of my inviting you to Flora's house in Mr. Jervoise's state of health," Effie said, almost running in her endeavour to keep pace with Jenifer, who, full of a fixed purpose to manage the luggage matters and get her mother "home," threaded her way through the crowd with ease and speed.

"We quite see it," Jenifer said, making for the barrier; and the next moment Effie heard her describing the various trunks and boxes, and saw her directing the porters where to take them, as ably and calmly as if she had been travelling and taking care of herself all her life.

"You might spare a minute to say good-bye to me, I think, Jenifer," Effie said in a cold, offended tone; "I've taken the trouble to run the length of the platform after you, and I'm keeping Flora's horses waiting, and you go on about your luggage as if I didn't exist!"

"Oh, good-bye," Jenifer said quickly, holding out her hand, but keeping a lookout on a porter the while. "Let me see! there are only three more to be accounted for now—two portmanteaux, and an oak box with brass hinges."

"If you had let Hugh see to your things there would have been none of this fuss," Effie said loftily. "Why you should suddenly develop strong-mindedness and scorn manly aid I can't imagine."

"That's the last, that's all right," Jenifer cried triumphantly, as the last box was conveyed away to one of the cabs she

had secured. "Now for mother," and she turned and skimmed along the platform at a pace which again taxed Effie's turn of speed to keep up with her.

"I can't bear to see women tearing about at railway-stations, as if everything depended on their saving a moment," Effie said when she rejoined the group. "Good-bye, Mrs. Ray. Hugh and I will come and see you in a few days; I should have made some arrangement with you now about it, only Jenifer has kept me galloping about all over the station instead of waiting quietly to have the luggage looked after for her. Captain Edgecumb, are you coming with us? I know I may say that Flora will be very happy to see you."

"Notwithstanding Mr. Jervoise's state of health," Jenifer said, smiling. Then she followed her mother into a cab, and nodded a last farewell out of the window as they drove off. "Now I've got you to myself, and I'll make you so happy," she said, getting hold of her mother's hand and hugging it. "I was afraid Captain Edgecumb would think himself bound to offer to come with us, and he'd have been quite superfluous. Effie's hospitable invitation was a timely one."

"You don't think we shall have any trouble with the cabmen about the luggage or the fares, do you?"

"Not the least," Jenifer said cheerfully.

"Are you quite sure that other cab won't miss us, dear?"

"I've got his number and he has our address."

"It would be dreadful if, to add to everything else, we were to lose any of our boxes," Mrs. Ray said thoughtfully. "It seems to me that we have been very imprudent, Jenny dear; one of us ought to have gone in the other cab," she added uneasily. So to assuage her anxiety their own cab was stopped and the driver interrogated as to the whereabouts of his colleague.

"It's all right, mum," he said reassuringly; "one of the gentlemen jumped in as we was startin'."

"Hubert couldn't make up his mind to neglect his mother altogether," Mrs. Ray said fondly; "no doubt that's why Effie asked Captain Edgecumb to go home with them; it was to leave Hubert free to look after us."

And with this pleasant conviction in her mind, Mrs. Ray remained silent until they stopped at the entrance to a good-looking house in a wide road, in which there were a number of trees and a general expression of fresh air and pleasantness.

"Here's the other cab, and here's Captain Edgecumb," Jenifer cried as she sprang out, and though she had previously avowed her satisfaction at his having refrained from offering to escort them, she felt glad and grateful now that he was here taking thought for her mother.

They were soon sitting down in their own room, resting and trying to recover from their wonderment at finding "lodgings" so utterly different to what they had expected. A quiet middle-aged woman, with the manners of a parlour-maid and the strength of a porter, aided in transporting the luggage up to their bedrooms, and presently, while they were murmuring to one another that all this would be far beyond the power of their purse, Mrs. Hatton, the landlady, came in to bid them welcome, and Captain Edgecumb took a lingering leave.

"May I call to-morrow?" he asked, trying to hold Jenifer's hand in his while she answered him; but she took it away, and crossed her arms behind her waist as she leant back against the table.

"Ask mother if she can see you to-morrow."

"I want to know if I can see you."

"Then I can tell you I'm afraid not; I shall be out, and I shall be busy."

"Then the day after?"

"The day after I shall be busier, and the day after that busier still. Don't you see what it is with me? I will do what I came up to London to do, or at least I will try unswervingly. Little things, trifles in themselves, even a call from you, would hinder me, and I won't be hindered."

"But I may come here, and see Mrs. Ray? Won't you say good-night?" he asked, holding out his hand again.

"We shook hands just now—don't you remember it?" Jenifer laughed. "It's mother you have to shake hands with now," and he had to go away without another word from her.

The landlady, Mrs. Hatton, had come in to bid them welcome, and she had done so in the fewest words, and the briefest period of time compatible with civility.

"I hope you will find your rooms comfortable, and that Ann will please you and wait upon you as you like," she had said, coming softly in, and standing a perfectly peaceful, restful figure in a long, dark-grey, noiseless textured dress before them. And then, almost as it seemed as they were answering her, and answering her of their perfect satisfaction—nay more, their delight

at finding their lodgings so superior to anything they had anticipated, she had quietly murmured another little "hope that they would be happy there," and had quietly vanished.

A delicately ordered little supper was served to them presently by the deft-handed Ann, in another room which they were told was to be their dining-room—a large well-furnished room opening under a verandah, from which a flight of steps led down to a shady garden. This room communicated with the drawing-room, into which they had first been ushered, by a door in a corner leading into a tiny passage about a yard square. Even as they congratulated themselves on the rooms not being united in the conventional manner by folding doors, they shook their heads, and so silently expressed their fear and conviction that either these lodgings would be too expensive for them, or that some at present unknown cause would compel them to leave.

"Are there any other lodgers in the house?" Mrs. Ray asked rather timidly of Ann, who was motionlessly awaiting their orders, and at the same time sedulously refraining from looking either of them in the face.

"None, ma'am."

"What a large house for Mrs. Hatton to have lived alone in; she must have felt quite lost in it," Mrs. Ray went on, but there was no speculation, far less any vulgar curiosity, in her tone. Nevertheless, Jenifer saw that Ann's rigid face grew a dark red, as if she felt resentment at the remark, and a feeling that both mistress and maid were a little out of the everyday order of things took possession of Jenifer.

But conjectures on this subject gave way to solid, complacent enjoyment, when by-and-by, on going up to their bedrooms, Jenifer found her mother's chamber appointed as perfectly as if they had been in a home of their own with the old Moor Royal furniture about them. Jenifer was not at all superior to the influence of good surroundings. To have seen her mother in sordidly furnished rooms (however clean they might have been) would have taxed the girl's strength, and sorely tried her determination. But here everything was good, handsome, comfortable to a degree, and Jenifer felt very happy in spite of the occasionally obtruding thought, "How shall we pay for it?"

"Is she pretty?" Jenifer ejaculated

abruptly, standing herself at the time before a cheval-glass in her mother's room, Mrs. Ray having gone contentedly into bed, where she was lying cosily between sleeping and waking.

"Speaking of Mrs. Hatton, dear?" Mrs. Ray drawled out sleepily.

"I am!" Jenifer cried, moving over to the side of the bed; "don't wake yourself up to think about it now; but is she pretty? She's something that makes me think about her."

"I think she's very nice and thoughtful," Mrs. Ray said drowsily; "an excellent manager, I'm sure; that servant waits admirably. I should never have supposed we were in common lodgings."

"We're in most uncommon lodgings, I believe," Jenifer half whispered, for she saw her mother was struggling ineffectually with sleep. Then with one kiss on the dear face that wore a look of placid content which gladdened her daughter's heart, Jenifer withdrew to her own room, and silence and sound sleep filled their section of the house.

But in a little chamber far apart, Mrs. Hatton was sitting up wakefully.

She had retreated thither, as soon as she had been assured that her new guests, or lodgers, were being satisfactorily served at supper. And there she had sat almost motionless in a big chair by the side of her bed till now, when Ann came to her with the information that it was long past midnight.

"And you ought to have been resting hours ago, ma'am," the servant added compassionately, as she lifted the dressing-gown off her mistress's shoulders and helped her into bed.

"Ah, for once I may be forgiven for having been rash," the mistress cried, with a little ring of appeal in her voice that was very pathetic as being addressed by the served to the servant; "but I wanted to see these friends of Mr. Boldero's so much."

"Well, now you've seen them, and don't you trouble yourself any more about them," Ann said stolidly, tucking the bed-clothes comfortably round her mistress as she spoke.

"He has sent them here for a purpose, Ann."

"And if he has, it's a good purpose; he wants to make you happier and more independent-like; and what they pay will help to do it," Ann said respectfully, but with an evident determination to take up her candlestick and depart.

"Do stay a minute, Ann," the gentle voice from the bed pleaded; "he meant all you say I'm sure; but don't you think he means me to understand that Miss Ray is his idea of perfection—his idea of what his wife should be?"

"There you go with your romancing again! I do wish you'd stop that romancing, and take things as they are, and let what isn't go," Ann said incoherently and imploringly. "What's what Mr. Boldero thinks about 'em to you? What's what they are to you, so long as they pay their way? Directly Mr. Boldero draws away from you, you go repenting, and apologising, and bemoaning yourself; and as soon as you've got him to be his own kind generous self again, you go romancing."

"But he doesn't know it, Ann. Oh, Ann! you know I never show a bit of the—the gratitude I feel to him," Mrs. Hatton cried, raising herself on her elbow, and fixing eyes that were suffused with tears of self-pity on Ann. But that handmaiden was inexorable. She adored her mistress, but she always remembered something that her mistress appeared at times to forget.

She was rather an attractive woman, this mistress whom Ann served. Not a pretty woman, as Jenifer had half-suspected her of being at their first interview, but a pleasant-faced, plump, softly-curved little woman, with nothing angular about her, either in form or manner. Gentle-toned, never neglectful of appearances, gifted with the power of acting sufficiently to be able to portray any feeling or emotion which she deemed it desirable to portray in private life. Good-natured, sensitively alive to physical discomfort of any kind, and jealous.

Jealous to an extraordinary degree—jealous of her own position, of her house and its appointments, of her old servant Ann, and of Mr. Boldero's friendship. Of this last, feverishly and frightfully jealous—dangerously so, because the poor man was unconscious of this sentiment concerning him which she nursed, and so acted in innocent accordance with, or defiance of it. Jealous above all of Jenifer Ray.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART IX.

THE Count de St. Pol has revealed himself in a new light. He presents himself as a formal suitor, and demands the hand of Hilda from her father. The count has seen Mr. Chancellor, who, he understands,

has abandoned his pretensions. The old squire, although a little puzzled, for Hilda has not yet spoken to him about new arrangements—the old squire professes himself to be quite prepared to accept the count as a son-in-law, if Hilda really has a preference for him. Personally Mr. Chudleigh would prefer the count indeed, for he has no great liking for John Chancellor; but there are business matters to be considered, settlements and so on, as to which he does not see his way. The count explains that this action of his is only a preliminary. He is not yet five-and-twenty years of age, and although his father and mother are dead, yet he has an aged grandmother in Brittany whose consent must be obtained before he can marry. As the old lady is almost blind, very deaf, and obstinate beyond expression, and as she is, moreover, extremely devout, it is quite possible that he may have some difficulty in persuading her to consent to his marriage with a foreigner and a Protestant; but he is prepared to face these difficulties if he has the assurance that Miss Chudleigh will receive him favourably. And so Hilda is sent for by her father, who insists that she shall grant the count an interview.

And this interview resulted in some embarrassment for Hilda. The count did his best to make his peace with her; he assured her that he had conceived a sudden and violent passion for her, and that he meant to win her at any price. If his conduct had ever been rash and blameworthy, the warmth of his passion must excuse it. It was vain for Hilda to tell him that her heart was entirely given to another; the count received her statements with polite incredulity. It was the custom of English young ladies, he believed, to raise difficulties. And as for this affection Miss Chudleigh spoke of, had it the sanction of her father? Hilda could not truthfully say that it had. Whereupon the count triumphantly rejoined that he was satisfied that it rested with him to kindle the great passion of her life—only let him have the opportunity of trying to please her. Hilda might tell him that he was only wasting his time, but that was his affair; he was quite content to waste his time in such a quest. On one point the count won Hilda's good opinion—he declared that he was quite ready to shake hands, after the English fashion, with the man who had struck him, and to dismiss the matter from his mind. It was but a

faithful bouldowg, said the count, who had bitten hard in defence of his mistress.

Without feeling much cordial approval of the count's estimate of my character, still I felt bound at Hilda's request to accept the proffered olive-branch. The opportunity soon occurred, for Tom and I, who had settled ourselves in a comfortable old-fashioned hotel, where we were completely at our ease, were presently pounced upon by our director, who had all kinds of plans for our entertainment. First of all there was a charming dinner arranged for this evening, and at the very house in which we were staying, the Hotel St. Pierre, the host of which was a brave garçon after the director's own heart, with an enthusiasm for the history and antiquity of his town which it is quite rare to meet with. And the dinner to-night would inaugurate a grand "salle Louis treize," which the director had just seen and pronounced exquisite. The selectest notabilities of Caen would be there, the chiefs of the garrison, some distinguished artists from Paris, the editors of one or two of the leading journals, and last, not least, cried the director with enthusiasm, our charming friend the Count de St Pol.

The promises of our director were abundantly realised. The dinner was charming, the guests in their best vein, and full of the liveliness that is the native growth of their country.

Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself whom all the world can please.

And the salle was a marvel of unique antiquity; carved oak panels and dado, with buffets and presses elaborately wrought, and the faience of Nevers and Rouen all of the same period. Cinq Mars would have felt himself at home among us, except for the swallow-tails and shirt-fronts, which he would have considered, and perhaps justly, as dowdy garments for gentlemen, and Richelieu might have come and emptied a bottle with us, without causing much surprise.

It was Tom's notion to introduce Zamora with her tambourine, to dance a gipsy dance and sing a song. The child pleased the critics, who were, perhaps, in a complacent mood. But when our director told her little story, there was a general outcry that the Englishmen must not be allowed to provide for her. A general levy was made, and the amount placed in the hands of the director; and then and there the proprietor of the circus was summoned, who, when he appeared, de-

clared himself willing to take charge of a child so powerfully recommended, and teach her all the mysteries of the ring. And so Zamora is in a fair way of realising her ambition; but she is a grateful little thing, and seems sorry to part with us.

When the party breaks up, some are for the préfecture, where there is an evening reception, while others adjourn to a neighbouring café, and among these last Tom and myself, the Count de St. Pol, and a certain Colonel Peltier, who is a great ally, it seems, of the count. Cards are brought, and Tom and I are matched with the count and his friend at whist. We should not be rated as third-class players at home, but we manage to hold our own with the Frenchmen, who are very indifferent performers. Still our adversaries seem to fancy themselves, and they go on till Tom and I have won four or five napoleons.

"You will give us our revenge?" says the count rather significantly.

Of course we must give the others their revenge, and then follows a comparing of dates and engagements. The count and his friend are going on to Trouville presently, and there we have engaged to meet Redmond on the third day from this.

"And so on the third day from now. It is a bargain!" say our adversaries, as they make an exact note of the date.

There are few pleasanter places than Caen, that within easy reach from England is at once gay and bright in itself, full of interest to archæologist, historian, architect, rich in charming works for the artist, and shows fresh pleasant glimpses of unsophisticated country life, and—what is even more often sought than found—the picturesque costume, the tall Norman caps, and short jaunty skirts of other days. Lumbering diligences roll into the town, leaded on market-days with red-faced jolly country folk, and the markets, crammed with vegetables and fruit from the fertile country round about, echo with the din of Babel, a confusion of tongues not without the kindly northern burr, as the steward of some Scotch boat cheapens vegetables for the captain's mess. Or it is the corn-market in a quaint old church, with the fresh earthy perfume of oats and beans, and the loud shouts of sellers and buyers, instead of the faint perfume of incense and the roll of the organ's notes. But if it comes to churches, there are plenty still left, and you may roam about all day long from one cool, solemn vault to another,

till you get so used to the atmosphere that the world outside feels like a hot-house, and the summer breeze seems to scorch your cheeks.

This morning we went—Hilda and I—to a round of churches, beginning with the Conqueror's church, the Church of St. Stephen, belonging to the Abbaye aux Hommes, which he founded. The secular buildings of the abbey, cloisters, refectory, dormitories, are now occupied by troops of schoolboys in their smart military uniforms and képis. These buildings are mostly of the seventeenth century, and although of merit architecturally, do not much interest us English. But the church is another matter, with its grand simplicity of rounded arch and massive column, its solemn stillness, now broken by the still more solemn chant of the priest who intones the service for the dead. A funeral is being performed in the choir, lights are burning, censers swinging. We can realise the scene of eight hundred years ago. The same glimmer of wax-lights in the noontide gloom, the same solemn cadence of priests and acolytes. The perfume of incense has lingered here all these years, all is much the same in outward aspect as when they laid the mighty victor in the narrow tomb where still his dust reposes. But to-day there is grief and heartfelt sorrow in the pale tear-stained faces which are clustered about the coffin, while for the mighty Conqueror there was not one sad faithful heart to grieve, and instead of the sobs of mourners, the shrill cry of Haro, over his grave. The very ground in which the body is to be laid, is claimed by a peasant who raises that strange, all potent cry of Haro, that all must listen to—the barons with their long swords, the bishops with their pastoral staffs, none of them daring to lay a hand upon the man who raises this cry for justice. And they say there is only a single bone left of this unconquered William, under the marble slab that bears his name, but that is enough to moralise over, if one were in the mood. But the funeral is over, the mourners file away, and are lost in the cheerful living world outside.

The incident of the funeral makes Hilda rather grave.

"It is not right to be so happy, Frank, when other people are suffering."

And then we go to another church, Matilda's this time, where a wedding is going on in a little side-chapel; a working people's wedding, the bride in a bright

Paisley shawl, and kneeling a long way apart from the bridegroom, who looks sheepish enough in his glossy-black suit. The ceremony finishes as we are waiting, the white-robed priest vanishes into the sacristy, and the acolyte, in his red soutane, comes and puts out the candles. One of the candles smokes a long while after it has been extinguished, the smoke rising in a long twisted column, that winds at last into a ray of sunlight shining through a painted window, and becomes glorified. We both of us have been watching the smoke intently, and the little gleam of radiance pleases us. It seems to be recognised by Hilda as a good omen; and then the wedding has counteracted the depressing effect of the funeral.

As well as churches there are plenty of fine old houses in Caen, in little courts and squares and out-of-the-way places; and among these the morning flies pleasantly enough, till we meet Master Tom, who, it seems, is wandering about discontentedly, and wants to know when we are going to do something.

"I vote for a cruise," cried Tom; "say to the Isle of Wight and back, just to freshen us up."

Hilda looked at Tom in some surprise.

"Have you got your yacht here, Tom?" she asked; and added: "I don't think I shall ever sail in the Sea Mew again."

It was Tom's turn to look surprised and mystified.

"Have you quarrelled already, you two?" he asked. "Oh, I see," he continued in a low tone, "it is a surprise—eh?"

The fact was that the Sea Mew was beginning to weigh upon my mind a good deal. I did not know how to break the matter to Hilda. It had been so delightful to find that Hilda was ready to take me, thinking me still poor Frank Lyme, and so I had ventured a little way in the path of deceit, and found it hard to retrace my steps. Hilda might possibly take umbrage, and consider that I had treated her like a child. At that moment I would gladly have given the Sea Mew to anybody who would have taken her out into the Channel and away out of sight. And Tom was frowning and nodding at me in the most significant way, meaning, as I understood his signals, "I know Hilda better than you, and it won't do."

"Let us go and have a look at her," I cried in desperation, and we took a fiacre and drove down to the port.

But Hilda took the matter better than I expected. In fact, she looked at me rather tenderly than otherwise when I had made my explanation in a very awkward, bungling fashion.

"You will soon be poor again, Frank," she said, "unless you have somebody to look after you."

And then Hilda began to rummage about the yacht, proposing that this thing and the other should be done, feeling, as she said, more at home in it than she had ever done before.

"And now, Frank," began Hilda when she had tired herself a little and thoroughly stupefied the skipper and his crew with her questions and suggestions—for Hilda prided herself on her seamanship, or its feminine equivalent, and meant to have things ship-shape now that she felt herself in command—"and now, Frank," she said with determination, "you must take me to Dives, where the Conqueror sailed from, you know, and we must land there; so let us call up the skipper."

The skipper came, and overhauled his charts, and rubbed his chin meditatively.

"I'm doubting, miss, we'll no have watter enough to land ye at Dives."

"If there was water enough for William the Conqueror," replied Hilda tartly, "surely there is for me."

Captain Macrubbits—he hails from the North, and is not quite a Scotchman, perhaps, but something very near it—grins contemptuously as he replies:

"I'm thinking the Conqueror never navigated a three hundred ton yacht. They were just bits o' galleys like—smacks, we should ca' them now—that were navigated in those days."

Hilda made a face expressive of impatience.

"Then, Captain Mac, if there isn't water enough at Dives, how are we to get there?"

"Ye'd just better go by rail, miss," replied the skipper with alacrity. "Aye, ye shall go by rail, and I'll pick ye up at Trouville; there's a decent kind of port there. And then ye might like to run up the Seine. I'd take ye up to Roan now with the flood—like that!" cried the skipper, snapping his fingers with emphasis.

"Well, then," said Hilda, shrugging her shoulders in token of resignation, "that is how it must be then."

As we returned to the city, Tom had a boon to beg of Hilda—would she try to

keep the party together? Wyvern was already recalled, and was going back to London with his sister, from Havre. But Miss Chancellor now and Mrs. Bacon, as inseparable from Miss Chancellor, why should they not go on with us?

"You know," continued Tom maliciously, "it will be precious dull for me now that you and Frank are so thick together."

Hilda replied, with a slightly sarcastic inflection of the voice, that she was sure Miss Chancellor would be quite ready to go on with us if she knew that Tom was so anxious about the matter.

Whatever inducements Hilda may have offered to induce Miss Chancellor and her aunt to continue their journey with us, they must have proved sufficient, for we all assembled at the station—a party reduced in numbers, but, if anything, in better spirits than before. Even Contango kicked up his heels in a still more lively fashion than usual, and he called forth showers of "sacrés" from the railway officials as they tried to haul him by main force into his box. Our destination in the first instance, it seemed, was Dozulé-Putot, and Tom made merry at the expense of people who could give such ridiculous names to their places.

"Where is our director," cried Tom, "to read us these riddles?"

As it happened, our director was close at hand. Yes, he had come to the station with his Stéphanie to bid us "Bon voyage." The director's wife did not care to go to Dives, which was triste—oh, and so stupid. But we should meet at Trouville, no doubt. And so, with waving of hands and cries of "A bientôt!" we pass out of the station into the pleasant green country.

There is nothing on the way to tempt us to stop, unless it be at Troarn, pleasantly placed on the slope of the hill, with some small remains of a famous old abbey, founded in the eleventh century by one Montgomery, who was heard of afterwards on the other side of the Channel. Old Talbot pillaged and ruined the abbey, we read, under our Harry the Fifth, because the men of the abbey had broken down the bridge over the Dives to hinder the march of the English upon Caen, and the Revolution finally extinguished it, while the buildings are now utilised for a kind of stud-farm belonging to the Government. A little farther on, we cross the Dives just above the bridge about which Talbot made himself so unpleasant. And we cross the river again to make a halt at Cabourg—a

watering-place that is coming into note—and yet again we cross the river in full view of the wide-spreading marshes, all now reclaimed and made into fertile meadows, with Dives lying pleasantly in a crook of the river.

But, after all, now that we have seen the place, there is nothing in the quiet little village, with its picturesque, half-ruinous church, to tempt us to stop. In fact, we had rather not, for, taking a turn round the churchyard, we find abundant evidence that the rude forefathers of the hamlet are not allowed to sleep beyond a certain time, but are after a while turned out to make room for new comers. A general disturbance of this kind must have taken place not long before, and we have no fancy to witness possibly an indignation meeting of perturbed spirits, whose remains have thus been evicted from what it would be a figure of speech to call their last homes.

And so we leave our baggage to come on by the next train, and walk over the hill towards the coast. Looking back we see Dives snugly lying in the valley with a great plain stretching beyond, dotted with cattle and homesteads, the river winding through, with a bridge here and there, and hamlets showing among the trees. But the road proposes to take us a good many miles inland, and then we try a footpath, which brings us out on the very lawn of a modern château, where the gardener is mowing the grass, and where the people of the house are taking the air upon the terrace. But the gardener throws down his scythe and volunteers to take us across the grounds, and we come out at a little gate close by a broken column, which some enthusiastic Norman has erected as a memorial of the great invasion. We happen to know the date of this event, so that there is no use in repeating that part of the inscription, but the column goes more into detail than such objects generally do, and tells us that during a month the fleet of Duke William moored in the port of Dives, and his army, composed of fifty thousand men, encamped in the neighbourhood.

Then we throw ourselves down on the grass at the foot of the column, a little out of breath with the pull up the hill, and watch the evening glow as it spreads over sea and sky and wide green plain, and discuss the Norman Conquest.

Here is the scene where the affair began; the sea dimpling and sparkling, a long line of coast running out, with a tower

or spire here and there, marking the site of one of the little towns we have recently passed. Just below, the river makes a sharp elbow caused by a great bank of sand half-overgrown with herbage; a crescent-shaped bank, with its farther horn connected with the general coast-line; and on this horn stands Cabourg, with its big hotels and fine villas. Once upon a time, no doubt, the river made its way straight to the sea, near where Cabourg now stands, as it might do again in some conjunction of storm and flood; just as the river at Newhaven straightened itself and left Seaford high and dry, a port only in name. Rivers are continually playing such pranks when left to their own sweet will. But to return to our Dives. Probably, then, this great sandbank, and a good deal of the ground between the village of Dives and the present little port which lies in the bend of the river just below us—probably all this has been formed by the action of stream and tide in the centuries that have elapsed since the Conquest. But the general features of the scene are the same; the wide green plain affording forage for countless horses and cattle, the winding river and the long coast-line stretching into the sea.

The tide is out now, and we can endorse Captain Mac's opinion as to the quantity of water here. Ribs of yellow sand divide the slender current—you might easily wade over the Conqueror's river just now; boats are lying high and dry, their masts at any angle you please. Still, at high-water, a good big ship might find her way into the river; though when she could get out again would be problematical. And now a train rumbles along at leisurely speed below us, along the river bank, and then cutting off the great bend, and speeding along towards Caen. Altogether a vast farm is this of lower Normandy, right away from Carentan to Dives, well-watered and wooded, and with abundance written in every part of it. No wonder that the Conqueror did great things with such a heritage to start with.

It takes us only a few minutes from the tops of the cliffs to reach the long-drawn town of Beuzeval Houlgate, with its one street that follows the winding of the shore—a mixture of grand villas, and big chalets, and humble booths. The eastern end, or Beuzeval, is the more fashionable, but Houlgate is the pleasanter, with the river winding in to the haven under the hill—a happy, friendly-looking haven, backed by

green trees, against which the white sails look charmingly fresh and pure. The tide is beginning to make now, and all the boats are afloat, and the fisher-craft are running for home. It is pleasant, too, to find a good dinner awaiting us in a room open on three sides to the sea breezes.

When dinner is over we follow the example of all the world, and pitch our seats on the margin of the rising tide, to be driven, like King Canute, from one position to another. The children are making big embankments to resist the tide which ever and again tumbles in amid great laughter and shouting from the beholders. Our end of the beach has the reputation of being almost exclusively French Protestant, and the Temple certainly occupies a very prominent position in the street. But there is little difference to be noticed between the two populations, and where Beuzval ends and Houlgate begins nobody seems to know. But both are charming places and would be still more charming if it were not that the drains have their outfalls under people's noses. As night comes on the stenches begin.

"It is not dangerous," cried a French friend; "it is all quite fresh smell, that do no harm." But all the same a smell is a smell.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR ORGANIST.

THE consideration of the life and death of Jonas Harper, our organist, will reveal a melancholy picture of that moral and intellectual waste which is constantly going on around us, a waste produced in large measure by the fact that genius and the gift of conduct do not always go together. It was not from the want of natural ability that Jonas Harper lived and died as he did. He had the soul of a true musician. He was by far the best organist in the county; and, but for an unfortunate accident, he might have ended his days in the dignified repose of the organ gallery of Martlebury Cathedral. He was a thorough master of counterpoint, and indeed of the whole theory of music. He could play the violin as well as, if not better, than the organ; but there were certain things he could not do. He could not keep a shilling in his pocket, let his earnings be ever so good; and he could never, wherever the place, whatever the hour, resist the temptation of taking a drop too much.

When first I remember Jonas he was

a round-faced bullet-headed man, shabbily dressed at whatever hour of the day you might meet him, seemingly about forty years of age, and the description above written might very well have been applied to him thirty years afterwards, when I set eyes upon him for the last time. Somehow or other Jonas seemed to find it difficult to wear, at the same time, all the different articles which go to make up the sum of a man's attire. It was very rare to find him wearing contemporaneously both collar and cravat. I never saw him with an overcoat, even in the most bitter weather. A waistcoat he always discarded with the first days of summer; and, now and then, when, according to his own account, he was very busy, I have seen him walking about the market-place in his shirt-sleeves.

Jonas Harper lived in a mouldy little house in Freeschool Lane, where his daughter Phoebe, a kind-hearted, weak-witted girl, kept house—and kept it well too, considering the extremely intermittent nature of the family income, and the woe-ful raids that the paterfamilias would make upon it at certain times when he felt inclined for what he euphemistically called "a little pleasure."

The major part of Jonas Harper's income was of a highly precarious nature. He had a fixed salary of twenty-six pounds per annum for playing the organ in the parish church, and this was all he had in the way of permanent revenue. This salary the Rev. Francis Northborough, when he first came to live amongst us, tried to revise along with all the other parish expenditure, but Jonas was intractable under the paring-knife. Meeting the rector one day after he had been taking a "little pleasure," Jonas urged his view of the case in such forcible terms, that Mr. Northborough, seeing that he must have Jonas Harper or nobody to play the organ, gave way; but he did not love our organist any the better for this show of independence. The occasional portion of Jonas's income arose from a multiplicity of sources, some of them in no way connected with the art of the divine Cecilia. For instance, he was an expert at bird-stuffing. He could clean clocks after a fashion, and mend locks and bells and bell-wires. He was an adroit fisherman, too, and persisted in fishing, as by common right, all along our river, even where it ran through Squire Winsor's park. He had had altercations innumerable with the keepers; but Mr. Winsor could never be persuaded

to proceed against the offender. The fishing was very poor, and he himself cared for no fishing, good or bad, and he fancied, if he should dam up Mr. Harper's sporting tastes in this one direction, that they might very possibly break out in surreptitious assaults upon the hares and pheasants, for which he did care very much indeed. Then there were lots of jobs within the limits of his own profession to be done in the district. Jonas tuned all the pianos round about—they were not so numerous then as they are now—at a charge of two-and-sixpence each, and as many glasses as possible of any alcoholic fluid which might be on draught. At one time he kept a horse and gig, and used to make a regular circuit of the neighbouring towns, wherever there might be a young ladies' school, teaching the rudiments of music for a very moderate fee, and for a time Jonas did not do amiss in this particular line, for he always exacted payment in advance from his pupils, while he was in no hurry to liquidate the bills for the provender of the unlucky horse which took him his rounds. However, the career of Jonas as a peripatetic teacher came to an end after a year or so. He might have been able to keep it up longer, if the public-houses had not stood so thickly along the roads which he had to traverse, and if the entertainment for man and beast—for man especially—which they offered had not been so seductive.

One luckless winter's day, when there was a biting frost, and the northern blast blew full in his teeth all through his drive over Pudsey Heath, it happened that his horse cast a shoe just after he had passed The Shepherd and Dog. There was a smith's shop attached to the renowned hostelry just mentioned, so Jonas turned back and comforted himself with a glass of something hot, while the shoe was being replaced. When he got to Offbury, instead of going direct to Miss Carver's seminary, he looked into the bar-parlour at The Crown just to warm his frozen fingers; and, while he was there, somebody came in and asked for a glass of hot rum-and-water, with a bit of lemon in it. Now, the glow of that glass of "something hot" imbibed at The Shepherd and Dog was beginning to die out under Jonas Harper's waistcoat by this time; but the memory of it was pleasing. The rum by itself smelt like nectar to the nose of Jonas, but supplemented by the fragrance of the lemon it was simply irresistible; so he ordered a

glass, and, casting a regretful look at the empty measure as he put it down on the table, he went forth to his duty.

While he was waiting in Miss Carver's drawing-room the mistress herself appeared, and, with many apologies, informed him that, owing to the illness of one of the teachers, the girls' lessons had been all thrown out of the regular order, and asked him whether, as a great favour, he would mind giving his music-lessons in the afternoon instead of the morning. Jonas at once assented, and promised to return at two p.m., and the very first thought that crossed his mind as Miss Carver's door closed behind him was, what capital rum they sold at The Crown, and in less than two minutes he had framed a resolution to go back and have another glass of it.

Alas! how easily things go wrong. Who shall say that, but for Miss Carver's assistant's headache, and the consequent relegation of the music-master to the bar-parlour at The Crown, Jonas Harper might not have got the better of his inclination for rum-and-water with lemon in it—for he was by no means a confirmed drunkard in those days—and have risen to the very tip-top of his profession, perhaps as organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and have been buried under a gravestone inscribed "Sir Jonas Harper, Kt., Mus. Doc."

The upshot will readily be guessed. Jonas on his return took another glass, and another, and another, and by the time two o'clock came, he was in a condition more fitted to take the chair at a harmonic meeting than to make his appearance in Miss Carver's drawing-room. He got through his first half-hour without mishap, but then his tongue began to talk wildly, and the desire to show his pupil how it ought to be done, came upon him. He ousted the young lady from the music-stool and began to run his fingers over the keys in obligato fortissimo fashion. Soon the spirit of song was stirred within him, and when Miss Carver, alarmed by the unwonted clamour which assailed her ears even in the distant recesses of the school-room, entered her drawing-room, she found the youngest Miss Bowles standing white as a sheet at the window, and Jonas rolling about on the music-stool, banging the piano and trolling out in a rather unsteady voice, "One bumper at parting." The tableau which followed may be realised without words of description. Dismissal from his post followed as a matter of course, and in this case dis-

missal from one school meant dismissal from all, for naturally the cause of offence was not kept a secret. A young man from Martlebury, a former pupil of Jonas, stepped into his quondam master's shoes, and, after this reverse of fortune, things went very badly with our organist for some time. He sold his horse and lived for a while on the proceeds, and when these were exhausted, fate came to his aid in the guise of Walter Tafnell, who had then just started our choral society and musical union. He offered to Jonas the posts of conductor, collector of subscriptions, and purveyor of music, which offices, small as the salary was, the latter gladly accepted.

There was indeed a bond of sympathy between the president of the society and his employé, in the fact that they were probably the two idlest men in Shillingbury; but the idleness of Jonas was by far the more culpable, for he had good talents, and if he had been willing to work he might have achieved high success, whereas the idleness of poor Walter arose largely from the fact that he was by nature capable of doing very little, and that he had never been put in the way of doing even the little that lay within the compass of his powers. The two spent many hours together, doing nothing with wonderful assiduity, but in spite of this intimacy there would arise now and then violent disputes with regard to the financial affairs of the choral society. Jonas collected the subscriptions from the outside public readily and efficiently enough, but when it came to collecting the year's income from him, Walter, as treasurer, found that the bulldog did not hang more tenaciously to whatever it took between its teeth than did Jonas Harper to any money which might once have touched his palm. There were always arrears of salary, or cross accounts of one kind or another, and Walter Tafnell found his treasurer's office very much of a sinecure. Experience, however, never taught him wisdom; for every time our choral society revived after its periodical decease, Jonas was invariably promoted to the same offices, which he had so lately abused and neglected. Once Walter took to collecting the subscriptions himself, but unfortunately this was just before one of the society's concerts, and Jonas, regarding this step as an imputation on his integrity, at once declared that, if he was not to be trusted to collect the subscriptions, he was not fit to wield the conductor's bâton, which instrument he threw across the room with

some force towards the spot where Walter Tafnell was standing. Jonas was master of the situation. The concert was advertised, the tickets were sold, and no other conductor was available, so he could enforce his terms. The bâton was handed back to him, and he was assured that there would be no further interference with his duties.

Jonas picked up a few shillings as the purveyor of the small beer chronicle of our district to the Martlebury Mercury. Nothing was too minute for the range of his observation. Every fractured bone that our doctor set was described to the listening county as "a dangerous fracture which was speedily reduced by the skill of Dr. Goldingham." Whenever the river overflowed its banks, as it did regularly every autumn; whenever one of Simon Deverel's cows had twins; whenever Mrs. Gillings had a swarm of bees; or whenever there was a vestry meeting, Jonas would elaborate a paragraph of a dozen lines or so. At the various seasons of the agricultural year the readers of our county papers were enlightened as to the prospects of the crops. Now Jonas informed us that never had there been a finer promise for roots, and again, that the caterpillars and the wire-worms by their ravages were threatening entire ruin to the grazing interest. He never failed to let the rest of the county know when harvest was general in the district of Shillingbury, and any superabundance and deficiency in the crops was sure to be noted by his graphic pen. At Christmas time he would give a full description of the good cheer displayed at the butcher's shops of our respected townsmen, Mr. Ribstone and Mr. Plummer. The weight of every ox and sheep would be quoted, and the name of the grazier with complimentary remarks.

In describing the concerts of our musical society, Jonas of course came out strong in musical phraseology, but at one time it was whispered abroad that these reports were not drawn up in a spirit entirely free from fear, favour, or affection. At least Miss Gill, one of our leading sopranos, once told me that she knew as a fact that Mr. Ticeman, our leading corn-chandler, coal-merchant, etc., had sent Jonas Harper his bill, which had been standing ever so long, duly receipted as a consideration for a very favourable notice of Miss Ticeman's singing at one of our concerts, and anybody with half an ear must know that Carry Ticeman could not sing a note in tune. This remark of Miss Gill's may or may not have

been prompted by jealousy—of this I am not going to judge—but I am disposed to think that Jonas was sometimes governed by considerations of expediency as to what he should send, and what he should not send, to the columns of the county paper. For instance, though he would on ordinary occasions make half a column at least out of the monthly proceedings before the Shillingbury bench, on one particular day no report whatever of our petty sessions was given, and it happened that at these particular sessions Mr. Jonas Harper and two other rollicking blades were each fined ten shillings and costs for being drunk and disorderly in the market-place one night after an Oddfellows' anniversary.

But though Jonas misconducted himself on this occasion the Oddfellows did not cut him off as a rotten branch. I have been present at many of their anniversary dinners, and I find it hard to think of one of them which was ungraced by the wit and eloquence of our organist. Without Jonas they certainly would have been very dull indeed. It used to be said of the late Sir Peter Lawrie that he was perpetual ex-Lord Mayor of London, and in like manner Jonas had a claim to be called perpetual vice-chairman of our Oddfellows' dinner. Chairmen came and went, varying every year, but Jonas was always with us.

Sometimes, towards the end of the evening, he would be a little difficult to keep in order, and would insist on giving toasts which had been proposed and drunk long before. Naturally the musical portion of the feast fell entirely under his direction, and once I remember he arranged to grace every toast with an appropriate melody by the way of musical honours. "The Queen" was naturally followed by the National Anthem. The British Grenadiers and The Arethusa, did duty for the Army and Navy; and when The Bishop and the Clergy were given from the chair we hardly expected that Jonas would rise equal to such an emergency. But he soon showed us that he had not been organist of the parish church ten years for nothing, for, after a little jerking and whispering, the musicians struck up From Greenland's Icy Mountains, the most appropriate bit of their repertoire, much to the gratification of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke, who was put up to respond, for it gave him a peg upon which he could hang an appeal in favour of the missionary society which was his especial care.

In his latter years Jonas followed a

certain system in his more serious lapses on the score of inebriety. All through his tenure of the post of organist he was never known to be too drunk to manage his instrument. Sundays and the great festivals of the Church found him always fairly sober, but there were certain days upon which he took more to drink than was good for him with a punctuality and a persistency which, if devoted to a worthier end, might have saved him from shipwreck and even led him on to fortune. On petty sessions days, on county court days, on cricket match days in the summer, and on market-days all the year round, you would find Jonas more or less unsteady in his walk and speech towards the end of the afternoon, as surely as you would meet Walter Tafnell shambling up to The White Horse as the clock drew on towards the hour of seven in the evening.

There is one epoch in Jonas Harper's life—the tide he just missed, the great chance he threw away—which I must notice briefly. One winter, some time before Jonas had sunk into habits of chronic inebriety, Dr. Stagg, the organist of Martlebury Cathedral, died, full of years and honours, and a multitude of candidates appeared to compete for the vacant post. They came from all parts of the country, backed by testimonials as trustworthy as testimonials generally are, and amongst them came Jonas Harper. His recommendations were of a less imposing character than were those of many of his opponents, but he had in his favour that spice of possession which is fabled to give to the holder such a large majority of the legal points, for after Dr. Stagg's death Jonas, with Dr. Unwin's consent, applied for and obtained the post of organist pending the election of Dr. Stagg's successor. The latter, though he was a famous musician, had lost much of his execution as a performer, and of late the grand organ in Martlebury Cathedral seemed to have grown feeble and faint, as if in sympathy with the failing powers of the ancient master. To a man who loved music as Jonas did, the opportunity of playing when he would upon such an organ was in itself a rich reward. He practised late and early, and soon began to know the instrument well enough to bring out its full powers, and to send floating down the vaulted aisles such a flood of harmony as they had not known for many a day. The dean, the canons, and all interested were greatly astonished that such a musician

should have come out of Shillingbury, and as the day of election drew near the feeling ran strongly in favour of Jonas, in spite of the big names by which the merits of divers of his adversaries were guaranteed.

Jonas was gifted with that easy-going, happy-go-lucky disposition which has been the mark of the mauvais sujet in all ages. He found himself, after a little, a sort of a lion in Martlebury, and almost every evening he would be asked out to one or other of the principal houses, on the implied understanding that he should give a little music. After the dulness of his life in Shillingbury, he was glad enough to go and play the whole evening to an audience which at all events seemed to be appreciative. By this means his acquaintance spread far and wide; he was always a welcome guest at a convivial evening; but, though the temptation was great, Jonas managed to keep himself pretty straight, and he certainly dressed himself in more orderly fashion than usual.

The eventful day of the trial came at last; the testimonials had all been weighed and considered, and it only remained for the judges to hear how the competitors were qualified to deal with the great organ. Only six had been chosen for this final ordeal, and of them Jonas Harper was one.

Four musicians, with whom we are not further interested, in succession filled the ears of the judges with music sweet and loud by turns. I dare say, if the truth had been told, that the precentor and his colleagues were, by this time, a trifle hazy as to the especial merit of any particular candidate, and would have found it hard work to declare with perfect sincerity in what respect Number One was better or worse than Number Three; but the form had to be gone through. The fourth gentleman played his last bar, and then resigned the stool to Jonas. The adjudicators drew their breath more freely, as they counted the names and found that their task was well-nigh done; but if they fancied that they might lie back in their stalls and calmly await the end, they were greatly mistaken. Before Jonas had played half-a-dozen bars it was evident that there was something unusual, to say the least of it, in his style of performance. It seemed as if he must have pulled out all the stops at once, so fearful was the crash of sound which burst from the organ-gallery; but by degrees the semblance of a melody unravelled itself from the chaos of contend-

ing uproar. It certainly was a very extraordinary style of playing, and soon the dean and the precentor began to fancy that it was a very extraordinary sort of tune to be played in a cathedral—that tune which was now flowing out ever plainer and more plain from the touch of Jonas Harper's fingers. The dean looked at the precentor and the precentor at the dean. The latter then made a hurried sign to an astonished verger to hasten up into the gallery and stop the player at all hazards, for by this time Jonas was boldly playing *We Won't Go 'Home Till Morning*, and accompanying it vocally in a vigorous but somewhat unsteady strain.

It was this escapade which ruined Jonas finally and fated him to spend the residue of his days in obscurity. Indeed, for a time, it looked as if he might be cut adrift from Shillingbury, for there were many words spoken to Dr. Unwin as to the possible scandal which might arise at any moment through keeping such a man in the service of the Church; but Dr. Unwin was growing very old, and hated change, and I believe had a sneaking kindness for Jonas, worthless dog as he was.

Jonas had a taste which I fancy no other human being shared with him. He delighted above all things in serving upon a jury, and I never remember a coroner's jury in Shillingbury of which he was not the foreman. On one occasion he especially distinguished himself. A tramp had been picked up half dead with cold and hunger on the road, and had died soon after he had been taken to the workhouse. The coroner was summoned, the jury was empannelled, and Dr. Goldingham was in attendance to tell the twelve good men and true what were the causes of death. Now the good doctor, with all his virtues, had one weak point: he was very fond of using the hard words of the medical vocabulary, and it was an extra pleasure to him if he thought that he was only imperfectly understood by those who listened to him. In the present case he told the jury how the man had complained of "gastralgia," and had soon showed signs of "syncope." The cause of death he described as "the effusion of serum into the pericardium." Jonas Harper had evidently been taking "a little pleasure" while waiting for the inquest to open, and all through he showed signs of a desire to cross-examine the doctor, but was stopped by the coroner, who put into plain English the

description of the disease of which the unfortunate had died. The verdict was given; and, just as the coroner was about to discharge the jury, Jonas rose to his feet, and in spite of all the efforts of Mr. Ribstone, who was sitting near, to prevent him, announced with tipsy gravity that he had a toast to propose. For a moment there was a dead silence; then some said, "Sit down, Jonas!" and others, "Take him away!" but Jonas was not to be daunted. Glaring around him he informed the meeting that he was going to propose the health of their excellent coroner with musical honours, and convey to him the thanks of the party for the ingenuity with which he had found out what the man had really died of, in spite of Dr. Goldingham's long words.

That was the last jury Jonas ever served on. The next inquest held in that room was held on his own ill-starred body. One winter's day he went over to Offbury to be present at the dinner of a coursing club where he was to have his dinner and as much liquor as he could drink, provided he kept sober enough to sing whenever the chairman might call upon him. Whether or not he fulfilled his contract as to the singing clauses, I do not know; but it was certain that he did not keep sober enough to walk home over the foot-bridge at Brooksbank End. Poor Phoebe sat up all night, and was well-nigh bereft of the few poor wits she had when the laggard morning came, and with it no sign of her father; but news of him came soon enough. The miller when he went to draw the dam of Shillingbury water-mill found Jonas Harper's body lying amongst the slime and ooze which had accumulated during the night. His useless life was done, and I am not going, even figuratively, to drop a tear to his memory.

No. Sympathy for worthless drunkards like Jonas Harper, on the score that they are not bad fellows at heart, is not to my taste. If a man be good at heart, let him show it by his deeds, or at least let him abstain from ill-doing. Here was a man who had within him the power to attain high excellence in the most divine of all the arts, and he willed to spend his days boozing in tavern-parlours with a pack of boors. Sordid and brutalised as his companions were, they were better than himself, because they threw no good gift away; the pleasures they sought and enjoyed were the best they knew of. Jonas Harper died a drunkard's death,

and I see less reason for adhering to the "de mortuis" maxim when speaking of his end than in the case of any other scape-grace I ever knew.

A PLAIN GIRL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

It was autumn, and of the names of the four seasons autumn is the one which calls up the least definite picture. It may mean the splendour of ripeness, or the melancholy of decay. In this case autumn had withered, till it was fuller of forebodings of the winter that was coming than of the summer that was gone.

Mr. Langley did not care for hunting or shooting, but Jack Morrison, the man with whom he happened to be staying that November, cared very much indeed, and insisted moreover that his friend should accompany him, and as a long day in a bachelor's house in Tipperary is apt to be very decidedly long, Philip Langley found it advisable to make the best of these outdoor amusements. He did so, only regretting that he could not find them a trifle more amusing.

The first day's hunting was announced. The meet was at a small village near Cashel, about seven miles distant. Mr. Langley did not at first like the idea of the morning ride, but when the name of Ballyvarry had been many times repeated in his hearing, the vague recollection which it had at first awakened suddenly became definite.

Ballyvarry—why, that was Miss Harrison's address! She had sent him a letter about some book he had mentioned in their talk—some question, Heaven knew what! He had never answered it. He did not care much for letter-writing. But, he remembered, as he sat smoking his cigarette the evening before Jack Morrison's all-important day, that Ballyvarry had been written with elaborate clearness at the head of that timid little note. Mr. Langley's gaze pursued the tiny smoke-wreaths till they melted into the air, while he inwardly resolved that, if it could be managed, he would escape from his friend the next morning and call at the rectory. After all hunting was not such bad sport, and might serve well enough to pass a vacant day; only Mr. Langley's idea of hunting was not quite the same as honest Jack's.

The latter was an Irish sportsman, and while the hounds were in view he had no thought to spare for friend or foe. Mr. Langley, therefore, found no difficulty in

carrying out his scheme. Having risked his neck with studious moderation over a few small fences, he slipped away unobserved and trotted back in the direction of Ballyvary, enquiring his way from time to time. As he rode along he wondered idly how Emma Harrison would receive him. What would she look like? What would she say? His thoughts recurred to that evening's flirtation with the same kind of interest which a chess-player might feel in looking back to a game which some accident had compelled him to relinquish. Played out it would probably have been forgotten; interrupted, it remains a subject for speculation, a problem unsolved.

Philip Langley had been a pleasure-seeker all his life, and he found his pleasures in many directions. He did not scorn the simplest; he loved his ease, he loved good living, but he did not stop there. He was attracted by poetry and music, and had devoted himself assiduously enough, and with very fair success, to the composition of both. He was not precisely vain, but it was a delight to him to dominate, to measure his strength against an antagonist, or to overcome a difficulty. Of love he had read much, had thought much, could talk fluently, and knew absolutely nothing. He was always seeking it in order to gratify his master instinct of analysis; he had learnt its routine; constant practice had enabled him to ape the tenderness and passion which he had never felt; but the consciousness that something eluded him in all his triumphs, stung him with a never satisfied curiosity. No impulse had ever carried him away. His desires, in their utmost strength, would always suffer him to pause and to consider their consequences, as if he had been a bystander.

It was very certain that the beat of his horse's hoofs on the road to the rectory did not mark the approach of a true-hearted lover. Indeed, had he been anything of the kind he would have hesitated before he set out upon his errand that morning, for the difficulties which had so nearly driven him into a marriage with Miss Willing earlier in the year, were pressing more closely than ever upon him, and continually reminding him of the absolute necessity that he should do something to retrieve his fortunes, if he would not be overtaken and ruined. His escape from Miss Willing had seemed like salvation at the time, and he still congratulated himself upon it; but, after the first moment, he had realised that he was left in the

same hopeless condition as before he met her, and that since she could not save him somebody else must. His fortune, never large, had suffered considerably from his extravagance, for he had denied himself nothing. For a long while he had thrust aside the idea of marriage; liberty, with four hundred a year, had seemed better to him than two thousand, or even four thousand, with a wife; but of late he had begun to tire of his pleasures; to chafe at the restriction of his narrowing income, which rendered self-indulgence a toil; and to think with decreasing reluctance of the ease and security of a wealthy home; and his plans were already matured as he rode to call on Miss Harrison. He would go to England in the spring and spend the London season in looking out for an heiress.

Perhaps the determination to surrender his roving independence gave a little freshness and flavour to what remained of it. It was not likely that there was anything yet reserved to him to learn and feel in these few lightly-fitting weeks; he was not conscious of any such hope or fancy, and yet his flagging interest revived as if he felt it possible. And his awakened thoughts settled just then on Emma Harrison. Her very plainness, and shyness, and ignorance gave piquancy and a curious distinction to their brief flirtation. Men were always flirting with attractive girls, one after another trying their hands at the pretty sport, eliciting such bright, sweet response as their skill permitted—some more, some less. Tom might succeed where Dick failed. Harry with a more delicate tact than either might arrive in his turn to supplant the conqueror. But it was all a game, or rather, perhaps, it was a well-known air, played by thousands of performers. He, Philip Langley, had turned aside from the beaten track for one evening to find his pleasure where no one else had sought it, and had been rewarded by discovering a shy wood-bird with no wealth of song, but just a single penetrating, reiterated note—love, joy, and pain blended in one utterance. Later its memory had returned to him, freed from the distasteful surroundings of that evening, and had made other voices seem flatter and shallower than ever his weariness had found them. One note! For a lifetime it would be too monotonous, but he felt a touch of something almost like excitement at the thought that he would call it forth again. He could if he pleased, but no one else ever had, and no one ever would, of that he was sure. Possibly some-

thing of this unspoken certainty had caused his very carelessness. He might neglect her letter, and scarcely remember the place where she lived, but, if he wanted her, he could find her, and she would be the same. His wonder as to the reception in store for him was really only wonder how her sweet gladness would manifest itself at his approach.

So, well satisfied, he went his way, glancing idly right and left. An immense sea of green extended on both sides, intersected by grey stone walls which gave the landscape somewhat the appearance of a tailor's pattern-sheet. Here and there a few elms decorated the corners of the fields, and the white side of a distant cottage caught a gleam of cold November sunlight. Before him rose the rectory, exactly like scores of others, a square two-storeyed house with trees grouped about it, standing in the centre of a green lawn, not a hundred yards from the high road. Close at hand was the church; and garden and graveyard, thus nearly united, seemed like a miniature world of life and death, complete in itself, a little island in the wide green levels which stretched in every direction around it. Looking at that home, it was easy for Mr. Langley to perceive much of the grey monotony of poor little Miss Harrison's life, and there was an even deeper dulness within its walls. Her father was over sixty, a silent and melancholy man, and she lived with him alone, for her elder sister was married, and brothers she had none. Day succeeded day, and the sun rose and set without an event to mark its passage. In that sparsely populated neighbourhood a stray visitor, or an invitation to lunch, was something to be remembered and to date little household matters by, for weeks afterwards. Indeed, Emma thought that this special day was greatly distinguished by the fact that her new dress had been sent home, and that she was trying it on. She did not see the rider in the distance; she was standing a little away from the uncurtained window of her room, buttoning the soft, dark-brown dress with careful fingers. She might take her time about it. Her father was in Dublin, and if she chose to spend an hour in admiring her new possession, she had no reason to suppose that anyone was likely to disturb her. In point of fact, however, she had just buttoned the last button, and was studying herself in the glass to make sure that everything was as

it should be, when the door-bell rang sharply through the house. The possibility that it might be Mr. Langley did not occur to her. Since her letter had called forth no reply, he had seemed to her withdrawn to some unapproachable remoteness, where even her thoughts could not find him. That evening, she said to herself, had been the beginning and end of all, and she no more expected him to seek her than she expected the sun to come down out of the sky. When his name was announced she stood for one breathing space startled and still, then ran downstairs to meet him. Her heart was beating in such a tumult of surprise and joy, that the delight was almost pain, and the words of greeting died upon her parted lips. She could only put out her hand to meet his hand once more, and look up at him with the certainty that he would understand.

As the little fingers closed on his, even Mr. Langley felt a kind of wonder at his welcome. Not wonder that he should be worshipped, he was accustomed to that, it was the frankness of the worship that was new. Other girls who were attracted by him, veiled their feelings with a thousand little artifices and affectations, but Emma Harrison never attempted anything of the kind. He had supposed, since these concealments really concealed nothing from his clear-sightedness, that they made no difference, and he took them merely as an expression of the passion which they pretended to hide. But when this girl's adoration came to him, simple, and sweet, and undisguised, it left no room for his amused, half-scornful divination, but touched him to something of smiling pity.

It could not, however, rob him of his ease and fluency. He expressed his pleasure at their meeting, and explained lightly that he had not answered her letter because he did not believe in letter-writing. A letter was a cold thing, and meant nothing. She acquiesced, fancying that he could not possibly know how much the merest scrap of his handwriting would have been to her. But she did not for a moment doubt that what he said was right. How, indeed, could she think of letters on this day of days, when he was there before her?

It seemed to her that all was fated to go well with her during his stay. She was unreasonably sure that no one would come, and that nothing would interfere to spoil the perfect hours. For it was not merely a call—he would stay to lunch, and

she trembled with happiness at the thought that she would have him all to herself. Never was there so delightful a meal as that. Even the most frivolous woman loves to play at housekeeping with her lover; the home is her domain, she is queen there, and yet, by virtue of her queenship, she has the right to make herself his serving-maid.

To the day of her death the girl could always call up a picture in that room. She saw Mr. Langley, leaning forward a little as he spoke to her across the table, his dark eyes shining. Through the square grey window came the cold November light. It fell on the white cloth, brightening it here and there with the pale glitter of the silver laid out; it touched the little bouquet of autumnal leaves and berries; it shone on the glass, half-filled with topaz-coloured wine, which he was about to lift to his lips, and on his slim white fingers—she remembered the brightness of a ring on one holding the slender crystal stem. He was a phantom guest, on whom her dreaming gaze was fixed at many a later meal.

But for the time being he was before her in flesh and blood, and she was happy in his presence—happy in every mouthful that he took. To Mr. Langley it was simply his luncheon; but, had he seen fit, he could have talked easily enough of the poetic symbolism of food shared, and of the sacred bonds between the giver and receiver of hospitality. The ignorant girl who faced him knew little of such things, and yet, in her simple fashion, she felt the poetry she could not speak, and he seemed nearer to her because they ate and drank together. To carve for him, to give him the best, to press him to help himself to sherry—was ever such delight since life began?

Then, when lunch was over, it was but a change of happiness, for they went out into the garden, and strolled idly to and fro by the flowerless borders. Above their heads a network of bare black boughs was etched on the pale sky. At their feet the dry leaves, little drifted heaps in faded tints of yellow and brown, rustled as they walked, sending up a faint autumnal odour. As a man who has lived long in a forest may remember it in after-years by a single tree, so did Emma think always of the garden under that one aspect. She had known it before, she would know it again, full of the little music of singing-birds, full of buds and flowers, and green leaves

quivering in the sunlight, but no June breeze had ever been as sweet to her as this damp leaf-scented air, and it seemed as if not the garden only, but the whole world, were bursting into blossom around her while Mr. Langley loitered by her side and talked of love.

He was talking with no purpose of any kind. It was easy to him, and it pleased her; it made her eyes shine and her glances come and go, and touched the poor little sallow cheeks with colour. He meant no harm. Very likely he would never see her again; certainly he never intended to seek her, but was that any reason why she should not enjoy that one afternoon? If you may not drain the cup, need you therefore deny yourself a sip? Mr. Langley, for his own part, had never thought so. He did not suppose that the girl at his side, poor, shy, and plain, without a gift or grace, was destined to be passionately loved. He smiled to himself at the absurdity of the idea; but why should he not give her one golden glimpse of paradise—one drop from the enchanted cup? Is not the sip of perfect sweetness really better than the full draught which reaches the bitter dregs? And he was thus far right that she would have taken what he gave, even with a certain knowledge of the unsatisfied longing which must follow it.

Mr. Langley could read her heart like an open book. Poor little Miss Harrison, dreaming of love! "The desire of the moth for the star" came into his head as he looked down at her. Poor little brown moth, striving with weak wings towards the flame that lights love's elect to strange pre-eminence of joy and sorrow! The desire was laughable, and yet touching in its utter hopelessness. He was silent for a minute. "Poor little moth!" he was thinking. "Well, it won't hurt you very much. You will struggle a little, and then you will be tired and give it up. You would like to die in the flame, but you can't reach it. You will have to stay here and grow older and plainer, and be dull and safe to the end of your days." The pathos of such prosaic half-starved lives, seen dimly in the ring of shadow beyond the glowing sphere of love, struck him so forcibly that he walked on, watching the dead leaves as they flickered down, and for the moment he forgot his companion altogether.

A question in her timid voice recalled him to himself.

"No, I'm not going to leave Ireland at

present," he replied. "I suppose I shall be in London in the spring."

"We are always here all the spring-time," said the girl.

They paused by the little gate masked by a clump of laurels, which led into the churchyard, the gate through which Emma and her father went on Sundays. Mr. Langley looked over the low undulations which marked the graves, and it seemed to him that it would be almost as well to be lying there asleep under a coverlet of green grass as to be buried alive in that dull house and garden. "Always here in the spring-time!" He thought of the difference between his life and hers, when spring should come again. For her the alternations in colours in the wide heavens, the shortening and lengthening of shadows over the great fields, the little daily round of household tasks. For him the onward stream of life, with its endless variety and unchanging change, fashions, crowds, meetings, partings, laughter, talk, music, theatres, pictures—a world of ambition, and haste, and restless glitter, under the low arch of a murky London sky.

Emma's eyes followed his, and wandered over the green hillocks and scattered headstones.

"My mother is buried there," she said, "and my two little sisters. They were older than I am; it seems strange to think they are ever so much younger now."

"Well, you are not very old," replied Mr. Langley with a smile.

Her hand was busy with the fastening of the gate. "I often go in," she said; "will you walk round there once?"

There was something of pleading in her tone. Perhaps she wished all her little world of life and death to be for ever associated with him, and felt that the graveyard would be less dreary if he had trodden it.

He heard the entreaty, but he drew back. "No, no," he exclaimed; "the garden is better."

She acquiesced instantly, vexed with herself for having proposed anything that could displease him, and turned hurriedly away from the little gate.

"How the days shorten," he said as they passed the laurels.

She looked up with a timid glance. "Shall we go in?" she asked.

It cost her something to make the suggestion, for every change compelled her to mark the too-swift passing of the precious hours. But when they went indoors there was yet a

happy time reserved for her in the rectory drawing-room. Outside the black boughs and the cold green lawn grew indistinct in the twilight; but, within, the glowing radiance lighted their faces as they sat by the fireside. She made his tea, and poured it out for him. It was like the luncheon, only with even more of the personal service which was so sweet to her. She fancied that these moments, with the shadow of the inevitable parting drawing ever nearer and nearer, were the dearest and best of all; his voice had tones in it which thrilled through her, his words were gentler, his eyes, full of unknown meaning, met hers and lingered. The present pleasure and the coming anguish rose in her heart in a wave of passionate feeling, sweet beyond all sweetness, and salt as burning tears. It broke at last in an utterance which was almost a sob, and the same low cry which had been wrung from her by the pain of their earlier parting: "Oh, what is the use? We shall never meet again!"

It was the same, but more intense, and there was an appeal to him for help in the despairing words. Mr. Langley consoled her skilfully enough (he had had practice in such consolation), he promised her that they should meet—yes, that very winter—before he went away; he held her hands in his soft white hands, and as he took leave of her he drew her towards him and kissed her. She did not resist, and every thought, dream, and memory of her whole life faded and paled beside that moment when her lips met his.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER IX.

"ENGAGED to her? You! George, I don't believe it."

"And yet it is quite true, my dear aunt. Should I be likely to say it otherwise?"

"But when?"

"Less than a week ago, and I heartily wish you had known it at the time. Why I tell you now, when you are in so much trouble about your own affairs, is simply on account of the very erroneous impression you are under respecting her, an impression which is quite as offensive to me as it is cruel and unjust to that poor child, and which is making you treat her as an enemy, and shut her from your

confidence, just when you most need her love and sympathy."

It was breakfast time, and a very comfortable breakfast had been laid for Mrs. Pentreath and her nephew in a private sitting-room at Almond's Hotel; but though the vicar brought a little table to his aunt's side, and heaped it up with all the choicest portions he could select, to tempt her appetite, pouring out her coffee, and adding cream and sugar with all that anxious, tender awkwardness which in a strong manly man has something so lovable in it, Mrs. Pentreath only smiled sadly in recognition of what he was doing, and then leant back in the large armchair where she was sitting, and covered her eyes with her hand, to hide the slow painful tears which would steal from under the closed lids, do what she would to restrain them.

The last two days of suspense and anguish seemed to have aged her all of a sudden, and to have turned her into an old woman, robbing hair and eyes of the brightness they had always hitherto retained, and bending the stately head and shoulders with a weight heavier than a dozen years could have laid upon them.

It pained the vicar inexpressibly to see how shaken and feeble she looked. He had not expected to see her so utterly crushed by the conclusion of the inquest, a conclusion for which he himself had not been unprepared, and which, as he reminded her, need not necessarily affect that of the magisterial enquiry; and fearing that she was going to be taken seriously ill, he entreated her to return home before the latter began, and let him bring or telegraph her the result as soon as it was decided; or, if she would not do that, to allow him to send for Hetty to be with her. Mrs. Pentreath, however, repudiated the latter proposal quite as indignantly as the first, and with an amount of scorn at the mention of the girl's name, which provoked the vicar to anger on his side, and made him betray the secret which only his promise to Hetty had induced him to keep so long.

Yesterday he himself had been feeling puzzled and irritated with regard to his betrothed, and Mowcher's information, embellished with all a lady's-maid's normal inaccuracy, had coincided too unpleasantly with the testimony of his own eyes and ears not to make him sufficiently uneasy and suspicious to be desirous of a

very speedy explanation and clearing up of the matters in question.

This satisfaction, however, the exigencies of Ernest's situation had as yet denied him; and he had been obliged to return to town with his aunt, haunted all the way up by the vision of a pure, child-like face, too shocked and sorrowful in its innocent dismay to make the insinuations levelled against it seem anything but grossly unjust and absurd even to a jealous man's promptings; and filling him with a longing to go back then and there that he might take the poor forlorn little figure to his heart, and try by the tenderest caresses, the heartiest assurances of his own faith and confidence, to bring back the colour to those white cheeks, the light to those wistful despairing eyes.

It was a vision which came back to him again and again through the long watches of the night, knocking at his window with every gust of wind that rattled at the sashes and wailed along the deserted street, weeping and sobbing in the rain which pattered against the panes with dreary persistency all the livelong night, stretching out soft appealing hands to him in every one of the brief snatches of slumber which, at long intervals, relieved the wakeful hours.

Try as he might to think of the more momentous issues in hand, it was Hetty, Hetty only, Hetty always, who filled his mind, and but for his sincere affection for his widowed aunt, and the absolute duty that he felt it to attend to her, and her only, at the present time, nothing would have prevented him from going down to Kew by the earliest available train in the morning. As it was, he felt it impossible to listen to a repetition of those strictures against the absent girl which had seemed so unendurable when uttered in her presence, and his indignation took the form of an abrupt announcement of his engagement to her.

Rather to his surprise the very shock of the news seemed to do Mrs. Pentreath good. For the first time that morning she sat upright, and a faint tinge of colour came into her wan face.

"I can't take it in," she said, putting her hand rather hazily to her forehead. "Hetty engaged to you! But I thought you didn't care for her?"

"Then you must have been very blind, Aunt Julia, since I began to care for her when she was a mere child and have done so ever since."

"Well, so I once thought, but of late—ever since Ernest came, in fact—you seemed to change. You hardly ever came to the house; and she and Ernest were always together. I thought——"

"Yes, I know," said the vicar impatiently, "and so did I. I saw he admired her; and I thought I had no chance against a fellow who was younger, better looking, and better calculated to please most girls' fancies; so I acted like a jealous fool, kept out of the way, and made myself so disagreeable that the wonder is she didn't take a thorough dislike to me."

"But, George, why didn't you tell me?"

"Well, first, because I didn't believe I had any hope; and then, because after I had found out my mistake, and that the dear little girl did care for me after all, she wouldn't let me speak. No, don't blame her. It was natural enough, though it seems horridly cruel to say so to you now; but the scorn with which you had treated her, and the way in which her girlish kindness and friendship for your son had been misconstrued, wounded her more than you perhaps realise, and had taught her to distrust both your justice and affection where she was concerned. She had grown afraid of you, in fact, and I was foolish enough to give in to her fear, and to agree to our engagement being a secret for a few days. I am sorry for it now."

"And I am sorry, too. Why, George, it used to be my great desire that this should be so. Nothing would more have pleased me; but, are you sure, even now?"

"Sure of what?"

"That she does care for you? I should be only too thankful to believe it; but if so, why should she scheme to get walks in secret with my boy, and pretend to have been at church?"

"It was not a pretence. I saw her at church, and spoke to her after the service. Indeed I wanted to walk home with her myself, only she wouldn't let me."

"And then she met Ernest by arrangement, and walked with him! George, I don't want to hurt you; but after what Mowcher told us, and even Hickson's remark as to the state of agitation they were both in when they returned, does it not look bad?"

"No, it does not." The vicar spoke with rather angry doggedness. "Why should you assume they met by arrangement or

design, on her part at any rate; or take it for granted that, because some scraps of conversation were repeated to you, they must be correct in substance and form? Servants! Do you think I would listen to the vulgar tittle-tattle of a lady's-maid against my future wife, if you would against your son? But there, aunt," checking himself suddenly, as he saw the widow start and flinch nervously, "I didn't mean to reproach you, and you must forgive me if I seemed to do so, only, you see, I love that little girl. I helped to form her mind. I've watched her grow up from child to woman, and knowing how pure and true and tender every instinct of her nature has always proved itself to be in the past, I cannot hear her condemned without appeal, and on the mere authority of the servants'-hall, for a piece of vulgar, undignified deception of which no girl with common maidenly honesty would be guilty. I grant you the thing seems mysterious, and I myself don't yet see the explanation of it; but there is only one person whom I will ask for that explanation, and that is Hetty herself, and whatever she tells me I will believe."

Mrs. Pentreath looked up at him wonderingly. In her heart I think she was feeling rather ashamed of herself, and certainly she had never respected her nephew more than when he stood over her and lectured her thus sharply on her duty to her old sweetheart's daughter. In memory she seemed to see poor Jack Mavors on his death-bed, with his bright, hollow eyes fixed imploringly on her as he commended his little daughter to her motherly care, and the tears rose thickly in her own as she said, turning her head away:

"Well, well, don't scold me, George; I may have been wrong, and it is your affair more than mine at present; but even you say it is mysterious, and there are so many mysteries just now! Oh, my dear, I am a selfish woman, but I can't think of more than one thing at present, or let you do so either. You may think Ernest to blame in this. Perhaps he is; but he is your cousin, he has no father or brother, no one but his poor mother to stand by him; and oh, George, while it is a question of life or death, or, worse than death, life-long disgrace and punishment for him, don't—pray don't, let us waste our time on other matters."

She was weeping unrestrainedly now, and George Hamilton was fain to do his

best to soothe and comfort her, hating himself all the while for his own clumsiness in the task, and wishing more than ever for Hetty, who would have done it so much better.

Breakfast at the hotel had been very early that morning, as the magistrate's enquiry was to open at ten; and Mrs. Pentreath was determined, even if not required as a witness, to be present at it; but when Mr. Lorton arrived to escort her and the vicar to the Marylebone Police Court, it was found quite impossible for her to go. Mowcher brought her bonnet and cloak indeed, and dressed her in them; but directly she attempted to stand on her feet she was seized with trembling and faintness; and after some delay it had to be decided, on the doctor's authority, that she was unfit for the effort and must stay behind.

The vicar was glad afterwards that it had been so settled; for although it seemed cruel to leave her at the hotel under no better care than a chambermaid's (for Mowcher as well as Hickson had been called as witnesses by the other side), he felt before long that to have been present at the hearing of the case would have been terribly trying to her.

For it went against the prisoner in a way for which even the finding of the coroner's inquest had not prepared him. Mr. Lorton, indeed, had rather pooh-poohed that, speaking of the jury as a set of ignorant, fat-brained little shopkeepers, who knew nothing of law, and whose decision would more probably be overruled than confirmed by that of an intelligent magistrate, a man likely to have some acquaintance with military honour and social life in the upper classes; while Ernest himself had so completely upheld a similar view, and carried himself with such careless defiance during the brief interview he was allowed to hold with his family after the inquest was over, that both his mother and Mr. Hamilton felt their own misgivings rebuked by the sight of his cheerfulness and confidence.

But all this was quite altered to-day; and as, moment by moment, the case against Captain Pentreath grew darker and more convincing, George Hamilton's heart sank lower and lower, and even the prisoner himself lost the air of proud, well-bred composure which hitherto he had so successfully maintained, and leant forward in the dock with haggard face and feverish eyes, and restless gnawing at the heavy moustache

which covered his trembling lips, as one witness after another appeared in corroboration of the charge against him, while on his own side there was little to bring forward but his own testimony and that of the doctor; and on this latter, which went to show that there was nothing in the direction of the wounds or the place in which the pistol was found to contradict the theory for the defence that the former were self-inflicted, Mr. Lorton laid so much stress as to show he felt the weakness of the other parts of his case.

This was all he could do, however; and unless accepted as confirmatory of the prisoner's evidence, it rather told against him in the minds of the public. For although the doctor was willing to admit so much, he would not say that it was in any way impossible for the shot which killed Major Hollis to have been fired by someone else, only, that in the latter case the person in question must have either fired from a sitting position, or holding the pistol intentionally low in order to enable the bullet to take effect in an upward direction as it had done; and this was immediately taken advantage of by the other side to show the unfairness with which the duel had been conducted, and by which Major Hollis had been taken at a disadvantage and killed before he had had time to fire, if, indeed, he intended doing so in his own defence.

And of witnesses to Captain Pentreath's own story there were positively none. The cabman, indeed, who drove Major Hollis from the club had been found, and had been identified by the servant-girl as "the man" who had been disputing with her mistress's lodger on the doorstep; thus disposing of the supposition that the individual in question was Captain Pentreath; but the ticket-collector at Kew Gardens station, who was called upon to bear witness to having taken the young officer's ticket on the evening of the fatal occurrence, failed both in examination and cross-examination to identify him with any degree of certainty, and when pressed would only remember noticing a "tall, military-looking gent in a light coat, something like the prisoner," and declined altogether to swear that the latter was the same person. Two other points in Captain Pentreath's statement were, it is true, corroborated, one by Hickson as to the iron-gates being open at the time at which Ernest declared he had found them so; and the other by the ticket-clerk at Kew,

as to a large number of persons who had been at some public entertainment in the place, having left by the ten forty-four train at the same time as he did. But both these points, which seemed so conclusive to the prisoner's own family and friends, were made very little of at the enquiry, where it was shown that the entertainment in question (a Shakesperian reading for a charity) had been advertised in Kew for ten days beforehand, with the hours at which it would begin and finish; and as the train named was the next after the conclusion of the affair, it was easy for Captain Pentreath, who must have seen the advertisement a score of times, to guess that a large number of the audience who lived at a little distance down the line would be pretty sure to leave by that train and no other; while even Hickson was forced, under pressure, to admit that the whist party which had taken Mrs. Pentreath out was a regular weekly institution, and as the gates were always kept open between the time of her leaving the house and returning to it, it did not need her son to be a conjuror to tell almost to a minute the exact time at which they would be found in either condition. As Hickson nearly wept while this evidence was being dragged out of him it was made all the more telling, and as it had become evident some time before that the case was one which must inevitably go before a jury, not even the vicar, and still less Mr. Lorton, was surprised when the latter's appeal for a remand was refused by the presiding magistrate on the ground that there was not sufficient cause for one.

By five o'clock that afternoon Ernest Pentreath had been formally committed to Newgate to await his trial at the next sitting of the Central Criminal Court, and his lawyer was saying to George Hamilton:

"My dear sir, I never expected anything else for a single moment, and now, as there are only three weeks to the next sessions, and Captain Pentreath's one chance of escape is an alibi strong enough to upset all this overwhelming weight of evidence against him, what we have got to do is to hunt up everything in the shape of a witness for it that we can find between now and then; and, by Jove! it's a task that we must spare neither time, trouble, nor expense over."

It was a sad journey back to Kew on the following day. Mrs. Pentreath, indeed, had borne the blow better than could have

been expected. Emotion had worn itself out in the excitement and suspense of the last few days, and when the final stroke came she received it with a sorrowful, pathetic dignity that surprised everybody.

"I know that my son is innocent," she said, "and I believe that sooner or later his innocence will be shown to the world; but I knew, too, that his enemies would do their best to make him out guilty. I felt from the beginning that we had no chance against them; but it was not that which crushed me then; it was the doubt which even I, his mother, felt as to whether he might not have been tempted to call out and shoot the man who had so foully insulted him. If it had been so it would have killed me, but now that I have his own word to the contrary, I can afford to wait a few weeks for those who do not know him as I do to be convinced of the same. It is impossible that during that time some one among the many who must have seen and passed him on the way between Kew and Albion Street should not come forward to testify to it."

But, with all this courage and resignation on the mother's part, and with all the cheering predictions with which George Hamilton strove, even against his own convictions, to sustain and strengthen her, the journey home was a very sad one, and as they drove in at the big gates, and came in sight of the house, every window of which seemed flashing with some memory of Captain Pentreath's handsome face and figure, his mother turned so pale that the vicar feared she was going to faint then and there, and wished more than ever that he could see her safely in bed and under Hetty's loving care and tendance.

Some reflection of the latter thought must have crossed his aunt's mind, for she turned her sad eyes on him with a look meant to be kind as she said:

"Hetty will be looking out for us, I dare say. Does she know, George? I—I almost wished I had had her with me yesterday."

The vicar took her hand in his and pressed it gratefully, but there was no time for him to answer. They were just driving up to the door, and two of the maids had got it open, and were standing at it before Hickson had even had time to descend from the box and ring.

Mr. Hamilton sprang out, casting a keen glance round for his betrothed. More keenly than Mrs. Pentreath he realised in what manner she had been left; but he had

telegraphed the sorrowful ending to the enquiry the evening before, addressing the telegram to her, and in his heart he felt sure that now in the hour of her guardian's humiliation neither pride, timidity, nor wounded feeling would keep the girl from her side.

It gave him a sharp pang, therefore, to see no sign of her sweet, sympathetic face, and ere he turned back to help his aunt from the carriage, he asked sharply :

"Where is Miss Mavors? Does she know we have come back?"

There was a moment's hesitation; and the maid addressed turned pale and looked with rather a frightened glance from the vicar to her mistress, who was standing just within the hall with head bent wearily, and one hand resting on her nephew's arm, while poor Hickson (whose demeanour ever since his unlucky evidence had been that of a self-condemned Iscariot) lifted almost reverentially from her shoulders the heavy furred cloak she had worn in the carriage. Outside there was a pale blue sky, crossed with drifting masses of purplish-grey clouds, and a high cold wind sweeping the dead leaves into heaps, drying the sopped gravel, and shaking showers of glittering drops from the ivy over the porch. It seemed a relief to the girl when Mr. Hamilton repeated the question, adding, as a new fear struck him :

"She—she is not ill, is she?"

"Ill? Oh no, sir," said the housemaid quickly. "Not that I've heard, at least; but I thought the mistress would know—Miss Mavors isn't here, sir."

"Not here!"

Even Mrs. Pentreath looked up, roused from her own absorbing thoughts by the unexpected words.

"No, ma'am, not since yesterday morning. We fancied that perhaps she had gone to you—that you expected her."

"To me! No, certainly not. I thought she was here. I—George, what can it mean?" Mrs. Pentreath asked, turning her startled eyes on him. For an instant there was a look in his which almost frightened her, but it was gone even before he answered :

"What does this woman mean? Speak out, please, and tell your mistress plainly. When did Miss Mavors leave?"

"Quite early yesterday morning, sir. Leastways, she didn't answer when she was called, and when Hannah went in

after a while, to see if she'd like her breakfast in bed, the room was empty."

"And did she leave no message? Did none of you see her go out?"

"No, sir; it must have been before we were up, or when no one was about, and she didn't say a word to anyone."

"But, Thomson." This new shock had shaken Mrs. Pentreath afresh, and she sat down trembling and very pale. "Why did you not send to us, or let me know?"

"Well, ma'am, Hickson had started to attend the—the court afore we went into Miss Hetty's room, and afterwards we all made sure she'd gone to you. That was what puzzled me, ma'am, the not seeing her get out of the carriage."

"And you don't know—you have no idea where else she can have gone?"

"Indeed no, ma'am. Why, the last thing I should ha' thought of was her being able to go anywhere, so ill as she looked the night before. Not a bite or sup had she tasted since you left her, ma'am, and fainted dead away as soon as ever she saw Hickson come in with the first news."

"Fainted?"

"Yes, sir; but not for more than a minute or two, and though when she come to she sat up at once, and said she didn't want a doctor or anything, but to go to bed, she looked quite white and dazed-like still, and in the morning, as I said, she was gone. She hadn't been to bed at all, either, for the pillow wasn't even rumped, and the sheets was turned down just as Hannah left them."

For a minute there was silence, while Mrs. Pentreath and the vicar looked at each other, a great dread in both hearts, in hers a little remorse as well. Was it she in truth who had driven the girl from her home? or was it— She stretched out her hands to her nephew with an almost imploring gesture.

"Oh, George—" she was beginning, when Mowcher's voice, prim and cold as usual, interrupted her :

"If you please, ma'am, here is a note which I've just found in your room. I think it is from Miss Mavors, ma'am."

Mowcher was right, it was from Hetty, a mere scrap of paper, scribbled over in pencil, and much blurred with tears, which must have rained down fast on it in the writing; but when Mrs. Pentreath handed it to the vicar, there were one or two fresh drops on it as well, and she seemed afraid to raise her eyes to his.

"I am going away," it said, "because

after what you said to me to-day I am sure you cannot want to see me, or have me near you any more. And I could not stay—I could not stay with anyone who thought me as bad as you do; for indeed—indeed, I have always tried to be good, and do what I thought would please you. I would dearly like to help you now; but you have made it impossible, and I cannot even tell you how. Thank you for all your past kindness, and please thank Mr. Hamilton too, and bid him good-bye for me. Of course all he wanted me to do is at an end now. I quite understand that, and there is no need for anyone to trouble about me. I am going to my mother's people. They are quite poor and common; but they are very good, and I feel sure they will take care of me till I can find something to do to earn my own living."

The vicar did not say anything for a minute. He had turned aside to read the letter, and stood with his head bent over it so long, that Mrs. Pentreath grew anxious and spoke to him, saying in a faltering voice that it was not her fault. She had never meant to be harsh or unjust, or to drive the child away. Surely George could not think she did! The vicar did not answer her. Instead he asked:

"Who are these relations, and where do they live?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I wish I did; but the fact is I never encouraged her to speak of them. They are quite common people, I know. Poor Jack's marriage was a terrible *mésalliance*, and the one comfort in it was that the wife died before she could drag him down to her level."

"But don't you even know their name? Surely you must have heard it!"

"Indeed I have not. There was an aunt who afterwards went out to India, and— Stay! she had a letter from a Mrs. White, a cousin, she said; and who wrote from somewhere in Brixton wanting a visit from her some months ago. She did not go. I thought it would be unkind to her to permit her to associate with mere tradespeople, which they were; and, indeed, George, I——"

The vicar did not seem to hear. He interrupted her very quietly:

"Do you know whereabouts in Brixton this person's address was?"

"No—Yes! Hetty read it out to me; and I remember thinking it was just the sort of place that kind of person would live in. Paradise Row, or Parade, or something of that sort. I don't think the child really cared about going; and, besides, it was impossible. I couldn't have spared Mowcher to take her there and bring her back; and she certainly couldn't have gone by herself. She was much too young and pretty to be let go about in the London streets alone; and, as you know, I have never allowed her to do so."

"Ah!"

The word escaped the vicar's lips involuntarily; but it silenced Mrs. Pentreath as suddenly as though she had heard in it an echo of the thought that gave it utterance. "What if the girl were alone in those streets now!"

His next question seemed a sequel to it.

"Do you know if she had any money?"

"Very little, I fear. Her next quarter's allowance is due only a fortnight hence; and girls are never very provident."

The vicar took up his hat.

"Good-bye," he said quietly. "I am going to find her."

"But not this instant; not without saying you don't think I am to blame for this! George, my dear, be generous. I know how bitter it must be to you if you loved her; but believe me, it is quite as much so to me, who now, in the very moment of being bereaved of my only son, find myself deserted by the child to whom I have been as a mother for the last five years. If you turn against me too, and reproach me——"

"My dear aunt," said the vicar gravely, "if I were to do either at such a time as this, I should be a brute, and worse. All I had to say about this unhappy mistake of yours, I said at the hotel yesterday, and I am not going to repeat it either now or at any other time. But I must go now. Hetty is my affianced wife; and my first duty at present is to find her, and make sure that she is safe and under proper protection. I will come back to you afterwards."

And then he went away. He was sorry for his aunt. He had spoken kindly to her; but—he was only a man, after all, and he could not forget that look in his little love's face when he left her with the woman who had so insulted her.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XVII. A FIRST LESSON.

"Now for Madame Voglio!"

Jenifer said this in quite a hopeful, exultant tone the next morning after breakfast — after a breakfast at which her mother had declared the eggs to be fresher, the loaf lighter, and the butter and milk sweeter than she could ever have supposed would have been procurable in the London market.

"Now for Madame Voglio!"

She said the words quite encouragingly to herself, and then all in a moment she felt dispirited.

"Mother, if she tells me I howl like a cat, and shall never be able to sing properly, what will you say when I come home to you?"

"Ah, Jenny dear, she'll never tell you that! you with that willow-wand figure of yours, and that face——"

"Mother, mother dearest, my figure and face have nothing to do with my voice, and perhaps my voice will have little to do with my singing," Jenifer said dolefully.

"Now, Jenny, that's ungrateful! Your poor dear father always said that you reminded him of Louisa Pyne, or Louisa Vining—or was it Madame Dolby?—more than anyone he ever heard."

Jenifer laughed and posed before the looking-glass for a moment, adjusting tulle about her throat, and trying to appear absorbed in the success of her own appearance. But, in reality, she was asking herself whether she had not, in very truth, been influenced in the decision she had come to about making singing her profession by unwise exaggerated amateurish

expressions of applause and criticism, such as those to which her mother had referred.

"At any rate I shall soon know the truth from Madame Voglio," she told herself, drawing a long breath, which was not one of relief.

As she went out alone in London for the first time, as she took the first steps forward on that bread-winning path which she had resolved to pursue, the country-bred girl felt very desolate. There had never been anything approaching to solitude for her for many miles round about Moor Royal. Every turn in every road, every hedge, and tree, and gate-post, every primrose bank and ferny hollow, had been familiar to her; and, with or without human companionship, in those well-known haunts she had never felt alone. But here, surrounded by houses on every side, stretching away into apparently interminable vistas of streets, knowing that each house contained her fellow-creatures, none of whom she knew, none of whom knew her, that deadly feeling of loneliness in a crowd, which hurts one into a full sense of one's own insignificance, fell upon her and nearly crushed out hope.

She had not gone out alone without suffering a little opposition from her mother. Refreshed by the blameless breakfast, and by the undeniably superior air of the lodgings and furniture, Mrs. Ray had proposed herself as Jenifer's companion in her first visit to the formidable singing-mistress. But Jenifer had sagaciously tempered her mother's valour with her own discretion. If a deadly disappointing blow were to be dealt to her, she would prefer receiving it unwitnessed by any other than the one who dealt it. But she would not give this, her real reason, to Mrs. Ray for fear of dispiriting her.

"I would rather go alone to Madame

Voglio, and get you to go into Kensington Gardens with me by-and-by, mother; it's genuine business that takes me out this morning, and a lady can go anywhere alone when the object is 'business.'

"I don't think your dear father would have liked it," Mrs. Ray said reflectively. "When we used to come to London for a change, he never let me walk a yard in the streets by myself. He always said it didn't look well."

"No one will look at me," Jenifer said; and then veracity prompted her to add: "And if anyone does I needn't be ashamed to be looked at."

"You're too pretty for it—much, much too pretty," Mrs. Ray thought, and the thought shone in her eyes. Still, she let the prospect of Kensington Gardens in the afternoon weigh against her traditional sense of what was right, and so it came to pass that Jenifer carried her point, and got off alone.

The girl was quite unconscious of being watched by a pair of anxious eyes, as she went down the steps and turned down the road in the direction which would lead her to Madame Voglio's. These eyes took in every detail of Jenifer's face, figure, and dress, as the girl stepped out freely with her head held high, and no sign of doubtfulness about her, and the owner of the eyes felt a pang.

"If he had hinted to me what she was like, I'd have seen my home broken up—I'd have starved, rather than I'd have had them here to see it grow under my eyes."

Mrs. Hatton uttered these words aloud, and stamped her foot and clenched her hands as she spoke. The stamping and clenching were not uncontrollable actions by any means, but this lady loved a little bit of acting even to herself. On this occasion though, her audience was larger than she knew of, for, her back being towards the door, Ann had entered unperceived.

"What are you conjuring up now, ma'am?" the woman asked reproachfully but very gently, almost as one might speak to a wilful child who was doing something detrimental to itself.

"Oh," Mrs. Hatton answered, laughing a light, sustained, untrite laugh, "I was only conjuring, as you call it, up a vision of the love-making that will go on here, and the marriage that will take place from here by-and-by."

"And why not, ma'am? You've had

enough of love-making, I should think," Ann replied, still in that tone of forbearing gentle reproach.

"And enough of marriage too, you might add, Ann," Mrs. Hatton answered, sighing with a mournfulness that would have been profoundly touching, if there had not been about it just the same faint suggestion of its being a bit of stage business, like the stamping and clenching.

"And of marriage too, poor dear," Ann replied tenderly and respectfully. There was no doubt as to the sigh she heaved, that was genuine enough, and it had the effect of making her mistress natural for a few moments.

"Poor good old Ann!" she said warmly. "I often think you're more really and truly sorry for me than I am for myself."

"I've grieved enough for the past, ma'am; it's no use either for you to bitter yourself, or for me to try and bitter you any more about that; but you might be happy enough, and at peace now, if you'd only let yourself be—if you wasn't so restless, so craving always for something you haven't got."

"My good Ann, I believe you think that if people have enough to eat and drink, and good clothes to wear, and a good house to cover them, they are possessed of all the materials for happiness."

"I should say so, ma'am, specially of one who's been so near to losing all these good things you talk of as you've been."

"Through the wickedness of others," Mrs. Hatton said quickly.

"Through the wickedness of others; but if some have been very bad to you, ma'am, there's others that have been very good."

"You mean Mr. Boldero? Yes, he has been good, he always will be good to me, and I venerate, and esteem, and love him for it."

"Do all that as much as you like, but don't go conjuring up things," Ann said stoutly. Then she went about her work, and Mrs. Hatton changed her pretty, brightly-embroidered dressing-gown for something more sombre in which to visit her new lodger, Mrs. Ray.

She spent an hour so profitably with Mrs. Ray, that at the expiration of it that lady was quite ready to take the interesting mistress of the house at her own valuation. Yet this end had been attained without Mrs. Hatton having committed herself to the making of any one distinct or clearly defined statement about herself.

Nevertheless, she had contrived to imbue Mrs. Ray with a deep sense of compassion for the many undeserved sufferings and reverses which she had experienced, and with a warm feeling of admiration for the gallant, long-suffering, womanly heroism with which she had endured them. And in return Mrs. Ray had told every fact concerning herself and her family—the Moor Royal property, the way her sons had married, and Mr. Boldero's extraordinarily vacillating conduct about Jenifer—which she could call to mind.

Mrs. Hatton made no comment on this last subject; she only said:

"Mr. Boldero is one of the best, perhaps the best and noblest character I've ever met with."

"My poor dear husband, who had great insight into character, always said the same," Mrs. Ray responded warmly.

"Perhaps without presumption I may say that I know him better, more thoroughly, than any other human being," Mrs. Hatton said with that audacious meekness which disarms suspicion or resentment.

"Indeed!" Mrs. Ray exclaimed with warm, kindly interest.

"Yes, indeed," Mrs. Hatton went on with pious fervour, and such a glow of generous truthfulness about her, that clearer eyes than Mrs. Ray's might have failed to discern either the art or the nature of the woman; "yes, indeed. We were old neighbours when I was a child, and the first act of his that I heard of impressed my childish mind with a deep sense of his superiority to other men. I was a curious little child, singularly shy and reticent, but full of enthusiasm and deep feeling."

Mrs. Hatton paused for a moment to mark the effect of this word-portrait of herself on her hearer. Observing that Mrs. Ray was listening with amazed delight, the little lady proceeded to make further efforts at being graphic and pictorial.

"Perhaps, seeing me now, you will hardly believe that I was one of those lovely children who are sure to command attention wherever they may be. I lived in an atmosphere of admiration, and quite revelled in it. Mr. Boldero was, I think, the only person who never told me in words how bewitching and beautiful I was."

"But I'm sure he expressed it in look and manner!" Mrs. Ray questioned

eagerly, for she began to feel jealous on her daughter's account.

"Oh, I don't say that. Mind, I don't say that for a moment," Mrs. Hatton cried with a little deprecating wave of her head and hands. "I am a very humble-minded, retiring little woman, and I never look for attention, or take any amount of expressed admiration or regard for granted. I am too proud; I have too much self-respect, humble-minded as I am, to do that; but still, from all I have told you, you can understand what a deep claim Mr. Boldero has on my regard. I feel that I can quite rely on your sympathy and— and delicacy of feeling."

Mrs. Ray, thus appealed to, gave ardent assurance of her understanding of and perfect sympathy with all the circumstances of Mrs. Hatton's deeply-interesting case; and as soon as she had done so, Mrs. Ray reflected that she knew nothing whatever of it. Still, this reflection in no wise shook her simple faith in the intrinsic worth, undeserved suffering, and generally much-to-be-applauded character and conduct of her new acquaintance.

Meanwhile, as Mrs. Hatton was improving the shining hour with the mother, the daughter was having a "first lesson."

Madame Voglio treated her professional pupils to more of the undress and easy side of her household modes than she was wont to display towards those who were, like Mrs. Jervoise, at the same time pupils and possible patronesses. Accordingly, this morning, when she heard that the girl from the country, who wanted to make her wood-notes wild heard on the London concert-boards, had come by appointment, the great singer graciously ordered the aspirant up at once, without regard to the circumstance of being in the midst of an oleaginous breakfast in a corresponding dressing-gown.

Jenifer's first sensations were of nausea and repulsion. She had been walking briskly through the fresh, sweet air for the last half-hour; she had been accustomed all her life to seeing women as fastidiously arranged in the early morning as at any other hour of the day; and now, at mid-day, this woman, who was notorious for wearing hundreds of pounds' worth of lace on her dresses every time she sang in public, and whose jewels had most of them a history, was lolling, with unkempt hair, in a palpably unbathed condition, in a smart, soiled dressing-gown, with loosely stockinged and slippers feet stuck out

before her, by the side of a demoralised breakfast-table.

Before Jenifer had time to condemn her, and turn to flee, Madame Voglio had risen, and with a grace that was due as much to good-heartedness as to training, had welcomed her new pupil, and swept away the first evil impression.

"I sang myself into little pieces yesterday, and I am not joined together again yet," she explained; "my work tears me to tatters—ah yes, as yours will soon; but you are young and so beautiful, the tatters will be pretty to look at. Now come, have a cutlet and a cup of my coffee? No? Ah, you don't know what you are refusing. My cutlets and my coffee are not to be lightly refused. You breakfasted hours ago, you say? ah, so did I; but that was yesterday. And to-day demands its breakfast; and see how I meet its demand. I supply myself with a cutlet that has formed a little friendship with a tomato, and has just bowed to a little chervil and a chive. Now, tell me, what have you learnt, and what have you come to me to unlearn?"

This last sentence was fired into Jenifer so abruptly and unexpectedly, that it startled her into boldness.

"When I have learnt something from you, I may be able to tell you what I have to unlearn."

Madame gave way to the indulgence of a hearty unrestrained laugh.

"Well said," she cried approvingly; "if your voice is as strong, and your ear as true, and your style as individual as your speech, you will do what you intend to do—you will succeed!"

Jenifer despised herself for it, but she could not help a smirk of self-gratulation passing over her face.

Madame Voglio saw the smirk and fathomed the cause of it in an instant, without at the same time perceiving the young woman's contempt for herself, or rather for her own momentary elation.

"Ah," madame cried, shaking a fat, white, well-shapen finger at her pupil, "do not think of success, do not even dream of it; keep it always before you that the 'best' have failed, and tell yourself that you are not one of them; put all your failures away behind you patiently, but don't think that you're nearer success for doing it. Why, even I," and she flung her arms wide-open, and then thumped her hands back vehemently on her breast, "even I have not always had success! Think of that, and prepare yourself."

STEELE'S WASTE-PAPER BASKET.

MOST editors, we imagine, find it easier work to fill their waste-paper baskets, than to fill their columns. It may not have been exactly so with the editor of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, still numbers of letters were delivered at Mr. Lillie's shop in Beaufort Buildings in the Strand, designed "in imitation of the great authors they were addressed to," to explode and correct sundry vices, follies, fashions, indecorums, and irregularities then reigning, which found their way to that bourse from which such things seldom return.

Having a shrewd eye to business, instead of destroying the contents of Steele's waste-paper basket, the perfumer carefully preserved them until both the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had run their course. Then he asked Sir Richard's permission to print the communications he had thrown aside as worthless; a permission readily accorded, on condition that he took care that no persons or family were offended, and that he published nothing contrary to religion or good manners. With that proviso, Lillie was welcome to do as he listed with the papers in his hands, and had their original proprietor's good wishes for the success of his venture.

Thus encouraged Lillie set to work arranging his spoil, and, in 1725, gave the reading public the result in a book entitled *Original and General Letters sent to the Tatler and Spectator*, providing "religion and morality for the upright and just, manners for the rude, a whip for the incorrigible, sobriety for the drunkard, temperance for the epicure, mirth for the laughers, dress and fashion for the gay, and just satire for the insipid and pretenders;" and, judging by the subscription-list, the enterprising perfumer had no reason to repent his intrusion into the field of literature.

In his prefatory remarks Lillie somewhat sorrowfully states that while but three or four of the three hundred epistles in his possession emanated from victims of the wiles of womankind, much too large a proportion of them came from innocent women who had suffered from the falsity of men. We would not impugn his arithmetic, but it must be remembered that he was dealing with only the residuum of Steele's correspondence; and possibly the majority of the complaining damsels had really no more personal experience of man's perfidy, than the insignificant creature who never

dressed, took snuff, or did anything that was fashionable, and averred she dared not marry the man of her heart for fear of thereby losing his love; the great neglect and coldness men displayed to their wives being so notorious, that if a man could but prevail upon himself to treat his wife with a little good manners after a month or two of wedlock, he was accounted a wonderful good husband, and she out of her wits who expected more. All young women, however, were not of this fearsome mind, for we find one waxing angry with wearers of Her Majesty's uniform for taking a lady's no for no, asserting

The lady showing but a modest scorn,
Their courtship's over, and their love is gone;

forgetting

A lady's gained not with that ease,
As they storm towns, and take them when they please.

Men of war who went a wooing might well look for an easy conquest if the girls of the period worshipped valour as ardently as the maiden who, recounting her experience in valentine-drawing, wrote: "I myself, at first putting my fingers into the hat, began to feel half-transported on a sudden, as if I had really felt fortune leading my hand where my heart wished it. As soon as I had pitched upon my lot, I unrolled it by degrees, and examined it by inches. Whilst I was thus feasting my eyes on my fortune, in comes an old uncle of mine, who, seeing me so delighted with a bit of paper, concluded it must be a bank-note, and could not possibly be persuaded that Prince Eugene, being drawn a valentine, would afford one so much joy and satisfaction."

According to Miss Isabella Thoughtful, the prevailing vice of England's Augustan age, was that of detraction. "We hang a thief for stealing a trifle," says she, "but those go unpunished that take from us our reputation, and sometimes our fortunes, for it is often seen that make-bates are the occasion of estates being given away, and so posterity suffers." Somebody else had stepped into the dead man's shoes for which Miss T.'s papa had waited, but we cannot so easily explain Porcia's onslaught on the Christian Hero, who must have been confounded to read: "You often suffer yourself to be imposed on by malicious sly insinuations from the worst of people, whose infamous art it is to sink all that have any advantage in merit to their own level; and you, by lending an easy credit and ready compliance to dispense their

poison, become an accessory to their guilt. If either religion, humanity, or justice have any weight with you, you will be tender for the future how you contribute to blast the reputation of any person."

Very gently is the sex handled in Lillie's book. One gentleman remarks that since the ladies have taken to tea-drinking, they cannot eat beef of a morning; another mildly suggests that to avoid confusion, a country gentlewoman should be called "Mistress;" a city matron, "Madam;" common serving-maids be content to be called plain Jane, Doll, or Sue; and better-born and higher-placed ones should be addressed as Mrs. Prim, Mrs. Patience, and so forth. But only one letter-writer is at all uncomplimentary, and all his complaint is that hoops have reached the red petticoats in the country, so that Kate and Jane are longer in getting over a stile than a fine lady is in getting out of her coach. A lover of animals, it is true, recognises the necessity of rating the ladies for their being as over-fond of lap-dogs, squirrels, and parrots, as the country squire was of the mare for which he put himself and man into mourning; but even he thinks it would be doing better service to call to account those of the rougher sex, who go to the contrary extremes in the treatment of creatures but one remove below them. "I look," he says, "upon hocking of cattle, as in Ireland, and cutting large pieces of flesh from them, and then turning them grazing, as in the Highlands of Scotland, to be arts as much denoting a man as much a tiger or a wolf, as is consistent with his being the external figure of a human creature." Had this Highland custom been generally known in England, Peter Pindar would not have penned the couplet:

Nor have I been where men—what loss, alas!
Kill half a cow, and turn the rest to grass!

A jest that might have cost the doctor dear, had traveller Bruce been of as bellicose a mind as the "hybernian gentleman" who challenged a correspondent of the Spectator for not including Ireland among lands "blessed with a climate."

Another hater of cruelty inveighs against bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting. He would fain see his countrymen take to worthier sports, and asks: "What think you, gentlemen, of ninepins—the harmless recreation of ninepins, or the noble and healthful game of cricket? In these plays you have as much exercise and diversion as in throwing at cocks; or,

if blood be your business, play at cudgels, and break each other's heads."

Some of Steele's correspondents would have had him play the part of marriage-broker; one sending all the way from York to say that if anyone wanted a tidy lass with more tongue than beauty, he was willing to dispose of his wife for the sum of half-a-crown; while a Mrs. H——t writes: "If you have any friend of ability, I have a young genteel widow, twenty-three years old, and hath one hundred, eighty, seventy, and twenty-five pounds per annum, and two coal mines that at least will bring in two thousand pounds, perhaps four, five, or six thousand pounds per annum, with the assistance of four or five thousand gradually, not all at once. She well-born and educated, without child, brother, and sister." Of these two investments, the bigamous one would probably have proved the best; but neither looks sufficiently tempting to have lured a member of the Mousetrap Club, in Fish Street Hill, into committing matrimony, and so having to pay a round sum of money to his brother members. Such a penalty might not have deterred a gentleman of whom his son says: "He thought matrimony so great a blessing, that he resolved, according to ancient custom, that his son's wedding should be celebrated with many fiddles, much eating, and abundance of mirth; for he hated the modern way of stealing into a church, and sneaking out of it, turning tail at the porch; which he had observed to be the great reason that most men and their wives went different ways all their lives afterward. The clock struck five before we threw the stocking."

A defender of the genuineness of Phalaris's Epistles cries out against the prevalent humour of setting wit and banter—or as the new word has it, bamboozle—in opposition to solid learning, as if the learned world were not as well worth a man's pains as the beau monde of St. James's coffee-houses, or White's Chocolate House. The inhospitable custom of exacting vails impels a sufferer to write: "When you go from a gentleman's house, you are forced to pay a long reckoning without the satisfaction of a bill; every servant puts himself in the rank to receive his due; the guest as it were running the gantlope, and is forced to pay every pretension, which they claim in proportion to the quality of their offices, which if you mistake, perhaps, you meet with an affront. There is no condition of these payments

being gratuitous, but that they give you no receipt for them." This tax must have been especially inconvenient to the "mashers" of the day, who found a feather in the hat, a ribbon on the sword, a well-jointed snuff-box, and an affected judgment in snuff, all that was necessary to recommend them to the acquaintance of the first quality.

These were the "men of muffs, red-heels, and ribbons," who thronged the theatre when Cibber took a benefit, while on Wilks's night the side-boxes were filled with tall, proper fellows, and stalwart officers. Booth was patronised by the bottle-companions, and the men of wit and gaiety; Mills drew together the sober husbands and sermon-hunters; Powell, the rakes and scorners; Bullock, Penkethman, Johnson, Lee, and Norris divided the suffrages of the wags and laughter-loving playgoers; and Pack, most favoured of actors, was sure of securing not only the merry singers and the busy-bodies, but "all the ladies."

That the present race of exponents of the dramatic art are not to be compared to those of the good old days, is past argument; that the stage has sadly degenerated is as established a fact as that Queen Anne is dead; and yet things were not quite perfect at Drury Lane when Her Majesty was alive, or how comes it that we have an indignant playgoer grumbling at the omission of whole scenes of Othello, and at the bedchamber of Desdemona being crowded with beaux in every part? "When the stifling pillow was uplifted and threatened death was in view, not one endeavoured to prevent it; from thence I thought, that since they could be so cruel, they had much better have kept behind the scenes, then nothing could have been expected from them," and those who came to see the play would have been saved the labour of trying to distinguish who were the spectators and performers on the stage. In one respect, certainly, our forefathers were no better off than ourselves, the opera-houses being wholly in the hands of foreigners, and the house in Drury Lane not being allowed to have any musical entertainment, so that English masters were excluded from all opportunities of proving their ability, and the public were compelled to listen to foreign music or none.

The greatest curiosity in Lillie's compilation, may be credited to Steele's own pen. A dispute arose respecting the meaning of Chaucer's lines:

If my wife were as little as she is good,
An inch of cloth would make her gown and hood.

The contention ended in a wager, the parties concerned agreeing to accept the Spectator's opinion as decisive, but it was specially desired that the decision should be given privately, not in the columns of that journal. This was the Spectator's judgment: "Upon the first reflection, one is apt to think this sentence is to the disadvantage of the wife, but upon further consideration it is quite otherwise. The humour of it is, that the man in a rallying way commends his wife under the appearance of discommending her. What makes a sort of riddle of it, is that the imagination is apt to carry the word 'little' to her virtue, as well as to her person, but the word refers to the quality of her body, not to the quality of her mind; so that if she were to be as little as she is good, the better woman she is, the less woman she would be. The meaning is, not that if her bulk and virtue were equal, a little would clothe her, but if she were in proportion as remarkably little as she is eminently good, she would be so little, that an inch of cloth would make her a gown and hood. Thus it appears to me, her increase of virtue would diminish her size, and the diminution of her virtue enlarge her size; and the words are a commendation.—(Signed) The Spectator."

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART X.

THE something bitter that is said to rise to the surface of the cup of life, even when it seems filled to the brim with enjoyment—this flavour of bitterness was supplied by Hilda's brother. Hilda herself looked forward to meeting him with some dread, for she felt sure that he would bitterly resent the change that had occurred in her prospects. Mr. Chancellor no doubt had sundry good things at his command, which he might have bestowed on Redmond without being the poorer himself. But such was not the case with me, and although Hilda had suggested that we should do something for poor Redmond—it was difficult to see what form that something could assume—my own notion was that sufficient had already been done for him by Hilda, and, indeed, a great deal too much. Not only had Redmond eaten his own cake, but a good portion of his sister's, and still he wanted more.

Already we had received a telegram from Redmond announcing his arrival at Trouville. and that he was stopping at the

Roches Noires, and advised his father and Hilda to join him there.

"Well," said Tom when he heard the news, "I am glad we have come upon these Roches Noires at last, for we have been chasing them all along the coast without coming upon them."

And this indeed had been the case. At all the sea-bathing places we had heard of these terrible Roches Noires as the dread of mariners and regular ship-breaking rocks, but always just out of sight along the coast.

"And is your poor brother living on those dreadful rocks?" cried Mrs. Bacon in full sympathy for the hardship of his lot, imagining that he supported himself on the crabs and periwinkles he found in the crevices.

But her mind was relieved when she found that the Roches Noires was a fashionable hotel, where the only hardship to be feared was in the evil quarter of an hour when the reckoning was settled.

But our next news of Redmond was not nearly so satisfactory. It was in the form of a telegram to say that he had been playing baccarat with the Prince de B—— and the Count de St. Pol the night before, and had lost two thousand francs. Hilda must telegraph the money to him—his honour was involved.

There was nothing for it but to telegraph to Rothschilds' to send the money. But it was evident that Redmond, once loose again upon the world, would prove a fearful sieve, through which a fortune would soon percolate.

"Perhaps he will win next time, poor fellow!" suggested Hilda hopefully.

On the other hand, Redmond might lose a great deal more; and if the Count de St. Pol should thus happen to get him in his power, he might use his power in a very awkward manner. However, we should be all at Trouville on the following day, and we could only trust to the chance that he would not meantime get into any very serious scrape.

If it had not been that overmastering destiny urged us on to Trouville, we should probably have remained where we were, notwithstanding the smells, which, after all, vanished for a time after each flood-tide, to return, perhaps, in the still small hours of the night, when the wind was hushed, while the sea could hardly be heard to murmur in the distance. To us the great charm was in the cool and pleasant-looking haven, with the indications it gives of groves and fields behind. and in the broad

smooth strand that is made up entirely of pounded sea-shells; while myriads of shells more or less in progress towards a pounded state line the margin of the waves.

And our hotel is pleasant and brisk with its shaded terrace overlooking the sea, where we sit after breakfast and smoke and talk to the parrot, and try to gain the attention of the big dog, who is generally too sleepy to notice anybody. He is a democratic dog this, for we have seen him early in the morning dashing about and joyously barking among the fishermen and old women with their baskets. If there is a truck to be wheeled or a load to be carried, Bayard is sure to be in the front, encouraging the honest porters with his most approving accents. But as the day wears on and the breakfast hour of the visitors at the hotel approaches, Bayard assumes an aspect of lazy indifference; stretched at full length under a bench he is proof against blandishments that the strongest men would succumb to; pretty fingers caress him, sweet voices appeal to him in the most endearing accents, but little he recks, if they'll let him sleep on, while cakes do not excite his interest in the least, and he is not to be tempted by the choicest morsel from the breakfast-table.

And then it is pleasant to watch the gradually rising tide of visitors. As the penny trumpet-like squeak from the level-crossing announces the approach of a train, the old lady at the crossing having rolled to the gates, draws herself up in front of them with her flag, as if she in her own person guaranteed alike the safety of the public and the railway service, the train glides quietly by, and speculation is rife as to the number of heads to be observed in the carriage windows. Then the omnibus rumbles down from the station, more luggage than omnibus, the driver clinging to some coign of vantage on the baggage. These are the people for the *Châlet Millefleurs*, with its overhanging gables, its verandahs of pitch-pine, and its rustic porches, and presently the house wakes up from its ten months' sleep, there are gay dresses on the balconies, and children and little dogs scamper about the terrace. The men of the party appear, transformed from smart Parisians to equally smart-looking fishermen, their shrimping nets over their shoulders, eager for the exciting sport of "*la chasse aux écrivisses*." Travelling vans come in loaded with draperies, shoes—everything you want. The place is a kind of summer encampment.

And while the long rows of elaborate and fanciful houses on the sands are filling up with visitors, all the cottages on the roads leading into the country—the pleasant cottages almost hidden in shrubs and creepers—are occupied by colonies of Parisians, who enter into primitive modes of life with great relish. Monsieur draws the water from the well, and madame arranges the table with flowers from the garden. Then there follows a great popping of corks and an odour of ragout and fricandeau, and soon through the open door you may see monsieur taking his *café* in great content, framed in vine-leaves, and metaphorically crowned with roses.

The evening is charming—the sun going down, round and red, into the sea; an infinite softness about the haven mouth, a white sail stealing gently in. As darkness comes on—the light in darkness of a summer night, the brilliant gleam from the lighthouse of Cape la Hève throws a pencil of lambent light across the placid sea. Havre lies below, invisible except that we fancy we catch a faint glow on the horizon from its gas-lamps and streets of brilliant shops; nearer at hand, glitters over the waters the long sea-front of Trouville, set in diamond sparkles, while its casino, brilliantly illuminated, flashes and gleams an invitation to the carnival. Can we hear the band? No, it is too far off, ten miles or so as the crow flies, and yet there is a feeling of music in the air. Is Redmond, we wonder, sitting in that fairy-like palace, watching with inward fever the turn of a card, with all that he has left of money and reputation hanging upon the result?

We have a little mild gambling going on here, at the *établissement* at Houlgate: whist and *écarté*, at which a few five-franc pieces change hands, and there are inveterate bezique players, who will play on well into the night. But all this in the most respectable way, the chief gainers being the proprietors of the *établissement*, who levy a heavy tax on the cards and other paraphernalia of play. And people go to bed early, being generally rather sleepy from their exploits in shrimping and fishing, and from their open-air life on the sands, and everything is quiet long before midnight. But when all our lights are turned out we can still see Trouville flaring at us over the bay.

To-night as the glare of lights died away the sea took up the illumination, breaking in waves of lambent flame over the sands; and the fisher-boats came home, leaving a

trail of mystic light behind them. All was glamour, nought was truth, for the sky seemed to share in the phosphorescent flare, the stars twinkling doubtfully through thin flakes of luminous clouds. We sat out till late watching the fairy scene, and Hilda and I fell into serious talk about the future.

"I want to go home, Frank," said Hilda; "I want to see the old place while I can still call it home. I want to talk to the old people and tell them all about you, and to say good-bye to the children, who will have to acknowledge another lady of the manor with smiles and greetings. But just to see them all once and say good-bye to the old life—I must go, Frank."

And then it struck me for the first time, forcibly and strongly, how much Hilda resigned when she gave up the Chancellor alliance. What could ever make up to her for the loss of the old home, that was now passing into the hands of strangers? And then it did not seem possible to prevent this loss. It was not likely that Mr. Chancellor would part with his bargain, and give up the Combe Chudleigh property to his successful rival. Human nature could not be expected to remain so entirely free from resentful feelings. But it would be easy enough to fulfil Hilda's present desire.

We could run over to Dartmouth, Hilda and I, and the old squire, while the others amused themselves at Trouville.

"Then we will start to-morrow night," cried Hilda eagerly, "and we shall see the old place by morning light."

And then I had to explain how it was impossible we could sail that next night, as I was pledged to meet the Count de St. Pol, to give him his revenge at whist.

It seemed a trivial thing; but the meeting had been arranged before witnesses with something like solemnity, and if I failed to appear it would be said that I was afraid to meet him.

"And you will not run this little risk for my sake then?" urged Hilda.

To which I replied, with the trite quotation:

"I could not love thee, dear, so well, loved I not honour more."

Hilda suddenly turned pale.

"Frank," she said, laying a hand upon my arm, "do you mean to say that if this Count St. Pol thrusts a quarrel upon you—and I have a presentiment that he will—you will fight him?"

The question was not easy to answer. A few years ago, when I was poor and rather

hopeless, with nothing to make life particularly desirable, I would have gone out and been run through by the count without scruple. But now, with wealth and my heart's desire, and the prospect of a life heightened by a woman's faithful love, the matter assumed a very different aspect. I should gladly have entertained a conscientious scruple against fighting. But then I felt no such scruple. I could certainly plead that in my own country such affairs were condemned by public opinion, and practically obsolete. But being in France, and engaged in altercation with a Frenchman, was I not rather bound by the customs of his country?

Hilda saw by my hesitation that her presentiment was not altogether unreasonable. But she was too staunch to exact any promise from me to decline any challenge.

"Only remember, Frank," she said, "if anything happens to you I shall die of grief and remorse. So you will do your best to keep out of danger."

And I promised this readily enough, reminding her, too, how these affairs were generally harmless enough, and rarely resulted in a serious casualty.

"But this is different, Frank," said Hilda mournfully. "I saw his face when you struck him, and he meant what he said—that you should pay for it with your life. And I could not see it all till now."

Altogether it would have been better if Hilda had remained in the dark as to my appointment with the count, for the knowledge made her anxious and restless, although she put a brave face upon the matter, and tried to appear easy and unconcerned. We were to go on to Trouville in the morning, and Hilda and I had determined to walk over to the station at Villers-sur-Mer, while Tom had undertaken to drive Contango, by easy stages, all the way to Trouville, taking Miss Chancellor with him, with Justine as a make-weight on the back-seat. The others were to come on by omnibus with the baggage. Very soon—by next season probably—the coast-line will be finished all along, and people will be able to get to Trouville from any point along the coast without making a long détour. But for the present, there is an awkward little break in the line of communication.

The walk to Villers proved rather hot and tiring, first along the coast, where the cliffs, of no great height, are of a clayey, crumbly nature, and then, as the sun beat down upon us hot and fiery, we took to

the inland road, cooler and more shaded, a dusty, arable country all about us till we descended into the Vale of Villers, well-wooded and luxuriant. Villers itself is of the quaint fantastic order, showing a studied quaintness, a regulated fantasy. Thatched roofs are fashionable, with lilies and flags growing on the ridges, as in some of the old farm-houses. Here are cottages as costly as palaces, and a studied simplicity which is the very refinement of luxury. A place, too, evidently on the rapid increase, where life is more reserved and exclusive than at Trouville, but a gay, pleasant place all the same, and of a cleanliness quite remarkable among French coast-towns. The road from the town to the station is quite charming, with trees, and stream, and gracious curves that raise an expectation of pleasanter scenes round the corner. It is quite a disappointment to come at last upon a commonplace little wooden station; but, however, the works are progressing rapidly, and soon we shall have stations as smart and coquettish as the towns they are to serve.

Indeed, this brightness and coquetry are the main charms of these watering-places. As far as scenery is concerned, the English coast, it must be said, is far superior, but then the life and gaiety of the scene, the absence of noise and vulgarity, of pretence and assumption—these latter attributes, indeed, not altogether absent, but more skilfully veiled—all these things make the sojourn by the sea in France very enjoyable. And then there is the almost certainty of getting something fit to eat wherever you may go, and of not being fleeced beyond reason. The hotel bills no longer, indeed, cause amazement at their smallness, as we read in the volumes of earlier days, but on the other hand, they do not affright by their extravagance.

Trouville is different again. We feel the change in a moment, as we alight in the brisk, noisy station, amid the shouts of the drivers of voitures, the commissionaires of hotels, and a generally excited public. Tom meets us at the station; he was the first to arrive, after all. He reports the Sea Mew as lying in port, and awaiting orders. But as yet he has not been able to hear anything of Redmond. He was not at the Roches Noires, but had been there, and was thought to have gone to the château of his friend, the Prince de B——, some twenty miles away, near Pont l'Évêque. But our brigandish friends with the Pyrenean sheep had arrived. Tom had

met them, but alas! in charge of the police of Trouville, who had condemned their proposed entertainment, as not being sufficiently polite or refined. But the police, embarrassed with the charge of two head-strong sheep, which refused to be driven except by their masters, and not much at that—the police were very much inclined to let them go, on their giving a promise to perform only on the outskirts of the town.

Tom had still more news for us. He had passed on the road a select troupe from the circus at Caen, who were to perform to-night in a temporary erection on the beach, and among the troupe was Zamora, looking very bright and happy, who had been chosen on account of her good looks for some subordinate part in the entertainment. As for the Count de St. Pol, he was thought to have left the town, and had probably forgotten all about his engagement to meet us at whist.

As we leave the station our first impression of Trouville is rather as a bustling little port than a fashionable watering-place. We were not prepared to see so much life and animation apart from the flocks of summer visitors. Behind us is Deauville, with its sea front of monumental houses, heavy and rather desolate-looking; and then there is a vista of a long harbour, crowded with fisher-boats and other small craft, with here and there a foreign steamer, and, conspicuous among them all, our own smart-looking Sea Mew. As we cross the bridge into the town it is dead low water, and a big mud-bank is left exposed in the middle of the stream. And upon this bank are gathered quite a little crowd of people, police, douaniers, and other officials. Another crowd is clustered about the parapets of the quay, and some people who have been fishing from the shore with rod and line, have suspended operations, and are watching the scene with interest. Something is lying stark and stiff in the midst of the people upon the mudbank, and that something is the corpse of a drowned man, whose legs, stiff and sodden, are painfully conspicuous. Only Tom and I have caught sight of this, and we hurry the ladies on to spare them the painful scene. Hilda and the rest have come to the conclusion that they will be more comfortable on board the Sea Mew than in a crowded hotel, and we soon reach the yacht's berth in the outer harbour, and go on board. Tom comes up presently, looking rather anxious. He

has just heard that the body found in the river was that of a young stranger, who was supposed to have committed suicide. "If it should be Redmond," murmured Tom, "who has lost a big pile, and ended the matter thus!"

Hilda's first care when she got on board the *Sea Mew* was to summon Captain Mac and interrogate him as to his being prepared to cross the Channel. The captain was reluctantly brought to acknowledge that everything was in readiness to sail that night, if necessary. The tide would serve from midnight up to three or four in the morning; the sea was calm outside, with every prospect of fine weather, and, if need were, we could make the Isle of Wight before breakfast, and then run along the coast to Dartmouth in another eight hours or so.

"Then you will get steam up, Captain Mac," cried Hilda joyfully, "and be ready to start at any time after midnight."

"Aye, aye, miss," said the captain, who seemed to recognise her as the ruling spirit.

"And now, Frank," said Hilda, turning to me, "if you must go ashore and play cards to-night, I shall send a boat's crew at midnight to bring you away, whether you will or no." But Hilda confessed that she hoped very much the Count de St. Pol would break his engagement. I also began to think that we should hear no more of the count, when, as I crossed the gangway to go ashore with Tom, I saw, rising head and shoulders over the crowd, the well set up torso of Colonel Peltier. The colonel was delighted to come on board and pay his compliments to the ladies. Hilda, however, did not appear to be very well pleased at his appearance, though she tried her best to be gracious in manner.

"We sail to-night, colonel, and shall be glad to take you across with us."

The colonel would have been delighted, but the exigencies of military duties, and so on—

"Then I shall have to break up your whist-party, I am afraid," said Hilda. "I can't spare my cousin and Mr. Lyme."

The colonel looked grave at this.

"But that would be a little—a little——"

Our colonel cannot find the exact epithet to add to his "little," when I relieve him from his embarrassment by assuring him I shall certainly appear at the trysting-place, which is to be the salon de jeu at the casino. And so he takes his leave very politely.

When the colonel was gone, Hilda's face assumed an expression of despair.

"Frank," she said, "I am sure these people mean to assassinate you—not openly to assassinate you, perhaps, but to draw you into a duel, when the count, who is, they say, a magnificent swordsman, will kill you."

I could only comfort her by saying that I did not intend to be killed quietly, and that if the count insulted me publicly, as might possibly be his intention, I should, as the aggrieved party in the contest, have the choice of weapons, and certainly would not choose swords. But Hilda felt sure there was some trap laid for me which would deprive me even of this advantage. And then the poor girl said she would go with me, and not lose sight of me till she had got me on board again. "They can't fix a quarrel upon you, Frank, if I am there." All the same, I could not take refuge behind a petticoat, and Hilda saw this, and was still in despair.

Meantime, Tom had undertaken the disagreeable duty of going to the Morgue to see if he could recognise the features of the drowned man. He returned very soon, and with a brighter face. He did not think that Redmond was the drowned man, although the features were too much swollen to be easily recognised.

That night we dined at the Roches Noires; the roches themselves, which are only a black-looking cliff, are visible a little farther along the coast, although some will have it that the originals, still more black, are to be found elsewhere. There was rather a brilliant gathering at the table d'hôte, fresh toilettes, and nice-looking women of all nationalities, and among the rest we saw our count and the colonel, looking out for their prey. And then we adjourned to the casino and found the grand salon brilliantly lighted up, and a concert going on. Outside it was pleasant to sit on the terraces, while the music, mellowed by distance, mingled with the splash of waves. In the west showed a bright sunset glow, and against that the dark sails of fishing-boats racing for the harbour. All the beach was lighted up, that grand sweep of sands which makes Trouville unapproachable as a watering-place. Cafés shone out in lines of light, booths, and shops, and places of entertainment, all brilliantly illuminated; while beyond faintly shone the phosphorescent sea, and the pale stars which looked quite dim in contrast with all the brightness close at hand.

Tom, I think, was in a sentimental mood that night. He was walking up and down with Miss Chancellor, talking very earnestly. The girl, perhaps, was a little puritanic. She had probably been reproaching Tom with his gambling proclivities; for she had been told of the contest that was impending.

"I can't sneak out of this," Tom was saying, "but I'll promise you for the future—look here, I never play beyond half-crowns and five shillings on the rub, and laying the long or short odds. Come, you won't mind that, will you?"

"But why should you promise me?" asked Miss Chancellor demurely. "If it's wrong you know you shouldn't do it."

The rest of their conversation was lost, but Tom seemed prouder of being scolded than in an ordinary way he would feel at the most lavish praise. And he had no misgivings that the match we were booked for was anything more than a trial of skill in trumping and finessing.

Between Hilda and me few words were spoken, but our silence was more expressive than words. The touch of danger in the future brought us closer together than any number of fair-weather days could have done. As yet neither the count nor his friend had appeared in the casino, and I had promised Hilda that if they did not show themselves by midnight we would come away. But just as the town-clock struck ten, Hilda shivered as if a chill had come over her, and, looking up, I saw the bullet-head, closely cropped, of Colonel Peltier.

"Oh, mademoiselle, I am looking for you on behalf of your father, who is anxious to leave," cried the colonel, and sure enough just behind him was the old squire, who looked quite brisk and *débonair* in his evening costume. Hilda took leave of me with an expressive, pressure of the fingers that sent a responsive thrill through my veins, and then I followed the bullet-headed colonel to the *salon de jeu*, a quiet, solemn apartment where the sun-lights shone upon many bald heads bending over their cards, with a calm silence occasionally broken by a gentle clatter of counters, or the shuffling of a pack of cards.

Up to midnight nothing had occurred to mar the harmony of the evening, but Tom and I had been carrying all before us, and our opponents were perhaps a little nettled. Midnight was striking, and I had promised Hilda that we would leave and go on board at that hour if practicable. A hoarse

whistle sounded from the port. It was a gentle hint, no doubt, from the *Sea Mew*. But Tom and I were winners each of a couple of thousand francs, and we could not possibly give up if our adversaries wanted to go on.

A PLAIN GIRL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MR. LANGLEY had passed a wearisome night, tossing and moaning in a restless succession of dreams. Towards morning he slept somewhat more heavily, but when the servant came with his hot water he woke with a start, and a bewildered cry:

"Where is she? Is she dead?"

The man, turning away, smiled discreetly, for his master was to be married that morning.

"You have been dreaming, sir," he said, drawing up the blinds and letting in a sudden flood of sunshine. Mr. Langley lay for a minute with half-closed eyes.

"Yes, I've been dreaming," he said, in a tone of relief, slowly coming to a consciousness of familiar surroundings, and of the splendour of the August day.

"Ten o'clock, sir; you have no time to lose," said the man. "And here is a letter."

"Very well. I shall get up almost directly."

He turned his head uneasily on his pillow, weary, yet glad of the warm golden morning, and the end of that long night. Of course he had been dreaming—dreaming of Emma Harrison. But why had he dreamt of that poor little girl in Ireland on the night before his wedding-day? He had never seen her since their parting at Ballyvarry; what had brought her back to his memory? After all, he had treated her no worse than scores of others; if all his past triumphs were to rise from the dead, his room should have been full of reproachful visions. Why did this one poor child haunt him thus, when the rest were forgotten? Yet so it had been. He had thought he was walking with her once more in the rectory garden, transformed in his fancy to a strange and desolate place, with a great grey sky above it, and the dead leaves dropping downward to the leaden earth below. He did not know how long this lasted—some dim immeasurable period, as time is in dreams. He woke, and slept again, and it still continued. There were changes, which were no

changes, for through them all they two were always together in a grey solitude. At last an appalling sense of dread came upon him; she was no longer by his side, but lying white, and silent, and asleep, and he could not leave her, could never escape from the horror of that stillness unless she would open her eyes once more, and speak a word to set him free. He stooped to kiss her, saying to himself in his dream, "She is asleep—she is not dead—I know she is not dead; because if she were dead, her lips would be cold." And then with a shudder he felt that the mouth which he touched with his was colder than a stone, and he pressed his chilled lips hopelessly upon it, and found no answering breath, no quivering stir of life and love. It was not wonderful that Mr. Langley, though he might be bewildered for a moment, was glad to have a flood of daylight poured on such a dream as that.

Something, however, of its sadness still lingered with him, or he should have wakened with a lighter heart on the morning which marked the crowning point of his success. The plan he had traced for himself in the autumn had been exactly carried out, except that for the unknown heiress had been substituted Rose Willing. The uncle had died just before Christmas, bequeathing to Rose an even larger inheritance than had been anticipated. Mr. Langley, when he left Ireland early in March, found Mrs. and Miss Willing already established in London.

In his desperate necessity he resolved to play a daring game, and win the girl whom he had won and cast aside twelve months earlier. It was annoying to remember that he had drawn back then, when success was absolutely certain, but he was not a man to waste time in useless regrets, and the very difficulty of the enterprise, under these new conditions, attracted him. It required no little skill and boldness to secure Rose and her money. That one unlucky evening had made Mrs. Willing his enemy; as for Rose, she had believed in him and adored him once, but no one was better aware than Mr. Langley that the rancour of a small-minded woman, who feels that she has been slighted, is more permanent than a good many sweeter sentiments. He set himself therefore to prove to Rose that it was he who had been slighted, and not she, and that any apparent discourtesy on his part was solely due to resentment and wounded feeling. Miss Willing found this

view of the matter very soothing, but while partially accepting it, she eyed her returned suitor distrustfully. She had already begun to suspect designs on her fortune, and found something equivocal in this tardy explanation. Mr. Langley, who was determined to maintain an attitude of superiority, had no easy part to play. He threw himself into it, however, with all his energies; he neglected nothing, he missed no opportunity, he pressed every advantage to the utmost. His courtship had a charm of genuine earnestness, for well as he knew Rose, he was really fascinated by his pursuit of her, and ardent until she yielded. She did yield at last, for with all her watchfulness and her small suspicions, she was no match for Philip Langley when his mind was made up. Thus he had his way, and the prosperous days had glided by till he reached his wedding morning.

While he dressed with elaborate care, the remembrance of the night, and its melancholy oppression, passed imperceptibly away. He pleased himself by recalling the turns and chances of the game which he had brought to so triumphant a close. A little smile, complacent and contemptuous, hovered about his lips, as he thought how well he knew his Rose, and how little she knew him; and he reviewed his tactics with an easy sense of mastery, assuring himself that he had made no mistake from beginning to end. He had almost finished dressing before he noticed the letter lying on his table. Then he happened to catch sight of it, and perceived, with a little shock of surprise, that it was from Emma Harrison. "Curious that she should write to me to-day," he said to himself, "and I was dreaming of her all last night!" For the moment his hands were occupied, and he only glanced sideways at the envelope where it lay, while he retraced the already faded vision. "Well, there was nothing in it, anyhow," he summed up with a half sigh of relief, "or she wouldn't be writing letters."

Apart from his dream the fact had no special significance. She had written to him at intervals since he left her, little pleading notes, with nothing remarkable about them except their single-hearted humility and adoration. Evidently no tidings of his renewed attentions to her cousin had reached her. As a matter of prudence he had never written a word in reply. The last interval had been longer, and, so far as he had had time to think about her at all, he had thought that she

was probably getting tired of her fruitless worship. The moth's poor little wings were beating more freely. It was a vexatious chance which had brought this last letter on his wedding-day, unless perhaps she had heard the news at last, and was crying at Ballyvarry over her lost dream.

As soon as he was at liberty he took it up, and negligently tore it open. At the first glance he changed colour. It was dated some two or three weeks earlier, and it began :

"MY DEAREST,—I shall never write to you again, for this will not be sent to you till I am dead."

Mr. Langley stopped short and sat down, feeling as if his dream were coming back to him in broad daylight. Then he went on:

"I felt I could not die without bidding you good-bye for ever. I suppose I ought not to write to you again, for I have heard that you are going to marry my cousin"—she had begun to write "Rose," and then had marked it out, as if she could not bear a woman's name upon the page—"but I must, just for this last time. I cannot die without a word, though I have never had a word from you. It would have been better never to write, but I could not help it; it was the only thing that made me feel a little nearer to you. If you had written only once!—but you were right. You never could have loved me, I knew it from the first.

"So you see, dearest, I was not deceived; I have nothing to reproach you with, and you must never reproach yourself. You could not prevent my loving you. I know you will be sorry when you hear that I am dead—you are so good—but you cannot miss me much; and do not think that it was your fault; I never was very strong, and I caught cold last winter. I did not say so when I wrote, because I thought you would not want to hear about that. I only tell you now that you may know that it was months ago that I was ill first. They thought I was better, and that I was going to get well, but I know I never shall. They don't understand how hard it is to get well. I can't do it; it seems as if I had not the heart to go on living. I think one had need be very strong to do that.

"I do not wish to live, and yet I am frightened when I think about dying. I feel as if my life were like a little candle going out in the dark. Everything seems dark now, but it was all sunshine that day

when you were here; I fancy it must always be sunshine where you are. When I look back, I think that there never was any happiness in my life till you came and brought it. Those two dear days, you do not know how happy they were! My two days! I hoped I should get well, because then I might perhaps have had just one more, but now I know it cannot be. Only two days in all my life, and you gave them to me!

"Good-bye, my dearest. It seems to me that I have said nothing at all, and now I cannot write more; it is too late. Once more, good-bye. Do not be too sorry for me. Even the dying will all be over before you read this, and I am not altogether unhappy. It has been my happiness to love you and pray for you. Good-bye.

"E. H."

And then, below the signature, was yet one more "Good-bye."

Philip Langley sat staring blankly at the paper with contracted brows. He was startled and unnerved. The strange coincidence of the letter and his dream had so impressed him that the one seemed as real as the other, and for the moment he could hardly have told whether he had actually touched the girl's dead hands and lips or not. The paper trembled in his fingers, and the lines stood out with curious distinctness.

Reproaches would not have touched him, but this tender eagerness to save him from self-reproach cut him to the quick. He knew that what she had written was literally true. Her happiness had been in his power to give or to withhold, and he had given her—what had he given her? A few smooth words, base coin, paid many times before for smiles and kisses. It made him sick to think how often he had used those ready speeches, and how empty and degraded they were. He had spoken them again, and then he had parted from her with the lightest and most contemptuous of caresses, and a promise which he never meant to keep. And for that she had gone into the great darkness, blessing him and praying for him. It was a jest for a devil to laugh at. But, for his own part, he felt that he would have given anything to be able to call her back for one moment—only one—not to excuse himself, but to kneel before her, to take her hands in his, and kiss them humbly. Then he would loosen his clasp, and let her go into eternity, with just a word of farewell: "All else was false, but

this is true." If he could do that! But what folly even to fancy it!

It is impossible to say how long he might have remained in his dreary reverie, had not his servant come to the door to warn him that it was nearly eleven o'clock, and that the ceremony was fixed for half-past. The man stopped short in the middle of his sentence.

"Are you ill, sir?" he asked wonderingly.

Mr. Langley stared at him for a moment, and then recovered himself.

"Yes," he said; "get me a glass of brandy."

His successful marriage seemed to him just then the most hideous dream of all; but it was too late to think of that, too late to think of anything, except that he must on no account keep Miss Willing waiting at the church.

How the next hour passed he hardly knew, but it did pass, and he was Rose's husband. His bride had cast one or two anxious glances at him, and, as they stood in the vestry, she whispered hurriedly:

"What is the matter? You are awfully white, and your hands are quite cold."

He told some ready little lie about a headache; he forced himself to laugh and talk; he drank champagne at the breakfast, and became more natural and less tragically pale; he made a remarkably neat speech for his wife and himself, with Emma's letter of farewell in his pocket all the time, and with a curious fancy in his mind that, behind the smiling faces which crowded about him, there must surely lurk some perception of that miserable story.

As a matter of course these shadowy impressions wore off as the day went by. But that evening, Rose, who had been looking meditatively at the window for a minute or two, turned suddenly and asked him:

"Do you remember Emma Harrison?"

He was on his guard.

"Seeing how often you have reminded me of the evening when I met her at your house, I certainly do," he replied.

"Poor little thing!" said Rose, eyeing him more from habit than from any real suspicion. "She is dead."

"You don't say so!" he exclaimed, and then echoed her "Poor little thing!" as naturally as possible.

"Yes," said Rose; "mamma had a letter this morning, and she told me just before we came away."

"She might have left it till to-morrow, I think," the bridegroom remarked.

"Oh, but I don't suppose she could," said Rose, with a little laugh, like Mrs. Willing's own. "Mamma can't keep a bit of news to herself, don't you know that? I'm only thankful she didn't let it out before we went to church. It would have been very horrid if she had."

"Very," he assented.

"I hope it isn't unlucky to hear a thing like that on one's wedding-day. I don't mean that I was especially fond of Emma—I never was," Rose continued with smiling candour. "I don't think one is bound to be fond of one's cousins, do you? She was always such a shy, stupid little thing—not a bit of style about her. It wasn't wonderful—you can't think what a dreary little hole she lived in all her life."

"I think I can fancy it," he said.

"Oh, you mean by what you saw of her that evening? I'm afraid you had a dull time of it, poor fellow! you were punished for being so cross," said Rose, well pleased. She was aware that she herself had looked her best that day, and she felt her immeasurable superiority to Emma very keenly. "But it is very sad," she added after a pause; "isn't it curious, Philip, that she and I should be cousins, and that my wedding and her funeral should be on the same day?"

"Well," he began, "we are most of us cousins to somebody, and considering the number of weddings and funerals——"

"Oh, don't be so dreadfully precise, to-day of all days!" Mrs. Philip Langley exclaimed, pouting a little. She had a vague idea that a happy inaccuracy would have been more suitable to their circumstances. "I know all about that; if you only talk long enough you can make out that anything is quite likely, of course. But all the same it is very strange when it happens to one's self, you know."

"Why, of course it is," he said, drawing her towards him, and looking down at her with his most lover-like gaze.

Later, when he found himself alone for a few minutes, he took the letter from his pocket, and stood turning it in his hands. He could not keep it. Suppose anything should happen to him, and Rose and Mrs. Willing should talk it over, and show it to their gossiping friends, and laugh at the poor little unrequited love; or if not Rose, someone else might find it, and it seemed to him that no eyes ought ever to read those words, unless they could see the girl's eyes looking out from the written page as

he saw them. The letter must certainly be destroyed. And yet, again, it was like a kind of murder, to silence that dying utterance of love.

Still, it had to be done, and as he stood there holding it, he tasted the full bitterness of vain remorse. His heart was sore with pity for his victim and sullen anger at his own destiny. He had killed her, and for what?

What had the passion he had awakened been to him? Nothing! It had given him no happiness—not much amusement; it had just served to pass a few dull hours, as a novel might. He had touched so many hearts, that there could be nothing really new in one more conquest. This poor heart had yielded itself a little more readily than others, was a little more sensitive, throbbed more quickly under his experiments—that was all. There was no other difference—nothing which could class it apart from the rest.

She would gladly have died for him. He knew it; but he knew also that she could not have made him happy for a moment. She had said truly. He never could have loved her.

It had been nothing to him. But to her—what had it not been to her? He crushed the paper in a fierce clasp. If he could have had but one heart-beat of the passionate love which he had taught her, it would have outweighed all the cheap successes that were the harvest of his life. She was the happy one, after all!

He bent his head and kissed the letter once, before he laid it on the hearth and burned it. As it flamed up and then died out, he seemed to see her little life burning and fading as she had said. Rose had told him that she had been buried that day, and he remembered with a pang how he had refused to go with her for a few minutes into the churchyard where she was now lying for ever. He determined to return some day to Ballyvarry and stand by her grave. The chances were that he never would, but the passing thought was in itself a kind of pilgrimage.

The letter was only rustling tinder, with red sparks running here and there, but he watched till the last should die, thinking to himself that had she known how sharp a stab her farewell would be to him on his marriage-morning, she would not have sent it.

Perhaps he was right. Yet Emma was neither heroine nor angel, and it is hard for a woman to go away without a last

glance from the man she loves, whatever the cost may be.

Let that be as it might, all was over, and of his double conquest there remained to Mr. Langley the black and grey ashes at his feet, and Rose with her three thousand a year.

TRIBOULET THE FOOL.

THE other day turning over "Quentin Durward," the mention of the fool, Le Glorieux, made me turn to the notes, one of which reminded me of the court fools of mediæval times, and of the age of the Renaissance—or, should it not be Renaissance? Many anecdotes of these latter are preserved in the numerous contemporary memoirs, especially the French.

The fool of Charles the Bold, however, is not one of those whose wit and wisdom have been preserved, and as to that of Louis the Eleventh, the note which we have mentioned will explain how it happened, as Brantome says: "Il passa le pas comme les autres, de peur qu'en réitérant il feust scandalisé davantage." Brantome adds that he had heard the story fifty years before from an old canon of eighty, and if the story is true that the jester repeated publicly what the king had said privately at his orisons, it is no wonder that he met his fate. Louis was precisely the man to punish such an offence. The story, however, is not without its impugnors, who certainly appear to have something on their side. The official fool, as a rule, was no fool, and none but a born idiot would have ventured so to outrage ordinary common-sense.

But this unlucky wight appears to have been the only one who graced the court of the grim king, and his name even is unknown.

Louis's successor is known to have conferred the dignity on someone, from official documents, but no name is recorded. These, too, show that the Queen Anne had a female fool of her own, whose expenses are duly entered.

In the time of Francis the First there happened to be two fools, whose names are often to be found in memoirs, records, and allusions of that date—Caillette and Triboulet. The former does not appear to have been officially attached to the court, and appears to have been simply of weak intellect, to judge from the stories which are related of him. The name itself shows

the estimation in which he was held at the time, and we are inclined to agree with the bibliophile Jacob, that the connection is evident between a fool and a quail which is for ever cackling. Marot, writing in 1515, says, if ever he is in love he will agree to be called Caillette. His portrait is to be found, too, in the well-known *Ship of Fools* of Sebastian Brandt, that extraordinary book which made the tour of Europe in a very short time, and retained its popularity for nearly a century after its publication in 1497. Many anecdotes are related of him, not one however of which is worth repeating, though at the time they were thought to be very good. But times are altered now, and, truth to say, our ancestors were easily pleased.

Triboulet is known, by name at least, to many, as the hero of Victor Hugo's play, *Le Roi s'Amuse*. The jester of the play, however, is purely an ideal being; nothing whatever in actual fact is to be found to agree with the character of the dramatist. The real Triboulet, as far as can be ascertained, died at about thirty years of age, and could not, therefore, even if he had been married, have had a daughter of marriageable age. Hugo simply found a powerful situation, and gave his character a name which was well known to those acquainted with the history of the court of Francis.

It appears to have been the custom to give the fool a nickname, as we have seen in the case of Caillette. From the researches of M. Jal we learn that Triboulet's real name was Nicolas Fevrial, Ferial, or Le Fevrial, according to whichever spelling one may incline, for in two documents it is spelt all three ways, and, as everyone knows, in the sixteenth century orthography was very shaky, especially in proper names. He appears to have been in office under Charles the Twelfth, and to have passed into the service of his successor, Francis. He must have been young, little more than a boy, and possibly of somewhat weak intellect. We find in the accounts of the disbursements for the royal household, payments from time to time to the governor of Triboulet, an official whose duty it was to look after his welfare, and especially to protect him against the malice of the pages, who of course never lost an opportunity of making sport out of him. He was born at Foiz les Blois, where "to be as silly as Triboulet" was proverbial in the time of Bernier, whose history of Blois was published in 1682. But later researches

lead us to believe that the young Ferial was an innocent taken out of the streets at an early age by the tender-hearted king. Something lacking in his composition there was, no doubt, and, probably, if he had not been taken care of he would have followed the usual ways of those unhappy mortals doomed to wander on the streets, and afford sport for the thoughtless and brutal. But the instruction of a governor, the refinement of a court, the insensible influence of his surroundings, might, and doubtless did, improve what there was in him of sense. At any rate he played his part well. According to Marot, his contemporary, he was as wise at thirty as the day he was born. He had a large head, small forehead, big eyes, enormous aquiline nose, small chest, and was hump-backed. But he was incapable of serious thought. There was something short in him, as the saying is; he was a daft body, but without a spark of malice in his composition, and so pleasant and agreeable as never to offend those against whom he had directed his aim. As a court official, in discharge of his duty he accompanied the king to the wars, and was present at the siege of Peschiera in 1509.

Here again we have Jean Marot telling us that Triboulet was so afraid of cannon that he slunk under his bed, and would have been there now if he had not been dragged out. The poet then makes the reflection that it is not wonderful that the wise fear the shocks which terrify the innocent and fools. However, as the poet goes on to say that the fire was so brisk that the French soldiers dared not raise their heads above the trenches, the fool may be pardoned for his timidity.

When Francis came to the throne, the fool was about twenty, and having profited by the lessons of his governor, Michel le Vernoy, he henceforwards becomes a personage such as we are accustomed to figure to ourselves as the typical fool of a court. He has the right of free speech, the bounds of which are only limited by common-sense; he can make game of his master and all his court, not only without offence, but with applause. Bonaventure des Periers gives us many anecdotes of him, most of which will not bear repetition, either from inherent grossness, or from want of a point that would be perceptible to this age. One day the king entering the Sainte Chapelle to hear vespers Triboulet noticed the deep silence

When all were seated the bishop began the service, the choir responded, and soon thunder outside could not have been heard. The fool got up and rushed to the bishop, and began to assault him furiously. In reply to the king, who enquired how he could think of laying hands on the holy man, all he could say was, "When we got in here, cousin, everything was quiet; this man began the row—he's the one to be punished." This exploit made some noise at the time, as well it might.

The real repute of the jester, however, may be inferred from the number of anecdotes attributed to him. It is extremely probable that he is guiltless of most of them. Some of them certainly seem to be the common property of the wits of all periods. Perhaps the best known, for it is one which will bear repeating, is the following:

"A great lord, offended at his sallies, threatened to flog him to death. Triboulet went to complain to his master. 'If he does it,' said the king, 'I'll hang him in a quarter of an hour after.' 'Thank ye, cousin,' said the fool; 'but if it's all the same, couldn't you do it a quarter of an hour before?'"

Nothing could be better than this in its way, and it is not impossible that it might come from one of weak intellect. But he was not wanting in common-sense either, if we are to believe what Dreux du Radier relates of him. He had tablets on which he carefully noted down everything which seemed worthy of himself. The king had an urgent letter to send to Rome, but found no courier to take it, as the time was not sufficient. At last, however, one appeared, who guaranteed to deliver the paper in the time specified. He mounted his horse, and received two thousand ducats. The fool was observed busy with his tablets; and the king wanted to know what he was writing. "It's impossible to get to Rome in the time, and it's foolish to give two thousand ducats when a quarter would be enough," said Triboulet; "here goes your name." "Ah," said the monarch, "but suppose he doesn't get there in time and I get my money back, where will you be then?" "In that case," said the fool, "I rub out your name and insert his."

This is a very pretty story as it stands, but a regard for truth compels one to doubt its attribution being correct. It is undoubtedly one of the stories always current, of no certain authorship, which are given to this or that wit of the current

period. Scott, using the privilege of the novelist, boldly fathers it on Le Glorieux, when the king insists on taking up his quarters in the Château of Peronne, the head-quarters of his insubordinate vassal. We will not copy this, but let the intelligent reader find it out for himself; he will then have the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance with Quentin Durward. Bouchet, in his *Sereés*, tells the same story of a Duke of Milan, who gave to a Moor, whom he had only known eight days, thirty thousand ducats to go and buy horses in Barbary. The duke enquired why his servant was putting him in his list of fools. It is not difficult here to supply question and reply. Again we meet with it on the occasion of Charles the Fifth visiting Paris, and being entertained by Francis. The fool remarks he will give his bauble to the emperor, and when his master repudiates the idea of treachery to his guest, merely observes that the gift shall be bestowed on him. There is another version that the remark was made when Charles asked and was granted a free passage through France, in order to get more quickly to Ghent, which was in revolt. This, however, could not have been the rightful occasion, for Triboulet had been dead several years in 1539, the date of this occurrence. There is another anecdote attributed to him which will bear repetition. Before the campaign, which ended so disastrously at Pavia, a banquet was held, at which the chief topic was the best way of entering Italy. Naturally each had its partisans, and the real difficulty was to decide. The fool remarked: "Gentlemen, you have spoken well, but you seem to have forgotten the essential point, for no one has said anything about it." "What is that?" said the king. "Why," replied Triboulet, "how are you to get back? You surely don't intend to stop there for ever." Here is a very pretty illustration of the proverb, that many a true word is spoken in jest.

But whether rightly or wrongly these and other anecdotes are attributed to Triboulet, his name will never be forgotten enshrined as it is by Rabelais. It will be remembered that Panurge, being very much exercised in mind about marriage, asked advice from all sorts and conditions of men. "Triboulet," quoth Pantagruel, "is completely foolish as I conceive." "Yes, truly," answered Panurge, "he is properly and totally a fool," and then

follows the wearisome list of adjectives which might be applied to a fool. However, Triboulet was asked to come from Blois, and arrived accordingly. "Panurge at his arrival gave him a hog's bladder puffed up with wind, and resounding because of the hard peas within it. Moreover, he did present him with a gilt wooden sword, a hollow budget made of a tortoise-shell, an osier wattled wicker bottle full of Breton wine, and five-and-twenty apples of Blandureau. Triboulet girded the sword and scrip to his side, took the bladder in his hand, ate some of the apples, and drank the wine. Panurge looked on wistly, and when the drinking was done, expounded his business, wherein he asked his advice in choicest and elegant rhetoric. But before he had done, Triboulet gave him a thump between the shoulders, handed him the bottle, leathered him with the bladder, and shaking his head gave him for all reply: 'Pardi, mad fool, beware the monk, Buzancay bagpipe.' This done, he went off playing with the bladder, and enjoying the delectable music of the peas, and not another word could be got from him. But, Panurge wishing further speech, Triboulet drew his wooden sword, and was for striking him with it. 'Marry,' quoth Panurge, 'I have brought my pigs to a fine market. He is a great fool that is not to be denied, yet he is a greater fool who brought him hither to me; but of the three I am the greatest fool to impart my secret thoughts to such an idiot, ass, and ninny.'" If our readers will look up this extract in the original, they will find much interesting reading in this and the following chapters. There is little doubt that if circumstances had not thrown Rabelais into another sphere of action, he would have played the court fool to perfection.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER X.

It was late on the day of Captain Pen-treath's examination before the magistrates. Dusk, the early dusk of a winter's afternoon, had long since fallen, and the gas-lamps were glimmering redly through the raw grey twilight, when a woman came swiftly round the corner of a long dreary street in one of the worst parts of the west end of London.

It was not exactly a disreputable street. It began, indeed, respectably enough with mediocre, shabby-genteel houses opening out of the Uxbridge Road on the northern outskirts of Holland Park; but as it went on the houses became smaller, poorer, and more squalid—the street itself grew narrower and dirtier. Gin-palaces and coffee-taverns glared at each other across a vista of small greengrocers', rag and bottle shops, and common lodging-houses.

Finally it split in two, and while one half ran up against a dead wall and a pig-stye, and ended there, the other narrowed still more, and became a mere lane leading into that wide district of vice, squalor, and misery, that haunt of navvies, gipsies, and brickmakers, known vaguely to the respectable public, and only too familiarly to the neighbouring police, as the "Potteries."

It was from the direction of this latter place that the woman in question was coming, but there was nothing either vicious or squalid in her appearance. On the contrary, she was tall, neat, and not ill-looking, with a thin, fresh-coloured face, very smooth hair, and bright dark eyes which shone out with a very resolute expression from the depths of a huge bonnet of coarse black straw. Her dress was also black, neatly made, and of good material, but enlivened at the throat and wrists by a couple of broad scarlet bands, giving it something of a military appearance, while as she walked along, keeping not on the pavement, but in the middle of the street, she was singing in a loud, rather musical voice, a verse of a strange sort of hymn.

"Come rally round the flag, boys,
To battle now we go;
Cry, three times three, 'Hurrah!' boys,
For Satan is the foe."

All around her, following and at times almost smothering her as they pressed at her side and crowded on her heels, was a motley throng composed of grimy, half-naked, little street Arabs; brutal, unwashed youths of the costermonger class; and a few rough-looking, flaunting girls; and these laughed, cheered, and danced about, yelling out choruses which not infrequently belonged to melodies breathing a very different spirit to the hymn, and in a way which would have impelled most modest and respectable women to hasty and immediate flight. The young woman in question, however, did not seem to mind it. Sometimes, indeed, she stopped short and wheeled round, facing the rowdiest of her followers, to the chief amongst whom

she would hold out her clean, well-shaped hand, and address a few words of exhortation, spoken in a bright eager way, and winding up with an invitation to go and hear General Booth at the Portobello Road Salvation Hall on the following night. Sometimes she would step out briskly to the right or left, and taking a tract from a parcel which she carried under her arm, offer it to one of the passers-by on the side-walk, and whenever they came to a public-house, which in this neighbourhood happened very frequently, she and all her company came to a full stop while she lifted a little red flag which she carried high above her head, and cried out in a clear ringing voice, "Halt! An outpost of the devil! Fix bayonets and sound the battle-cry—Glory, hallelujah!"; the last words in a shout echoed by the greater part of her audience with a vigour which brought out most of the drunkards or idlers in the bar to see what was up. Directly this was achieved, however, she burst into another verse of the hymn, and wheeling, marched on, still singing vigorously, and, in the generality of cases, with the addition of two or three of the gin-drinkers to the train of her existing followers.

All through the day it had been raining hard, and the streets were a slop of wet and mud, while a bitter north wind swept round the corners, freezing noses and fingers with its damp and icy breath, and nearly taking some of the smaller members of the army off their legs; but though the woman leading them had been out all the afternoon, traversing the "Potteries" from end to end in the work of beating up recruits; and though, during all that time, she had never ceased to speak or sing, and had never once sat down or rested, her eyes were the brightest, her step the lightest of the whole number. And once, when in crossing a street a half-tipsy follower of the army came into rough collision with a young girl who was trying to cross the road before them, and flung his arm round her waist, the victim—a slender little creature with a pretty childish face—had hardly time to utter one cry before the Salvation captain had turned and, seizing the brute by the wrist, gave it such a wrench as set his captive free on the instant.

"Why, missis," said the fellow surlily, "what's that for? I was just bringin' yer in a lamb to the fold."

"Aye, indeed? And what are you, my man?" said the captain briskly.

"Why, what else but a bloomin' lamb, too, my lass," was the answer, capped instantly by:

"Just so; but lambs don't bring each other into the fold. That's the sheep-dog's work, and I'm sheep-dog now, so come, child,

"Come and join the army.
We want a girl like you."
Oh, come and shout for—"

But before the invitation, caught up in full chorus, had got so far, the girl appealed to had taken to her heels and fled with such swiftness that she was already out of sight; while the army being now almost in front of "the fold," i.e., a small mission-room, with a bright glow of gas and fire, and long tables set with smoking tin cans, visible through the open door, the captain gave up the idea of a fresh recruit, and inviting her companions to shout "Glory, hallelujah!" three times, led them in.

She did not stay, however, to assist at the tea and prayer meeting which followed, or even to get any rest or refreshment herself; but after reporting herself to a commanding officer of the male sex, and exchanging a few words with one or two "Hallelujah Lasses" in the room, slipped quietly through the throng, and letting herself out by a side door, walked swiftly away.

Her manner was quite altered now. She had put on a thick plaid shawl over her black and scarlet gown, and as she passed quickly and silently along, keeping her head down, and further sheltering herself; from the rain, which had again begun to fall, under a big umbrella, there was nothing in her appearance to distinguish her from any other decent middle-class woman, or connect her with the noisy apostle who had passed that way only half an hour before.

She had not far to go. Ten minutes' walk brought her out on the broad, well-lighted thoroughfare of the Uxbridge Road, and after keeping along it for a few hundred yards she stopped at a large ironmonger's shop, and, knocking at the private door, was at once admitted.

"You're late, Jane," said the person who did so, a rather older and sharper-visaged edition of herself; "tea is over, and father is so cross."

"Is he? I'm sorry, Ju, but I walked as quick as ever I could, and you don't generally begin tea till six."

"Yes we do—on chapel nights. Did you forget this was one? If so, don't tell

father ; for what made him so angry was hearing a lot of shouting at the back of the house some while ago. That idiot of an Ellen said it was the Salvation Army, and that, and your not being here, made father so wild I believe he'll expound on it to-night. You'd better stay at home, Jane."

"Oh no, that would make him worse ; but I must have a cup of tea first. Do ask Ellen to make me one ;" and only waiting to hang up her bonnet and shawl in the narrow oil-clothed entry, she passed on into the parlour at the back of the house.

It was a large room just behind the shop, comfortably furnished, the windows hung with curtains of good red damask, and the walls with paper of the same colour, and decorated with sundry photographs of leading Methodist divines, and one or two large and very black engravings of "The Opening of the Seventh Vial," and other similarly cheerful subjects, in polished maple frames ; while the mahogany furniture and florid Brussels carpet, with a piece of oilcloth tacked over the centre of it to preserve its pristine freshness, bore witness to the fact of the owner being well-to-do in the business which forty years ago he had received from his father before him.

He was seated in an armchair by the fire now, a thin, fragile, little old man of over seventy, wearing a black velvet skull-cap on his bald head, and holding in one hand a gold watch and chain which he held up angrily as his daughter entered, saying :

"Half-past six, Jane, and tea over before you come in. Nice doin's—nice doin's for a young woman of thirty-three ! I was just saying to your sister, I supposed by midnight you'd be making your appearance. After that I'd not let the door be open for no one. No, not for my own children if they chose to forsake their homes and take to 'riotous living' like the son of that afflicted father in the gospel. But even he came in to meals ; for, as we know, a calf was roasted for him ; and, seeing as his elder brother was still out at work, it couldn't yet have been sundown. Read Luke, chapter fifteen, verse thirty."

"Yes, father dear," said Jane meekly ; "but it's not midnight now, and if we were in Israel I doubt if 'twould even be sundown ; but I'm very sorry to be late all the same. I didn't mean to be."

"Mean ! What's the good of meaning when you are so ? And is it one of your new Salvationist doctrines to browbeat and

argue with your old father, as if he were a small child in a jography class ? Jane, Jane, I'd have you remember what the Word says, 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection,' and do it. Read First Epistle to Timothy, chapter two, verse two. But there, all decent, godly ways are altered in these days when fathers have to hold their peace while young women take to dancing and yelling about the streets, and calling it religion. Ugh ! Give me my hat and coat, child, and say no more. We ought to be at chapel now."

Mr. Matthew Thompson belonged to what might emphatically be called a "serious family." There had been five of them originally, a father and four sons, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of these Luke died early, and Mark and John entered regularly into the service of religion, joined the Wesleyan body, and went out as missionaries, one to India and the other to Africa ; while Matthew remained at home, succeeded his father in the ironmongery business, throve wonderfully, married, and built a chapel for the Primitive Methodists, of which connexion he had always been a member, was made first deacon and then elder ; and now, in his old age, enjoyed nothing more than hearing himself hold forth on Wednesday evenings before his own family and a select number of fellow-worshippers, whose admiring groans kept pace and tune with his discourse.

He was a widower at present with three daughters, Judith and Jane, whom we have seen, and an elder one, Deborah, who went out to India to join her uncle John and convert the heathen, but fell in love en route with the first mate of the Indiaman, and ended by converting him instead, and to such good purpose that she was now the wife of a P. and O. captain, living in a handsome villa at Devonport, and much looked up to by her neighbours and relations.

Jane's defalcation into the ranks of the Salvationists had been a sore blow at home, being taken in the light of a deliberate slight and injury by old Mr. Thompson, whose favourite child she was ; and who, as an elder of the church, and having a decided weakness for decency and order in all walks of life, felt very much as a country rector might do whose eldest son had taken to preaching at a Dissenting chapel in his father's village.

As an old friend of the family said, however : "What else could you expect

from one of the Thompsons? They'd all got the Light, and they was bound to show it for themselves one way or another. Look at John, with a wife and twelve children to provide for; and poor Mrs. John spending her life on the high seas, travelling to and fro with one or other of 'em—what an elect vessel he was! Why, The Madras Christian went into mourning down a whole column when he died; and there were two of his sons missionaries now; and his eldest daughter married to a Scotch minister, with her only boy a Bible-reader in Aberdeen. And look at Mark, burying his wife and child out among the niggers, and then only coming back to bring home his little granddaughter, before going out again and dying there like the rest. That child of his, Esther, hadn't done well, indeed, having been so led away as to fall in love with and marry a mere man-o'-war officer, a fine fly-away gentleman, and one of the carnal-minded; but she had expiated her fault by dying very speedily afterwards, and so one wouldn't wish to be hard on her; while, as for the little girl, no one could say the Thompsons hadn't done their duty by her. Didn't Mrs. John take her from her grandfather and educate her with her own younger children, she being in England just then for that purpose? And wouldn't she have left her and Mary at school together when she had to go back to India herself if that ungrateful ne'er-do-weel, the father, hadn't turned up and carried the child off to make a worldling of her like himself, and a fine lady into the bargain? She was probably a lost sheep altogether now; but it couldn't be helped; and, after all, the Matthew Thompsons had never had anything to do with her. Mrs. John (for all that she was such a godly woman and one of the elect) holding herself rather high, and making a deal of excuse out of living at Deal to keep her own family and the little Esther from much visiting at the ironmonger's shop in the Uxbridge Road."

That respectable household was just going to bed at present. Chapel, at which old Matthew had discoursed with unusual unction, bringing hot blushes to poor Jane's cheeks by his allusions to the "indecent and scandalous behaviour of certain so-called religionists in the neighbourhood," was over, and, having had his supper, and enjoyed a talk over the fire, while his daughters stitched and listened dutifully, the old man had retired upstairs,

Judith accompanying him to see to his bedroom fire, while Jane remained below to put out the gas and see that the house was properly bolted up for the night, when, just as she had descended to the basement to look to the fastenings there, she was startled by one loud single knock at the front door.

For a moment she hesitated whether to answer it or not. It was late—nearly eleven o'clock. Besides, the knock had a heavy blundering sound, as though it had been dealt at random by some drunken passer. As she stood, however, in the entry below, candle in hand, and doubtful whether to go up or remain where she was, the knock was repeated twice over, and louder than before, and without more ado Jane ran upstairs and began to unbolt and unbar the front door, which only a few moments previously she had herself fastened up for the night. As she did so, and got it open, such a rush of wind and rain came in as drove her backwards and extinguished her candle, preventing her for the moment from distinguishing anything but a dark object like a cab drawn up outside, while a gruff voice asked:

"Is this 'ere Mr. Thompson's private door?"

"Yes, it is," Jane answered, sheltering herself behind it as she spoke. "What do you want?"

The gruff voice repeated the first part of her answer to someone in the cab, adding, for her benefit:

"It's a young lady as belongs here. The gent's helping her out. I should ha' got here sooner, but I missed the corner an' druv too far."

"A young lady! Oh, but it's a mistake. It must be some other Thompson. There's no young lady expected here," Jane said quickly, but stopped short and nearly uttered a cry, for by this time the gentleman—who appeared by his dress to be a clergyman—had extricated a slender girlish figure from the cab, and, as the two emerged from the wet and darkness, Jane saw, by the dim light of a gas-lamp outside, a small pale face looking eagerly up into hers, and recognised in it the girl whom, earlier in the same evening, she had rescued from the clutch of that ill-behaved follower of her little army.

And the man who was with her was worse than any ordinary clergyman, being a Romish priest whom she also knew by sight as having a church somewhere in the

neighbourhood, and as being often to be met with among the slums and purlieus of the Potteries.

Jane Thompson was a brave woman, but at the sight her courage nearly failed her, and for an instant she had a wild thought of banging the door in their faces, and taking refuge under her bed, for the thought which flashed upon her was that it was a police case, and that this priest of Baal was backing the young woman up in it to injure the Salvation cause; and oh, what would father say?—he who cared so much for respectability, and was always predicting that some of her proceedings would bring him into disrepute. In imagination she had time to see her whole career spoilt, and herself sent off in disgrace to her rich sister in Devonport, even while the priest was asking:

“Are you a Miss Thompson?”

But at the sound of his voice her courage came back, and she even came a step forward, blocking up the door as she answered him sharply enough:

“Yes, I am; but I don’t know you, or this young woman either. What do you want with me?”

The girl put out her little gloved hands with a quick, appealing gesture. She was trembling from head to foot, soaked with rain, and her voice was little more than a whisper.

“I am your cousin—Esther,” she said. “Don’t you remember me? I used to live with Aunt John at Deal when I was a little girl, and I remember you quite well. You are—surely you are Jane, are not you?”

“Yes, I am Jane,” said the Salvation captain blankly.

The surprise and relief were so great that she could hardly collect herself. Then, with fuller comprehension:

“But—little Esther! Uncle Mark’s granddaughter! You don’t mean it. Come in—come in out of the rain quickly.”

She put out her strong hand, and grasped the girl’s frozen fingers warmly, drawing her into the passage. For the moment she had forgotten the priest, and he had already stepped back.

“It is all right then?” he said to Hetty, speaking in a kind, brisk manner, “and I can leave you safely? I’m glad of it, so good-night, my child, and God bless you! No, no, nonsense!” as the girl turned from her cousin and clasped his hand, pouring out eager and almost tearful thanks in a weak, tremulous voice: “I did no more for you

than anyone should do for a fellow-creature. Good-bye.”

And he was gone.

Jane shut the hall-door with a bang, and took her cousin’s hand again.

“Esther,” she said solemnly, “I don’t know how you got into such company; but if father had seen me with that man of Belial, I doubt he would hardly have kept me under his roof afterwards. You shall tell me about it; but say nothing to him when you see him, and come in. You’re heartily welcome, for all that your visit’s so late and unexpected a one. Why, child, you’re wet to the bone!”

And, indeed, the rain was dripping heavily off Hetty’s black skirt, and all her pretty curling hair was gummed and plastered together with wet, while there was not a tinge of colour in the little face, at which Judith, who had heard the knock and come down to see what was the matter, was now staring in amazement. Her manner, however, was kind enough when Jane made her understand who it was.

“Cousin Esther’s child? Her that died abroad? Why to be sure, so you are, and I remember you new, though you’re so altered. But I thought you were being brought up by some grand friends of your father’s?”

“Yes, cousin,” said Hetty timidly. Judith’s sharp face and voice frightened her, and she was shivering with cold and nervousness, for it was so long since she had seen any of her mother’s relations that they were like strangers to her, “and I should not have come without writing; but I was only the lady’s companion, and something happened. She—she was not kind to me, and I did not know what to do. I was in great trouble, and I came away. I—I could not help it.”

Her voice, which had been growing hoarser and weaker, broke down altogether, and she sank down suddenly on to a chair, bursting into violent weeping. Judith held up her hands.

“Did you ever!” she exclaimed. “Why, child, what’s the matter, and where have you been to get in this state? Jane, she’s like a drowned rat.”

Jane put her hand on her sister’s shoulder and pushed her gently aside.

“I’m going to put her to bed,” she said. “She’s not fit to talk now, and, Judith, heat up the kettle and make a good hot glass of brandy-and-water. It’s an accursed thing usually—I hope Esther thinks so, but when folks are wet and ill—

Come, dear, don't you cry so. I'll give you a share of my bed to-night, and you shall tell us your story in the morning, when father's here to listen to it too."

She put her arm round Hetty as she spoke, and half helped, half led her upstairs to her own room, where she put the girl into a low chair, and bidding her take off her wet boots, began opening drawers and getting out articles of dry underclothing for her. But when they were got, poor Hetty was too spent even to stand up, far less to put them on unaided. Her head had drooped till it rested on the arm of the chair, and she was still shivering all over, but she said faintly that it was nothing, and she was not ill, only cold and tired—so very tired. And Jane fairly lifted her up in her strong arms, undressed her, and had got her into bed before Judith came in with the brandy-and-water, and a little tray of refreshments.

Hetty, however, was unable to touch the latter. She tried to do so, rather than seem ungracious to her cousins; but something in her throat seemed to prevent her swallowing, and it was with great difficulty that she could even take the hot drink. It seemed to revive her, however, for she smiled and said "Thank you" gratefully. Then, with another effort: "I must tell you—I am better now—how I came. It was Cousin Mary, Aunt John's daughter, I was going to see. She had written to me some time ago to tell me of her marriage, and ask me—but I was not allowed to go, and then, to-day, when I went—it was all the way to Brixton—she was not there. The house was empty, and no one knew—I could not find her."

"Find her? Why no, I should think not," cried Judith. "Mary and her husband left for Liverpool six weeks ago. He'd got the offer of a post as organist to a big church there. I wonder she didn't tell you. You poor child, you've had quite a journey over here then!"

Hetty looked up at her. Her voice was getting weaker and more husky.

"I did not know what to do. I had come a long way, and I had had no breakfast. It was very early. I went to a baker's shop and got some bread, and then I took a cab. I meant to come to you. I did not know the address, but I thought it was Uxbridge Road—and then I missed my bag. The cabman said I must have left it at the baker's, but it was not there,

and my purse was in it. I had no money left—not a penny. I walked on and on; but it rained—it was raining all the time."

"You walked from Brixton!" cried Judith. Jane was too pitiful for speech.

"Not all the way. I had a little ring of mamma's, and a woman in a shop lent me half-a-crown for it. That took me to Uxbridge Road Station, but I was afraid to spend it all. I thought I would walk on again and enquire. People sent me backwards and forwards. There were so many Thompsons, and none of them knew. I got quite to despair; and it was getting late. It was dusk. Once when I was crossing a street a tipsy man caught hold of me. I was so frightened I ran till I was tired. There was a church close by with a deep porch and a bench in it; and beside the door a little window through which one could see the church inside, and a lamp burning before the altar. It was so quiet there I did not feel frightened any more; and it was sheltered too. I thought I would stay there all night, and I sat down on the bench and fell asleep. It was the priest who woke me. He was coming back from a sick call, and he was very kind. He got a directory, and found out where there was an ironmonger's shop with the name; and then he brought me here. If—if I may stay to-night—"

Her voice had become quite inaudible, and Jane bade her go to sleep at once; but long after her eyes were closed the cousins sat by her bed watching her. They had time now to recognise the extreme beauty of the fair little face in its framing of dark, shining curls, the tiny white hands, and the fine texture of her black cashmere frock, with its dainty ruffings of lace all soiled and dragged with wet. Certainly the young girl had lived with rich people, but what was the trouble which had turned her out on the world like this? And as Jane bent over her she saw that the pretty face had flushed to a deep feverish red, and that the breath came in hoarse, struggling gasps through the dry lips. The girl tossed from side to side, and moaned in her sleep; and Jane sent her sister to bed, and sat up all night, too anxious herself to sleep.

In the course of next Month will be commenced

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XVIII. "CIRCUMSTANCES OVER WHICH—"

JENIFER thought of it, as well as the confused state of her mind would permit her to do, and attempted to prepare herself for any little surprise in the way of snub or reprimand that madame might have in store for her during the ensuing hour. But the attempt was not destined to be adorned with the crown of victory. When Madame Voglio did turn and read Jenifer, she tottered instead of standing erect and looking as if she liked being chastised and improved.

It was a very simple song this one which madame chose as the one by means of which a few first principles were to be implanted in Jenifer's mind. A simple song:—

"Easy to understand, easy to express," madame said incisively; "now read it to yourself once, then aloud to me."

Jenifer read it to herself, read the words over rapidly, and came to the conclusion as she read them that she could give due, full effect to the bars that were most pregnant with meaning.

"Now read it to me," madame said curtly; and Jenifer, obeying her, read a verse.

"Bah! if you murder melody as you do meaning, I shall have short work with you."

There was a tone of extreme severity in madame's voice. But Jenifer caught a glimpse of something softer and sweeter underneath it.

She looked up so quickly that madame had no time to roll away a good-humoured smile which was rollicking about on her

face, before her pupil's eyes were on her.

"Come, come, and let us begin our work now," Madame Voglio said kindly, rising and leading the way into a large room which was chiefly furnished with a magnificent grand piano. It was a bare, plain, undecorated apartment this in which the pupils took their lessons, for madame was impatient of anything like wandering attention, and so took care that there should be an absence of everything calculated to set either eyes or mind roving from the work in hand.

The lesson lasted more than an hour, and if, at the end of that time, Jenifer had not an intelligent notion of the fullest meaning that was to be conveyed by every word of the song, it unquestionably was not her instructress's fault. For madame first read the song herself to her pupil, and then impressed upon her that until she could sing it with precisely the same emphasis, effects, lights and shades, as had been expressed and indicated by Madame Voglio, she could not be said to sing it at all.

That the mistress had a great capacity for teaching was indisputable. She possessed to a rare degree the two essential qualities of patience and impressiveness. Additionally she had the art of imparting knowledge in a lucid unmistakable way, which arrested and riveted the attention of the taught.

And Jenifer was an apt pupil—quick to understand, utterly devoid of vanity or self-consciousness, indomitably persevering, and desperately anxious to justify the resolution she had formed and the effort she was making. At the end of the first lesson, though Madame Voglio spoke no word of hope or encouragement; though she did not even express satisfaction at the

evident earnestness of her pupil; Jenifer felt sure that she had gained this much ground—namely, that her mistress would teach and work her to the utmost of their respective abilities.

It had been understood that Jenifer was to have three lessons a week, but when she was going away madame said:

"Time is an object to you, I know; I will take you every day if you can come; and all the time you have at home must be given to practice, practice, practice! Nothing must come in the way of it, everything must give place to it. Have you a good piano?"

"I haven't had time to hire one yet; I thought perhaps you would——"

"Yes, yes, I will choose one for you; see! give me your address again, I've lost your card. I shall be in Regent Street to-day, and I will choose an instrument and send down to you. Now, good-bye; every minute of my day is disposed of—paid for, in fact, and I am rigorous in giving a full and fair equivalent." Then she shook Jenifer warmly by the hand, and sent the aspirant away feeling that her little bark was fairly launched now on the great, wide stormy sea of professional life.

But content as Jenifer was herself with the tacit approval Madame Voglio had vouchsafed to accord, she could not imbue her mother with the same sentiment.

"Didn't she admit that you had a beautiful voice, Jenny? Because, if she didn't allow that, I shall think that she's jealous of you already, and shall advise you to go to someone else for lessons."

"She said I had a good voice, and she made me do things with it that I've never achieved before. You needn't be afraid that jealousy will cause her to do me scanty justice; I'm sure she will make the best that is to be made of me; she won't make a fool of me by flattering me."

"My dear child, no one despises flattery more than I do; still, it seems rather strange that this Madame Voglio should find nothing to admire in a voice which has always commanded admiration from everyone who has heard it."

"Perhaps she's the only person who has heard it yet who knows anything at all about it," Jenifer said good-temperedly, but Mrs. Ray's maternal plumage had been ruffled.

"Your poor dear father always said you reminded him of Louisa Pyne—or was it Louisa Vinning? But whichever it was, you reminded him of that one at her

best. I suppose it's only natural for the old ones to cling to their laurels as long as they can, but I do like to see generosity shown to young talent! Well, we shall soon see if there is the marked improvement there ought to be in your singing after she has been teaching you a little time. What is Madame Voglio like?"

Jenifer described her.

"Shocking habit that of breakfasting late in a dressing-gown," Mrs. Ray said, shaking her head reprehendingly. "Did she name any time for you to come out?"

"Oh dear no, mother! There was nothing said about that advanced stage; but she is very clever, and if I can learn anything, it will be from her; and she's very kind and very clear; she's so sure that everything she says about singing is right that she didn't leave me in doubt for a moment. I shall attend to her, and obey her unhesitatingly."

"I confess I'm a little disappointed," Mrs. Ray said, sighing gently, "but I still think there may be a little professional jealousy at the bottom of it. It is hard to be superseded; no one knows that better than I do," the poor lady continued sadly, thinking of Effie; "still, we should all struggle against the small, grudging feeling. I'm quite longing to hear you sing, dear child, for, I suppose, after even one lesson from such a proficient your style has been altered and improved?"

"And so you shall hear me as soon as the piano, which Madame Voglio is going to send to-day, arrives," Jenifer said, and then she went on to speak of other things, feeling that the subject of her singing-mistress, lessons, and professional future would be one fruitful of misunderstanding between her mother and herself for some time—until, indeed, she had won her spurs, or been worsted in the battle.

"Now for Kensington Gardens, mother. This is my last free day for some time, and I want to enjoy it. After to-day I shall have to practise, practise, practise."

As they were walking down by the canal, wending their way as straight towards Kensington Gardens as their limited knowledge of the locality allowed them to do, Mrs. Ray gave her daughter an account of the interesting interview she had had with her even more interesting landlady.

"Hers is a deeply pathetic story I'm sure," the kind-hearted, confiding woman said warmly; "there were volumes—volumes in the tone in which she just

passingly alluded to the better days she had known."

"I'm glad you like her," Jenifer said heartily, for she hoped that Mrs. Hatton might prove a pleasant pastime for her mother during her own unavoidable absences.

"Her gratitude to Mr. Boldero is boundless. I'm not quite sure what he has done for her—now I come to think about it she did not tell me—but she is deeply, beautifully grateful to him. It was quite touching to hear her."

"Then my little fancy sketch of a romance, which you didn't like when I offered it for your inspection on the journey up, will be filled in. You say her gratitude to him is boundless, and I'm sure his pity for her is, so they're bound to reward and console one another sooner or later."

"I should hardly say that 'romance' has any place in her feelings towards him," Mrs. Ray said thoughtfully. "She is a remarkably sensible, straightforward, practical woman, I am sure, and I think she looks upon Mr. Boldero rather as a guardian or elder brother than a lover; he knew her when she was a lovely child, and afterwards, when she was a beautiful young girl."

"Did she tell you all this?"

"Yes, Jenny, in the simplest, frankest way; that's what struck me as being so pretty. And he was the only person who never flattered her—in words—he never pandered to her vanity, and she respects him for it."

"I wonder if she will repeat this touching little idyll for my benefit," Jenifer said, with a brief laugh that had not much mirth in it. "I should enjoy hearing her enlarge on the subject of her childish loveliness and girlish beauty. I hope she will tell me her simple story."

"Perhaps she may feel a little diffidence about it with you, for I believe I did say something about Mr. Boldero having proposed to you, or rather for you."

"Mother! surely not?"

"Yes, I did, Jenifer. I felt she was quite to be relied upon, and, circumspect as I am, I did tell her of Mr. Boldero's offer, and of the extraordinary way in which he withdrew it, or holds it over, or whatever one may call it. Even if she betrays my confidence and tells him, which I feel sure she won't do, there's no harm done."

"No, certainly, no harm. Did you tell

her—does she know anything about Hubert and Jack?"

"I told her that my sons had disappointed me in the marriages they have made, and she sympathised with me very feelingly, poor thing, for her mother was very much hurt and distressed by her marriage, it seems, and the remembrance of her own undutifulness evidently affects her deeply. She was quite interested in hearing about your brothers; she thought Captain Edgecumb was one of my sons last night, and I told her that I thought he would like to be."

"Let us go back to the lodgings," Jenifer exclaimed suddenly, with the feeling that all the sunshine was gone from the atmosphere, and that clogging, heavy, impeding mists were around her.

The girl was physically tired from the unwonted strain that had been made upon her by the morning's lesson, and in addition to the physical fatigue, she was nerve-weary, and desperately uncertain about many things. That her mother should have confided the causes of much of this uncertain feeling to their unknown, untried landlady was not reassuring.

"I hope you're not vexed, Jenny dear," Mrs. Ray murmured apologetically to her daughter; "she was so friendly and frank about her own affairs that I was led on to say more than perhaps I ought to have said to a stranger; but it was difficult to regard her as a stranger, mixed up as she seems to be with Mr. Boldero."

"I'm not vexed, I'm not anything but tired," poor Jenifer said wearily. "Why should I be vexed? You have a right to say what you please to anyone about your own children."

"And Mr. Boldero will be pleased if we become intimate with Mrs. Hatton; you remember how highly he spoke of her," Mrs. Ray said cheerily.

"I shall not try to please Mr. Boldero in that way," Jenny laughed; "Mrs. Hatton is too interesting a study to herself, for me to get interested in studying her. Oh dear! what a long way every place is from every other place in London when one walks the distance!"

"Mrs. Hatton was saying this morning that perhaps we might arrange to hire a little brougham between us once or twice a week," Mrs. Ray said hesitatingly, and Jenifer's heart ached over her own inability either to provide her mother with an independent locomotive power, or to endorse Mrs. Hatton's suggestion amiably.

The feeling that she had brought her mother to these unfamiliar haunts, where her footsteps would perpetually be straying from advisable paths, was upon the girl with cruel weight, and as they slowly and sadly plodded home, she told herself that as her brothers had disregarded their duty towards their mother, it might be hers to give Mrs. Ray such a son-in-law as Captain Edgcomb.

"Only he belongs to the holiday past, not to the workaday future," she thought, and just now she was in a frame of mind which yearned for fitness and harmony with her intentions and prospects, however crude the one and hard the other might be.

Things seemed brighter when they reached their lodgings. Two or three incidents had happened to make a diversion. The piano had arrived, and Hubert had called on horseback, bearing a neatly-worded little note from Effie, to the effect that Mr. Jervoise was temporarily better, and that therefore their departure for Brighton was delayed.

"Flora and I are rather glad of this," Effie wrote, "as Mrs. Archie Campbell has a big affair on on Sunday night. Shall I try to get an invitation for Jenifer? Mr. Campbell can help Jenifer tremendously professionally if he likes, and if she goes under Flora's wing he will be sure to like to do it."

"Effie is good-natured," Mrs. Ray said placably when she read this note. But Jenifer could not get up any enthusiasm about going to a party at the house of a man who might be professionally useful to her, under the wing of brightly-plumaged Mrs. Jervoise.

In spite of herself, in spite of her undeveloped antagonism to Mrs. Hatton, Jenifer was compelled to acknowledge that the presence of the pleasant-looking little mistress of the house in their room made the evening hours brighter and briefer. The versatile little lady was quite a different being to the one who had pathetically interested Mrs. Ray in the morning. She was no longer beauty in distress, but rather hard and practical, as became a woman who had to make her way in the world. Very frank still, but in a way that was prosaically disarming.

"I find you know Mr. Boldero as well as or better than I do?" she said to Jenifer; "he's a capital business man; I thought myself clever and a good manager, but if it hadn't been for him I should have come to dreadful grief when our affairs became

involved; he was so good to me—it's his nature to be good to everyone. Don't you like him, Miss Ray?"

"I do," Jenifer said curtly.

"You find very little to say about him."

"I like my mother, but I don't care to pull her good qualities, and my appreciation of them, to bits for the benefit of strangers."

"Ah, you mean you regard him as a father," Mrs. Hatton responded brightly; "yes, I can quite imagine your looking up to him in that way, and it must be so charming for him to feel that, however kind he is, you don't make sentimental mistakes. John Boldero has a horror of women who make sentimental mistakes; that is one reason why he is good enough to stand fast by poor little me always. He knows that I don't twist and distort every little idle bit of gallantry into an offer of marriage; he has, I know, had one or two awkward experiences of over-ready girls."

"And he has confided these experiences to you?" Jenifer asked, feeling furious with Mr. Boldero and Mrs. Hatton, and more furious still with herself for being discomposed.

"Well, he has sometimes allowed me to penetrate to the root of his troubles," Mrs. Hatton replied complacently. "I have had so many troubles of my own that it has made me a very ready reader of the cares and worries of others."

"Ah," Mrs. Ray said with tearful sympathy, "I too know what it is to lose a husband! None but a widow can rightly sympathise with a widow."

At these words Mrs. Hatton's face became suddenly suffused with a cruel, scarlet, scalding blush that evidently caused smarting sensations, for her eyes filled with tears.

"Whatever my griefs may be, I never obtrude them on any one; I am content to go on my quiet harmless way, always working and striving to do my best, without asking for aid or pity from the cruel world," she said resignedly, making poor old Mrs. Ray feel guilty of having displayed vulgar curiosity.

"And whatever your griefs may be, you may rest assured that neither my mother nor I want to drag them into the light for discussion," Jenifer said coldly; for that her mother should be unjustly made to suffer remorse for that of which she was incapable, was a state of things not to be patiently endured by Miss Ray.

But it was no part of Mrs. Hatton's programme to offend, or to take offence with, her young lady lodger yet. Much might be done by means of Miss Ray, and by Mrs. Ray's unguarded utterances in the future. And in the present these two ladies were a link between Mrs. Hatton, and a man over whom Mrs. Hatton did not mean to relax any hold she might have.

There was nothing either wicked or weak about the little woman, who was forced by circumstances into underhand lines of action very often. In reality she would have preferred straight, easy, blameless, briarless paths, and these she had trodden once. But circumstances had pressed hard upon her, and she was not one to resist the pressure of circumstances. She would evade them if they were adverse, or take a sinuous course in and about them. And this latter thing she had done from necessity at first, until the doing it had become a pleasant and exciting pastime in her rather eventless life. She acted and implied untruths frequently, but she argued that the actions and implications would invariably bear other constructions than those which were wrong-headedly put upon them by the people she deceived. For example, she had never said in so many words that her husband was dead. Yet Mr. Boldero believed her to be a widow, and Mrs. Ray was now taking the same thing for granted. It really was not her doing if other people fell into error through her being in a false position, and at the same time reticent and confiding. Nothing would have pleased her better than to have been free and daring, open and above-board in her dealings with people. But she could not bring herself to be these things, unless she could at the same time have the assurance that she would be thoroughly comfortable. This assurance was wanting as usual at the time the Rays came into her life. Therefore she did not feel that it behoved her to be exceptionally frank and above-board in her dealings with them.

So now when Jenifer said that neither her mother nor herself desired to drag Mrs. Hatton's secret sorrows into the light of day for discussion, Mrs. Hatton gracefully accepted the opportunity of avoiding any further information respecting herself, by saying:

"It is so much to me to feel that I have friends near to me on whom I can rely—friends of his."

"Who are they?" Jenifer asked bluntly.

"I meant your mother and yourself. Won't you let me claim you as friends? He wishes it," Mrs. Hatton replied sweetly.

"Who is 'he'? If you mean Mr. Boldero, why don't you say so; there is surely no reason why he should be nameless between us," Jenifer answered angrily.

THE LORDS OF THE FORESTS.

THREE months have passed—three months of delight—since my lucky star brought me to California, and suggested an immediate trip to the Sierra Nevada, there to rejoice by turns in its forests, its crags, its wonderful waterfalls.

Each has been a minister of true joy; but, perhaps, the most delightful days of all have been those spent in the sequoia groves, in the heart of the most magnificent forest that can well be imagined. And herein I have certainly realised an altogether new sensation, for I have seen the big trees of California, and have walked round about them, and inside their cavernous hollows, and have done homage as befits a most reverent tree-worshipper. They are wonderful! they are stupendous! But as to beauty!—no. They shall never tempt me to swerve from my allegiance to my true tree-love—the glorious deodara forests of the Himalayas.

If size alone were to be considered, undoubtedly the sequoia stands pre-eminent, for I have seen many trees at least three times as large as the biggest deodaras in the cedar shade of Kunai, but for symmetry and grace, and exquisitely harmonious lines, the "God-given" cedar of Himala stands alone, with its wide-spreading twisted arms and velvety layers of foliage studded with pale-green cones, its great red stem supporting a mighty pyramid of green, far more majestic than the diminutive crown of the big trees.

There is nothing loveable about a sequoia. It is so gigantic that I feel overawed by it, but all the time I am conscious that in my secret heart I am comparing it with the old Dutch trees in a Noah's Ark, with a small tuft of foliage on the top of a large red stem out of all proportion. And another unpleasant simile forces itself on my mind, namely, a tall penguin, or one of the wingless birds of New Zealand, with feeble little flaps in place of wings, altogether disproportioned to their bodies.

But this is merely an aside, lest you should suppose that each new land I visit

wins my affections from earlier loves. The deodara forests must ever keep their place in my innermost heart—no sunlight can ever be so lovely as that which plays among their boughs, no sky so blue, no ice-peak so glittering as those which there cleave the heavens, and I am sure that the poor wretched-looking Digger Indians, who live here, in their picturesque but miserable conical huts of bark, can never have the same interest for me as the wild Himalayan highlanders, the Paharis, who assemble at the little temples of carved cedar-wood in the great forest sanctuary, to offer their strange sacrifices, and dance in mystic procession.

Having said this much, I may now sing the praises of a newly-found delight, for, in truth, these forests of the Sierras have a charm of their own which cannot be surpassed—in the amazing variety of beautiful pines, firs, and cedars of which they are composed.

The white fir, the red fir, the Douglas spruce, the sugar-pine, and pitch-pine are the most abundant, and are scattered singly or in strikingly picturesque groups over all the mountains hereabouts.

But the big trees are only to be found in certain favoured spots, sheltered places watered by snow-fed streams, at an average of from five to seven thousand feet above the sea. Eight distinct groves have been discovered, all growing in rich, deep vegetable mould, on a foundation of powdered granite. Broad gaps lie between the principal groves, and it is observed that these invariably lie in the track of the great ice-rivers, where the accumulation of powdered rock and gravel formed the earliest commencement of the soil which by slow degrees became rich, and deep, and fertile.

There is every reason to believe that these groves are preadamite. A very average tree, only twenty-three feet in diameter, having been felled, its annular rings were counted by three different persons, whose calculations varied from two thousand one hundred and twenty-five to two thousand one hundred and thirty-seven, and this tree was probably not half the age of some of its big relations.

Then again, some of the largest of these trees are lying prostrate on the ground, and in the ditches formed by their crash, trees have grown up, of such a size and in such a position as to prove that the fallen giants must have lain there for a thousand years or more, and although partially embedded in the earth, and surrounded

by damp forest, their almost imperishable timber is as sound as if newly felled.

So it appears that a sequoia may lie on damp earth for almost untold ages, without showing any symptom of decay. Yet in the southern groves huge prostrate trees are found quite rotten, apparently proving that they must have lain there for an incalculable period.

Mr. Muir made a most careful calculation of the annular rings of a fallen tree, which was sawed across at four feet from the ground. He measured it inside the bark (which is about eighteen inches thick and feels like rough furniture velvet—a warm coating for the giant), and he found that it was one hundred and seven feet in circumference. The outer part of the trunk is so very close-grained, that he counted thirty annular rings to the inch. Had this proportion been uniform throughout it would have proved the age of the tree to be six thousand four hundred years. The central rings were, however, about twice the width of those formed by the aged tree, so he made a very liberal allowance, and set down the probable age of this patriarch at three thousand five hundred years.

What, then, must be the age of the giant in the King's River Grove, which, were it measured in the same way, inside the bark, would be a hundred and twenty-four feet in girth?

The largest sequoia I myself have seen standing is in the South Grove, near Calaveras. Its circumference is one hundred and twenty feet; but ere we reached it we had passed so many gigantic trees that our eyes failed to make us realise its true size. Perhaps the best way to do so would be to measure this length on a string and peg it out on an English lawn. One might then compare the size with the nearest oak or elm, and so gain a fair notion of the difference.

The largest tree in the Calaveras grove is the Father of the Forest; but it, alas! lies prostrate, and seems as though it may have lain there for many a century. Its girth near the base is one hundred and ten feet, and its length is estimated to have been four hundred and fifty, though part of it has disappeared. The tallest tree now standing at Calaveras is three hundred and twenty-five feet in height, and out of the one hundred sequoias found in this grove, twenty-five are found to exceed two hundred and fifty feet, and four exceed three hundred.

Though there is every probability that

California's big tree will maintain its supremacy as the most massive column in the world's forests, it must perforce yield the palm of altitude to the Australian eucalyptus. In the valley of the Watts River, in Victoria, many fallen trees have been measured as they lie on the ground, and found to exceed three hundred and fifty feet in length. One mighty giant had fallen, so as to form a bridge across a deep ravine. It had been broken in falling, but the portion which remained intact measured four hundred and thirty-five feet in length, and as its girth at the point of fracture is nine feet, its discoverer estimates that the perfect tree must have measured fully five hundred feet. Its circumference, five feet above the roots, is fifty-four feet.

Another gum-tree on Mount Wellington was found to be one hundred and two feet in girth at three feet from the ground. Its height could not be estimated, owing to the density of the forest. But its next neighbour, which was ninety feet in circumference, was found to be three hundred in height.

In the Dandenong district of Victoria, an almond-leaf gum-tree (*Eucalyptus amygdalina*) has been carefully measured, and is found to be four hundred and thirty feet in height. It rises three hundred and eighty feet before throwing out a branch; its circumference is sixty feet.

Tasmania also produces specimens of eucalyptus which are three hundred and fifty feet in height, and which rise two hundred feet ere forming a branch. One near Hobart Town is eighty-six feet in girth, and, till ten years ago, towered to a height of three hundred feet, but is now a ruin.

The question of supremacy is, however, confined to altitude, for the untidy-looking eucalyptus, with its ragged and tattered grey bark hanging about it in such slovenly fashion, can never contest the palm of might or majesty with these stately cedars, whose magnificent golden-red shafts tower on high like the fluted marble columns of some vast cathedral.

At Calaveras there is one glade in the forest which above all others suggests this thought. From one point I could see twenty of the grand red columns. Those on which the sunlight fell were of a bright glowing sienna; they seemed like pillars of fire. Others, seen against the light, were of a deep maroon colour, like porphyry. Mingling with these were lesser shafts, grey, red, or yellow, of many other pines and firs, and these were as the pillars

clustering in the dreamy aisles of Nature's grand sunlit forest sanctuary.

Before such stupendous pillars as these, my beloved Himalayan deodaras are positively dwarfed, for I doubt if I have ever seen one which exceeded thirty feet in circumference, even in the glorious forest of Kunai, where one especial group will ever abide in my mind as the very type of all that is noblest in the tree kingdom—a group which happily is safe from the cruel axe which works such sore havoc on every side, being guarded by the presence of a little cedar-wood temple, a mere pigmy nestling beneath their shade, but which marks that the simple highlanders reverence this beautiful group as being especially "The Trees of God," as their name implies.

The name of the sacred cedar, the deodar, whether it be derived from the Sanskrit deva or the Latin deus, describes these stately cedars as emphatically the trees of God. They are called in the sacred Shâstras, Devadara, or Devadaru—the names still in use among the Paharis. The second syllable, variously rendered as "da" or "do," "dara," "daru," may be translated "the gift," "the spouse," "the wood," but all alike denote the sanctity of the tree.

Something of reverence seems to have been accorded to the cedar in all lands. The Hebrew poet sang of "the trees of the Lord, even the cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted." And here in the Sierra Nevada, the Indians believe that all other trees grow, but that the big trees are the special creation of the Great Spirit.

Whether they know them by any name expressing this idea I failed to learn. But the name by which they are known to the civilised world is that of Sequoyah, a half-caste Cherokee Indian, who distinguished himself by inventing an alphabet and a written language for his tribe. It was a most ingenious alphabet, consisting of eighty-six characters, each representing a syllable, and was so well adapted to its purpose, that it was extensively used by the Indians before the white man had ever heard of it. Afterwards, it was adopted by the missionaries, who started a printing-press with types of this character, and issued a newspaper for the Cherokee tribe by whom this singular alphabet is still used.

When Endlicher, the learned botanist, had to find a suitable name for the lovely redwood cedars, he did honour to Sequoyah by linking his memory for ever with that of the evergreen forests of the

Coast Range—*Sequoia semper virens*. And when afterwards these big trees of the same race were discovered on the Sierras, they of course were included under the same family name. It is too bad that so many people in Britain should persist in calling these trees Wellingtonia.

I suppose there are few facts in the history of the world's forests more remarkable than the manner in which these two great brothers have divided the land between them, each adhering so rigidly to its own territory that the *Semper virens* holds undivided sway in the low Coast Range, while the *Gigantea* reigns exclusively in the Sierra Nevada. Except that a very small number of redwoods have been found in Oregon, the sequoia are purely Californian, being found nowhere else; and, indeed, they have as yet only been discovered in eight groves, of which Calaveras is the most northerly, and also lies at the lowest altitude, being only four thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine feet above the sea, whereas the southern groves in the great Tule and Kaweah forests are at a height of about seven thousand feet.

The redwood is never found save within the influence of the Pacific sea-fogs. The chilling mists which sweep up the Coast Range seem essential to the very existence of these beautiful trees, and perhaps accounts for the freshness of their rich green foliage. The redwood forests are perhaps the most stately in the world, partly owing to the fact that they are rarely mixed with other trees, but grow by themselves, generally far enough apart to let each tree have its separate value. Yet in the great forest their beautiful cinnamon-coloured stems are ranged in tens of thousands, like so many tall pillars faultlessly upright, losing themselves in a canopy of sombre green.

These average from twenty-five to thirty-six feet in circumference, but some are found ranging from eighty to a hundred feet, while in height they run from two to three hundred feet, and one has been measured which was upwards of three hundred and forty-four feet—a glorious spire!—so they are not so very far behind the *Gigantea* in point of size.

One group of redwoods, on the road between San José and Santa Cruz, has been converted into a quaint hotel. Here is its description taken from a local paper: "Imagine ten immense trees standing a few feet apart, and hollow inside; these are the hotel—neat, breezy, and romantic. The largest tree is sixty-five feet round,

and contains a sitting-room. All about this tree is a garden of flowers and evergreens. The drawing-room is a bower made of redwood, evergreens, and madrona branches. For bed-chambers there are nine great hollow trees, whitewashed or papered, and having doors cut to fit the shape of the holes. Literature finds a place in a leaning stump, dubbed 'The library.'"

Far more startling is the account given in another Californian paper of a railway viaduct in Sonoma County. Between the Chyper Mills and Stewart's Point, where the road crosses a deep ravine, the trees are sawed off on a level, and the roadway of rough timber is actually laid on these growing pillars. In the centre of the ravine two huge redwood trees, standing side by side, have been cut off seventy-five feet above the ground, and form substantial central columns for the support of the railway, across which heavily laden timber-cars pass securely.

Such use as this sounds well in keeping with the surroundings, but those timber-carts tell of ruthless, wholesale destruction, which is truly sad to think of; grand tracts of magnificent forest in which the lumberers see only so many thousand cubic feet of timber, which by every means in their power they must contrive to reduce to railway-sleepers and shingles for the building of wooden houses, and many another purpose useful to man.

The redwood timber is especially prized, for several reasons. To begin with, no other tree splits so true to the grain—a great virtue in the eyes of the lumberer. None better resists the action of damp and decay, or yields more slowly to that of fire, very important points to a country where nearly all the houses are built of wood. Consequently this timber is in immense demand, and already vast tracts which, but a few years ago, were primeval forest, are now entirely denuded.

This is notably the case in the neighbourhood of San Francisco, where, ere the gold rush of '49, the Coast Range was all clothed with beautiful redwood, which has now entirely vanished, and the destroyer is now carrying on the work of devastation in the forests far north and south of the city, especially along the course of the rivers, which form convenient water-ways for floating the great timber-rafts to the sea.

Many a noble tree is sent thundering down precipices, where it is broken by its own fall; but, if possible, a system of

leverage is brought to bear, by which the fallen monarch is carried to the brink of an artificially constructed slide, down which the great timbers glide gently, and so reach the stream which, in its next flood time, shall carry them to the river, and so they eventually reach the great timber vessels, and go to take their part in the busy world.

Sometimes, when the rivers come down in flood, they carry huge logs right out to sea, and the ocean-currents sweep them onward till they reach some distant shore, where they are hailed as invaluable prizes by islanders, to whom such giant stems are unknown. Thus, when Vancouver visited Kanai, the northernmost of the Hawaiian Isles, he noticed a very handsome canoe, upwards of sixty feet in length, which had been made from an American pine log, which had drifted ashore in a perfectly sound condition. The natives had kept the log unwrought for a long time, hoping that the tide might bring them a second, and enable them to make such a double canoe as would have been the envy of the whole group; but for this they had waited in vain.

The redwood is, unfortunately, not the sole sufferer at the hands of the lumberers, to whom all trees that can be transformed into dollars are alike fair game. Sad to say, of the eight sequoia groves hitherto discovered, that of Mariposa is the only one which has been reserved by government as a park for the nation, and is consequently strictly preserved. All the others are at the mercy of greedy Goths, whose energies are all devoted to the destruction of the beautiful primeval forests.

For the present, the small grove of Calaveras is safe, being the private property of one who fully recognises it as "the goose which lays the golden eggs," and is therefore worthy of all care. But the safety of this exquisite gem is dependent on individual will, and is not secured by any edict of the state.

The national park of Mariposa consists of two distinct groves, the lower grove lying in a sheltered valley between two mountain spurs; the upper grove, as its name implies, on a higher level, six thousand five hundred feet above the sea. It was here that I first had the privilege of doing homage to the sequoia.

In company with several friends, I had spent a night at a comfortable ranch, which has now developed into a cottage hotel. Early dawn found us in the saddle, capital sure-footed ponies being provided for all

who chose to ride. From this house we had to ascend about two thousand five hundred feet, but the track follows an easy gradient, and the whole distance lies through beautiful forests, where each successive group of pines seems lovelier than the last.

I think we all agreed that the queen of beauty is the sugar-pine (*Picus Laubertiana*), so exquisite is the grace of its tall tapering spire and slender branches, each following the most perfect double curve of the true line of beauty.

And next, I think, ranks the incense cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*), with its rich brown bark and warm golden-green foliage. The young trees are feathered to the ground, their lower branches drooping, those nearer the summit pointing heavenward; the whole forming a perfectly tapering cone of richest green. The older trees throw out great angular arms, from which the golden lichens hang in long waving festoons, like embodied sunlight. As we gradually worked uphill to the higher coniferous belts, the trees seemed gradually to increase in size, so that the eye got accustomed by degrees, and when at length we actually reached the big tree grove, we scarcely realised that we were in the presence of the race of giants. Only when we occasionally halted at the base of a colossal pillar, somewhere about eighty feet in circumference, and about two hundred and fifty in height, and compared it with its neighbours, and above all, with ourselves, poor insignificant pigmies, could we bring home to our minds a sense of its gigantic proportions.

With all the reverence due to antiquity, we gazed on these Methuselahs of the forest, to whom a few centuries more or less in the record of their long lives are a trifle scarcely worth mentioning. But our admiration was more freely bestowed on the rising generation, the beautiful young trees, only about five or six hundred years of age, and averaging thirty feet in circumference; while still younger trees, the mere children of about a hundred years old, still retain the graceful habits of early youth, and are very elegant in their growth, though, of course, none but mere babies bear the slightest resemblance to the tree as we know it on English lawns.

It really is heart-breaking to see the havoc that has been done by careless fires. Very few of the older trees have escaped scatheless. Most of this damage has been done by Indians, who burn the scrub to

scare the game, and the fire spreads to the trees, and there smoulders unheeded for weeks, till happily some chance extinguishes it. Many lords of the forest have thus been burned out, and have at last fallen, and lie on the ground partly embedded, forming great tunnels, hollow from end to end, so that, in several cases, two horsemen can ride abreast inside the tree from (what was once) its base to its summit.

We halted at the base of the Grizzly Giant, which well deserves its name, for it measures ninety-three feet in circumference, and looks so battered and weather-worn that it probably is about the most venerable tree in the forest. It is one of the most picturesque sequoias I have seen, just because it has broken through all the rules of symmetry so rigidly observed by its well-conditioned, well-grown brethren, and instead of being a vast cinnamon-coloured column with small boughs near the summit, it has taken a line of its own, and thrown out several great branches, each about six feet in diameter—in other words, about as large as a fine old English beech-tree.

This poor old tree has had a great hollow burnt in it (I think the Indians must have used it as a kitchen), and our half-dozen ponies and mules were stabled in the hollow—a most picturesque group. It seems strange to see trees thus scorched and charred, with their insides clean burnt out, yet on looking far, far overhead, to perceive them crowned with fresh green foliage, as if nothing ailed them.

I have said that these giants fail to impress me with a sense of beauty, from the disproportion of their boughs to their huge stems. This, however, only occurs to me on those rare occasions when a big tree stands so much alone that the eye can take it in at a glance, and this very rarely is the case. Generally, as the author of Circular Notes has quaintly put it, we cannot see the trees for the forest! Splendid red, and yellow, and silvery-grey pillars are grouped all around the colossal sienna column, and their mingling boughs form a canopy of such lovely green, that at first you scarcely notice that the kindly verdure all belongs to other trees, and that whatever clothing the giant may possess, is all reserved for his (frequently invisible) head and shoulders.

But of the loveliness of the underwood you can form no conception from any comparison with the finest fir-woods in Britain. True, the glory of purple heather is here unknown, so our little island has one

strong point in her favour. But on the other hand these forests are draped with a most exquisite lichen, which on many trees covers all the branches with a thick coating, several inches deep, of the most brilliant yellow-green. It is just the colour we call lemon-yellow, with a sprinkling of chrome; but this sounds prosaic, and its effect in the sombre forest is that of joyous sunbeams lighting up the darkness.

We all came back laden with golden boughs and with immense cones of the sugar-pine, which are about fifteen inches in length, and with tiny cones of the giant cedar, which scarcely measure two inches.

Considering the multitude of cones which must fall every autumn, we rather wondered to see so few young cedars springing up round the parent stems. But this is accounted for by the frequent fires, which, as I have already observed, have done so much havoc in the grove. Comparatively few of the largest trees are altogether free from injury. They are either burned at the base, or at one side, or, like the Grizzly Giant, their poor old hearts have been burnt out, leaving blackened caverns in their places, and perhaps forming chimneys right up the middle of the trees. I suppose the Indians have made a custom of camping in the grove, for there are fewer traces of fire on the outskirts, and young trees of five or six inches in diameter are tolerably abundant.

Someone has taken the trouble to count and measure the trees in the upper Mariposa grove, and has found that, without counting baby giants, it contains three hundred and sixty-five sequoias of upwards of three feet in circumference—one for every day of the year. Of these, about one hundred and twenty-five measure upwards of forty feet round. The lower grove contains about half that number. In the upper grove the big trees are more strikingly grouped, and stand together in clusters, without so many of other sorts intervening.

The trail is led uphill by the course of one stream, and down beside another, so as to pass beside all the finest trees. They are bright rushing streams, leaping from rock to rock, and in the month of April we found them still fringed with crystalline, glittering icicles. We did not, however, attempt to follow them closely, as, at that high level, the snow is still so deep as effectually to conceal the trail, so we struck a line for ourselves. You cannot imagine anything more glorious than the forest in its veil of white. The snow lay in dazzling layers on the drooping boughs of many a pine,

and now again a light shower of feathery snowflakes fell silently, as if just shaken from some passing cloud. All was still and solemn; the great pyramids of green seemed even more majestic when half revealed through these drifting showers, and here and there a tree, half burnt and blackened, stood alone, monstrous and spectral. Sometimes, when the mists became denser, each weird and awful form seemed magnified, till the forest seemed transformed into an army of mysterious spirits, appearing and disappearing amid the vapours, like gigantic blue phantoms.

Of our little company several were quickly satisfied, and turned back from the lower grove, with the happy consciousness that they had seen the big trees, and could say so, which appears to be the sole aim of a multitude of globe-trotters in regard to most of the beauties of Nature. So we were but a select few who reached the silence of the upper world.

The ridge was too steep, and the snow too deep for the ponies, so we tied them to trees, and toiled upward on foot, feeling that the beauty of the scene was a full reward for all the fatigue involved. On our homeward way, just on the verge of the newly-thawed snow, we found some blossoms of the strange Californian snow-flower (*Sarcodes sanguinea*)—a pyramid of little scarlet bells and crimson leaflets, clustered on one very fleshy stem, something like a hyacinth; it grows straight out of the earth almost like a fungus, without any green leaves—at least I saw none.

Since this first day at Mariposa, I have spent many a glad day in other groves, when the forest was all bathed in sunshine, and the glowing light shone on the great red stems, and the air was scented with the breath of wild flowers and resinous fir-needles—the most health-giving of all Nature's pleasant cures for her over-worked children.

Is it not strange that men should have been so slow to learn how to apply this lesson, that we are only now beginning to learn from Austrian peasants something of the curative properties of fir-tree oil and wool, and even woollen clothing manufactured from the needles of Austrian pines, in subduing rheumatism, in checking obstinate coughs, in cleansing wounds, and in purifying and disinfecting purposes of all sorts? It seems to possess a double virtue, for it is fatal to all noxious forms of life, and the gardener who is afflicted by such pests as green-fly, blight, or scale,

needs but to syringe his plants with this blessed oil and tepid water, in certain proportions, and lo! his foes perish, and the sickly plants recover.

Small wonder is there that those whose lonely but happy lot is cast in some log-hut on the borders of the great forest, should seem to us such embodiments of health, while with every breath they inhale the fragrance of cypress, pine, and cedar.

Well do the Californians understand the value of so delightful a remedy for over-worked denizens of the city. Hence has arisen one of the recognised "institutions" of the country, namely, that of camping out, which means that in the course of the summer a very large number of families start from San Francisco and other cities to enjoy a month or six weeks of most literal gipsying. Each family hires a large van to carry the cooking apparatus, bedding, and babies. Tents are slung on pack mules, and the grown-up members of the family, got up in wonderful forest costumes, ride powerful horses, the women generally adopting men's Mexican saddles. They march till they reach some fascinating spot—if possible, choosing one which combines the advantages of green pastures and clear waters—not necessarily still waters, for the bright rippling streams yield trout fully equal to our own, than which no higher praise can be bestowed. Here the tents are pitched, the camp-fires kindled; men, women, and children divide the pleasant domestic work, and day and night slip by in peaceful enjoyment of a delicious summer climate, where even a passing rain-shower is almost unknown. So when the month's holiday is ended, the pale faces have altogether disappeared, and a robust and healthy family returns to the dull routine of city life, therein sustained by the delightful prospect of another camping expedition in the following summer.

AMOR MORTUUS.

LONG years ago, when all the world was young,
And fresh and sweet, one morning I espied
Love standing by my side,
White, sun-kissed lilies in his hand;
With these he smote my heart-door, as he cried:
"Open! at Love's command!"
And lo! my heart-door on its hinges swung,
And slowly opened wide.

Love entered. All my life seemed fair and gay,
With passion-blossoms rare my heart he
dressed,
My lips with kisses pressed.
A thousand times I would that I had died
Ere I had opened to the vision blest!
Ah, would I had denied
The stranger welcome, for one bitter day
He died within my breast.

Love lieth dead, for ever pale and still ;
 By cruel hands, false vows, all foully slain,
 Red with his life-blood's stain.
 No lilies now or passion blooms he bears,
 Only the thorny crimson rose of pain
 Upon his breast he wears.
 I kiss his trailing wings, dumb lips so chill,
 I weep, I call in vain.
 Shall there in some far day, some unborn year,
 Some yet unwelcomed hour, unknown before,
 A step pause by my door ;
 A hand smite on the portals shut so fast,
 A voice, that thrills my being to its core,
 Bid my love rise at last ?
 Or shall he, in eternal darkness drear
 Lie dead for evermore ?

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART XI.

JUST as midnight had struck a strong reinforcement of visitors entered the salon-de-jeu at Trouville, all in evening-dress, and with the animation and gaiety of people who have made up their minds that they won't go home till morning. Conspicuous among these was Redmond, in the very best of spirits and looking as if he had not a care in the world, which, likely enough, was his happy lot.

"Well, Tom," he cried, taking my partner by the shoulder, "here I am, faithful to my tryst. And you, my Indian bird," neddng familiarly to me, "you are still making money by the odd trick."

The count looked up with an evil expression on his face. He was perhaps a little nettled at losing so persistently, and he saw at the same time an opportunity for forcing on a quarrel.

"That is an unlucky expression to make use of at a card-table, especially when one can command a diabolic vein of luck, like your friend there."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Redmond sharply, staring at the count with a defiant look in his eyes.

"Well, I do not know," retorted the count, rising from his seat and looking round as if addressing the room in general. "I play one day with an Englishman," looking at Redmond, "and I win, and he asks me to take a little bit of paper; another day I play and lose with another Englishman, who wins everything in a strange fashion; and then there is not talk of paper then. What shall we understand by that—of these comrades who work together?"

Redmond turned pale with anger, but as he evidently was in the count's debt for money lost at play, he could not for the moment reply with effect. I saw Tom fumbling in his pockets for his note-case.

"Pay the brute, and then knock him down," he whispered to Redmond. But it would have been disgraceful in me to have let Redmond take up my quarrel, and as the readiest means of bringing matters to a crisis I told the count that he was both "menteur" and "lâche." This last word is unpardonable, and in a moment everybody had sprung to his feet, and the whole room formed a hedge about us.

The director of the rooms hurried up with a formidable band of assistants. He implored and entreated that we would at once adjourn and settle the dispute elsewhere.

"But there is no dispute," cried Colonel Peltier with a voice of command; "this Englishman has insulted my friend and compatriot. Let it be understood that he is willing to give satisfaction; it is all that we ask. But if he shelters himself behind his nationality, if he is willing to insult, and run away, then I demand on the part of my friend that he be ignominiously expelled from these rooms."

There was a general cry of assent to the justice of this proposal.

"You'll have to fight him," said Tom in a low voice; "for the honour of old England, you will."

And indeed there seemed to be no other way out of the difficulty, unless at the cost of incurring a load of ignominy that would make life itself a burden. And having once confided the matter to the care of Tom and Redmond, the preliminaries were adjusted with commendable rapidity. No one would care to have such a thing hanging over his head for longer than he could help; and so I was glad to find that the meeting had been fixed for early morning—half-past five o'clock, before the workmen even were astir, on a level piece of sand beyond the Roches Noires. Our opponents advised that the yacht should be taken out of harbour and anchored out at sea, ready to slip off at a moment's notice, while a boat should lie off the shore ready to pick us up—the English parties to the quarrel—if the affair should have a serious result, that is to say, if I should happen to kill the count, which, by the way, I had not the slightest intention of doing. Not that anything was seriously to be dreaded from the action of the law even in that case; but a trial would necessarily follow, an affair which would be annoying and irksome.

Tom magnanimously offered to the count the shelter of the yacht in case he attained the honour of homicide. But this offer

was declined with many thanks. The inconvenience to the count of being arrested, and so forth, would be but trifling; and indeed it was evident that he would not willingly miss the honour and glory of making his appearance in court, and of being pointed out as the adroit swordsman who had wiped out an affront in the blood of his adversary.

We had agreed that Hilda was to know nothing of the meeting. But it was not easy to keep her in the dark. Hilda was sitting up for us when we reached the yacht, and she saw at once in our faces that something had happened. Still, we contrived to deceive her as to the imminence of the affair. There had been a quarrel, no doubt, and serious results might follow; but perhaps the matter would be arranged amicably after all. In the meantime we were to have a cruise on the following day, and the yacht was to lie at anchor outside for what remained of the night. Hilda was satisfied when she felt the yacht moving, and saw that she was actually steaming out of the harbour, and she retired to her cabin. And then we stepped quietly into a boat alongside, and made for the shore like so many malefactors, which perhaps, indeed, we were in intention. By the time Hilda woke in the morning the affair would be over; there was a kind of comfort in thinking of this. Whatever might happen there would be no long torture of suspense.

Already dawn was in the sky, a heavy lurid dawn, with great cloud-banks massed over the sea, while the sea itself, oily and unruffled, rolled in with a long undulating swell that broke in crisp, angry waves upon the shore. There was some little stir in the harbour, as fishing-boats ran in and landed their cargoes at the fish-market, where the bell was ringing constantly, and a small crowd of buyers was already collected. The fishermen lugged up their baskets and emptied them upon the stone floor of the fish-market. A couple of lobsters; perhaps a fine crayfish, all alive and ready to pinch any too forward customer; a few soles, maybe, flapped on the wet floor. And all these found ready purchasers among the retail fishmongers, and were presently transferred to the stalls outside. But the most ordinary lots were twos and threes of villainous-looking dog-fish, which sold readily—a dog of six or seven pounds fetching a franc or so. The salesman was a stout old fellow, in baggy garments, with an ivory-handled stick, the

ferrule of which did duty as an auctioneer's hammer as he cried in a nasal sing-song, "Six francs, cinq cinquante, cinq, quatre soixante quinze — quatre cinquante;" crack went the stick on the stones, and the lot was sold. Strictly speaking, we were told this kind of Dutch auction, by which the price is lowered instead of raised, and which seems universal in the fishing world, is not legal. Fish, like everything else, should be sold "aux enchères," or by regular advanced biddings. But to accommodate the fishermen, and at the same time avoid a breach of the law, the local authorities enact that the seller may put a reserve price upon his fish, and may lower his reserve price at any time during its sale. And thus behold the thing accomplished, the illegal Dutch auction harmonised with the proper practice in a quite charming manner.

We watched these proceedings for some time; as far as I was concerned, with the dreamy kind of intentness which is said to be characteristic of the man who is going to be hanged. My companions were more cheerful, and were full of advice, à la Lucius O'Trigger, as to the most effective ways of attack and parry; while Redmond, who was supposed to be good at the foils, offered to instruct me in some wonderful trick of fence which might give a tyro a chance with an experienced swordsman. But this last offer I declined, preferring to be left to the light of nature and the inspiration of the moment. As we walked down to the beach, past the boarded structure that did duty as a circus, we heard the noise of stamping and chuffing of feet—not due to the horses, evidently, but to human beings. Tom, who is of an enquiring disposition, put his eye to a crack between two boards, and presently withdrew on tip-toe.

"The arena is lighted up," he said, "and the count is practising fencing with some friends. But," he added, encouragingly, "with all his quickness, he lays himself open to a man with a strong defence."

But then I had no defence, strong or otherwise, as Tom ought to know.

"Then what do you mean to do?" asked Tom with some asperity; "stand there like a lamb to be slaughtered?"

My notion was to rush in and throw the count over my head, in a good Devonshire back-fall, and Redmond pronounced the idea not a bad one, if somewhat irregular.

We wander along the beach beneath

the black overhanging cliffs, till we reach the appointed place of combat—a smooth slip of sand, well-sheltered from observation, with a narrow footpath leading through a broken ravine to the top of the cliff. There is still an hour to wait, and we light our pipes and discourse in short disconnected sentences. Tom looks out to windward, and says he hopes it won't rain just yet, and I reflect that in an hour's time it very likely won't matter to me whether it rains or not. It is a startling notion that of the world going on just as usual, sunshine and rain, storm and pleasant breezes, but the individual ego out of it altogether. The thing must come sooner or later, but let it come rather later than sooner if one has the choice!

We now get a few sharp, stinging, but momentary showers, and the wind begins to howl overhead. Tom takes the part of Sister Ann, and runs up aloft by the little footpath to see if anybody is coming. Nothing is visible towards the land, he reports, but the Sea Mew is to be made out lying at anchor. To windward everything looks wild and stormy, the sea is rising, and Neptune's white horses are shaking their manes in the distance. And then Tom reports that he sees a small boat putting out from the harbour. It is the only moving thing on all the wide sea—a little boat, as Tom makes out through his glass, with an old man labouring at the oars, and a girl, as far as he can make out, who is helping to row. The boat seems to be making for the yacht, but it will never reach her, pronounces Tom. Sometimes it is lost to sight in the trough of the sea, and again the white crest of a wave wraps the little craft in foam. Still, the boat is well to windward of the yacht, and it may make the ship after all; if not the boat must go down, for she cannot live long in the rising sea. Tom now comes down from his perch, for the sea-drift hides boat, and yacht, and all the horizon from sight. Some time now elapses, during which we shelter ourselves from the driving mist and spray behind a fragment of rock.

After what seemed an age of suspense, although on comparing watches it seemed that only half an hour had elapsed, we heard voices in the air, and presently we saw dark forms descending the path from the cliff. These were our adversaries—the count, his two seconds, and a fourth, who turned out to be an army surgeon. All saluted us gravely and punctiliously, and

after a rather lengthened confabulation between the seconds, these separated at last to prepare the principals for the combat. The sea air blew keenly, and sent a shiver through my frame as I stripped off coat and waistcoat. The count on his part looked superbly confident, with an air of triumph on his face. Then one of the seconds, Colonel Peltier, I think, gave some directions, of which I did not quite catch the purport, in a sonorous voice.

Just as our swords were about to cross we heard a loud shout from the heights above, and we saw two douaniers standing on the verge of the cliff, and energetically signalling and shouting, but to what purpose we could not make out.

"Wait a moment, gentlemen," cried the colonel. "I must explain to these people that we are not contraband. Then they will pass on quietly, no doubt, without interrupting us."

The count recovered his sword with an impatient exclamation. But one of the douaniers had already descended the cliff, and approached us at a run, gesticulating and pointing seaward.

Engrossed in our evil business, we had hardly noticed how quickly the gale had gathered strength. The tide was out, and the rollers broke a long way from the beach, and then dashed onwards in masses of white seething surf, and as the mist and drift momentarily cleared away, we could make out some dark object in the direction pointed out by the douanier. In a few sentences the man explained the situation. He and his comrade had noticed the little boat which had made from the harbour-mouth towards the yacht, but, more practised observers even than Tom, they had followed its course with their glasses, and had seen that after a long and gallant struggle to make the yacht, the boat had drifted hopelessly to leeward. The danger of the little boat had been noticed from the yacht, and a boat had been manned from the Sea Mew with four stout rowers, while the douaniers were certain that the coxswain of the boat was a lady. The boat from the Sea Mew reached the other just in time to rescue her crew, for their craft was sinking beneath them, and a moment later disappeared in the waves. But in its turn the larger boat was overpowered by the force of wind and sea, against which all the exertions of the oarsmen were powerless. The boat, indeed, was drifting hopelessly away from the yacht, and must come ashore in a few

minutes. As soon as she struck the sands, the waves would tumble her over, and her crew would be left struggling in the surf—in the bitter biting surf that would soon overpower the strongest man. As for the woman and the girl who appeared in the boat, their chance of getting to the land was of the slenderest. Our douanier explained that his comrade had started for the nearest "sauvetage" station for ropes and the rocket apparatus. But there was no possibility that such help could arrive in time. In a few minutes, indeed, all would be over, unless, indeed, we were to make a line into the sea—there were eight of us altogether, strong men not exhausted by a losing battle against the storm.

"We will make a line," was shouted by everybody, and in a few moments the whole of us, forgetful of the purpose that had brought us there, were up to our waists in the surf, and struggling through it to reach the post of honour in the front. We could now hear the hoarse shouts of the seamen in the boat, encouraging each other to make a last spurt for the shore. Then a great wave dashed in, and a cry of despair was heard above the roar of the sea, as the boat was hurled bottom upwards towards the beach. The howling of the wind, and the roaring of the sea deafened and confused us, while the fierce biting surge, that cut like a legion of whiplashes, took away breath, and even sensation, and the sand afforded but an uncertain footing. Still we struggled on in the direction where we had last seen the boat. The count and I were in front, for our line was broken, and each did the best he could for himself, when presently I saw a woman's long hair streaming in the wind. It was Hilda, who, with her arm about another younger girl, was battling with the surf. The count, also, must have seen her at the same moment, and we both strained every nerve to be the first to reach her. As it happened, I was the first, and with my arm about her, half carrying, half dragging her through the surf, we struggled towards the shore, the other girl—Zamora, as it proved—clinging to Hilda's skirts. As soon as we reached the land Hilda fell upon her knees in thankfulness, while Zamora, stretched at full length on the sand, panted and struggled for breath. Soon other figures appeared, dripping and exhausted. The four seamen were safe. Tom and Redmond also appeared, each helping one of the sailors along, while the douanier and the rest of the party were cheering, and

patting the rescued men on the shoulders. The party was complete, surely? But no! Where was the count? Nobody had seen him since he rushed forward with me to rescue Hilda. There was not a sign of him in the white boiling surf, unless—yes, as a wave receded, we saw for a moment a dark object, turning over like a billet of driftwood in the sea. A general rush followed, everyone trying to be the first to reach the drowning man. Happily the wind had lulled for the time, and there was no great wave coming in at the moment, although a monster one was hurrying along from the sea, as if striving to reach us. As it happened, I was the first to reach the body of the count, which I seized, and dragged towards the shore; but I remember nothing more, for a big comber of a wave broke over us at that moment, and carried us along as if we had been just a tuft of seaweed.

When I came to myself I found Hilda bending over me, while Zamora, kneeling by my side, was busily chafing my hands. I had been only a little stunned and dazed, and soon could sit up and look about me. The other men were gathered about another figure which lay on the sands. By this time more coastguardmen had come down, and a few fishermen; and all were watching the proceedings of the doctor as he laboured to restore the suspended respiration. As moment after moment passed, and each increased the sad certainty that life had for ever fled, I looked upon the white, marble face of my late adversary, and asked myself what my feelings would have been had his death been my doing. No, people might call me what they liked, but I would never come out again on such a business.

And then the thrill of delight that went through everybody as a sort of electric shock seemed to agitate the little group. "He breathes," cried the doctor, and at the word the terror that held our nerves so tightly strung relaxed all of a sudden. Hilda wept upon my shoulder, while Zamora executed a pas seul on the sands, making her wet skirts fly about, and snapping her fingers gaily. The douaniers lifted their caps into the air, and the colonel sat down upon a sand-heap and tugged fiercely at his moustaches.

After a while the count was able to sit up a little, and looked about him with wild haggard eyes, which at last rested upon me, and seemed there fixed as if he were striving to recall something that eluded

his mental grasp. Then he feebly held out his hand, which I took in mine.

"A dead man has no enemies," he said, "and I have been dead."

The colonel, too, and his friend came forward to shake hands, and Zamora executed another wild dance.

"But what is this child doing here?" I asked, "and you, too, Hilda, why should you be in that particular galley which has come to grief?" Then Zamora explained how, from her little nest at the circus, she had seen the count and his friends fencing in the arena, and had overheard their conversation, from which she gathered that a duel was imminent, and that seeing no other way to save me, she had determined to find Hilda, and beseech her to interfere. And so she had engaged an old fisherman to row her out to the yacht. But the storm came upon them too quickly, and they would have been lost if Hilda had not come to their rescue. As it was the sea was so high that the captain very rightly refused to lower a boat, and it was only by something like mutiny, and taking her place as coxswain, that Hilda at last got the boat away.

As the tide came in the waves rose higher and higher, dashing up against the bathing cabins, and setting them afloat, and causing a general stampede among the settlers and traders on the beach.

Dried and restored by breakfast, we watched the scene with a good deal of amusement; although we were not without anxiety for the Sea Mew, which laboured a good deal in the sea, and threatened to drag her anchors. However, the yacht's steam was up, and presently the black balls from the signal-mast by the pier announced sufficient depth of water to cross the bar, and soon she came bravely dashing up to windward, and presently was in comparatively still water between the jetties.

The tide went out once more, retiring like a lion into its desert, with threatenings of coming once more to seek its prey, and everybody was on the alert, raising barricades and strengthening the foundations of their cabins, and carrying the moveable ones out of the way. But the storm died away as suddenly as it had arisen. The tide came in again in quite halcyon calm, with a glorious sunset glow over the sea. Crowds of people were upon the pier to watch the Havre boat as she came in, with a double load of passengers, for the storm had prevented her from crossing this morning.

When once the boat has passed the pier-head everybody hurries to the landing-place, where the hubbub and confusion are something indescribable. People are landing and embarking all at the same time, bales and boxes are hurled ashore or swung into the ship. The world is parting, meeting, laughing, crying, quarrelling, and kissing all in the same moment, and the noise is intensified by the clanking of chains, the creaking of cranes, and the hoarse rush of steam from the waste-pipe. Over everything rises the shrill voice of one who cries for "Auguste"—the real Auguste, if he be present, taking no notice, but spurious Augustes cropping up in every quarter. Among the passengers is a party of Americans with enormous packages, huge trunks, and cases that employ all the loafers and hangers-on of the quay, and fill all the omnibuses that are in waiting. Then there are pretty dark-eyed Spanish-looking women from Havre, with children still more pretty and bewitching; commercial travellers with their fragile-looking packages; and English tourists with handbags and knapsacks, proudly independent of porters and touts. And then the bustle suddenly culminates and ceases as the bell rings, and the boat casts off after her half-hour's stay.

Another embarkation in the same night is conducted in quieter fashion. Hilda, her father, and I are starting for Combe Chudleigh to take one last look at the old place before it is sold. It will be only a flying visit, for we have left the rest of the party as hostages for our return to Trouville. They have all come to see us off—an all which includes the director and his Stéphanie, who have just arrived in the place. We have sent to enquire after the count, and the reply is, that he is doing well, but is still too weak to receive visitors. However, we have no misgivings on his score now. The sea is calm, the sky clear, and everything promises a pleasant sail to the shores of old England.

AUSTRALIAN LAND-GRABBING.

SINCE we treated of New Guinea in connection with the movement of the Queensland Government to annex that island,* the Australians have developed a desire for "land-grabbing" on quite an extensive scale. The proposals made by

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 31, p. 534, "New Guinea."

the representatives of the several Colonial Governments to Lord Derby are of a most sweeping character, and we propose to show, as shortly as possible, what they embrace.

If the arc of a circle were drawn from outside the north-west peninsula of New Guinea and continued through the Fiji Islands to the east coast of New Zealand, it would include the whole area which the Australians are desirous of annexing. It would also, unfortunately, include New Caledonia, which is a French possession, but it would exclude Tonga, where the Germans have a footing. It may have been a mistake, as the Australians think, to have allowed New Caledonia to fall into the hands of a foreign power, but, with the insular entrenchment now proposed, the small alien settlement would not be of serious importance. A little study of a Mercator's map of the world is necessary to understand the Australian policy as now developing. It is a policy which, we must own, has a great deal of reasonableness in it, and one indeed which is irresistible if we admit the right of annexation at all.

We have already dealt with New Guinea. There are a considerable number of islands embraced in the scheme, but the principal are the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands, and, considering the comparative proximity of these to the Australian continent, it is remarkable how little is known about them, for both groups are not farther away from the Australian coasts than are the islands of New Zealand. They comprise, broadly, the section of the Pacific Ocean to which is sometimes given the name, Melanesia—or Black Islands—because they are supposed to be all inhabited by the same dark-skinned race which peoples New Guinea. But it has not yet been established that the race is the same, and indeed, there are probably two or three distinct races in Papua.

In the group of islands called the New Hebrides, the missionary society formed by Bishop Selwyn has long had stations. If we associate with the group, the Santa Cruz Islands, Banks Islands, and the smaller groups, we shall find an assemblage of over fifty islands, only a few of which are of any great size, the largest being about seventy-five miles long by forty miles wide. The total area of land is probably about five thousand square miles, and the inhabitants probably number about seventy thousand. The islands are nearly all of volcanic origin, and active volcanoes and boiling springs are found on several of them.

There are no mammals but rats, and not a great variety of birds. Cannibalism is said to be practised by the natives, but on one of the small islands—that of Aneiteuna—the people have all become Christians. We are not aware that missionary efforts have met with much success in other parts of the group. It is the practice, however, of the Melanesian Missionary Society rather to induce the natives to send their youths to the station on Norfolk Island, there to be educated in Christian principles, than to settle European missionaries in the group. After being educated, these young men are sent back to proselytise their friends, which system may work well enough ultimately, but it does not operate to the enlargement of our information about the islands.

The aborigines of both the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands are, according to Whitmee, a mixture of the pure Papuan breed of New Guinea, with the Sawaiori race, of which the Maoris of New Zealand are the purest specimens extant. The pure Papuan is generally regarded as about the lowest type of humanity, but, from what we know of New Guinea, we are inclined to think this is a mistake. Certainly the inhabitants of that island show themselves to be morally and physically superior to the inhabitants of some of the smaller islands, where crossing with other races has been more frequent.

In the New Hebrides the characteristics are often like those of the people of New Guinea, but they vary from island to island, and the people are evidently a mixed race. They have, as a rule, the frizzly hair but not the prominent features of the Papuan. In some of the islands they are both very ugly and very degraded, and in most they are cannibals. There are said to be no fewer than twenty different languages in these groups, and on one island alone there are six distinct tongues. As a rule the New Hebrideans rank very low in the human scale, and are charged with shocking immorality, for which the Beachcombers of the Pacific may be to some extent to blame. The climate is moist, and if not so salubrious as that of Fiji, is yet not unhealthy enough to have prevented some white traders from settling there. The canoes of the natives are rude, their weapons are clubs, spears, and arrows, and their religion is a species of fetishism. The principal products are coconuts and nutmegs, but the cotton-plant and the sugar-cane are both indigenous, and the vegetation generally seems to possess the

usual luxuriance of the South Pacific. As yet, however, they have been more frequented by Blackbirders than by Europeans desirous of examining and testing the natural resources of the islands. When the labourers who are decoyed thence return to their homes, they carry with them a few of the graces but more of the vices of civilisation. Many of them are employed on the sugar-plantations of Fiji and Queensland, but now under Government auspices and protection—a very different experience from that they had under the rule of the Blackbirders. But when their term of service expires, and they return to their tribes, they do not appear to carry any elevating influence with them. Indeed, there are many who hold that they and the other South Sea Islanders who are similarly deported, cannot be otherwise than injured by their brief taste of civilisation, and that these travelled islanders present the very worst forms of "savage scoundrelism." A good deal is, and justly, urged on the other side, but in the meantime the results in the New Hebrides are far from happy. The missionary system of deporting for educational purposes has in it more of the elements of success.

On the whole, however, an active settlement among the islands both of missionaries, teachers, and employers of native labour, is the only true way of reclaiming both the people and the land from savagedom; and in the growth of cotton, sugar, and other tropical produce which may receive a stimulus under the proposed annexation, they may receive an impetus towards civilisation.

The Solomon Islands have become rather better known of late years since the Fiji Government have sent thither for supplies of labour. The group is volcanic in origin, and contains at least one active volcano. It stretches for about seven hundred miles from north-west to south-east. The largest of the islands is about one hundred and fifty miles long by about thirty miles broad, and there are three others exceeding one hundred miles each in length. The total area of land is probably about seventeen thousand square miles, and there are several mountains of great height—one, indeed, is said to exceed ten thousand feet. Like those of the New Hebrides, the inhabitants are dark-skinned and woolly-haired, but short in stature, and, like the New Hebrideans again, they still practise cannibalism when they get the chance. Otherwise they are a superior race. They

are skilful craftsmen, and turn out some excellent work in carving. In physique and general character they more resemble the Fijians perhaps than the Papuans, and judging from results in Fiji, we should therefore be disposed to augur a happy future for the Solomon group. There are a few European traders settled there, and one of them—a friend of the present writer's—speaks in glowing terms of the fertility of some of the islands. Their general formation is that of a central mountain-chain, with gentle slopes to the sea, where the shores are low and thickly covered with vegetation of the usual Polynesian type. Like the Fiji Islands, the Solomons have abundance of large rivers, and the climate is good—superior to that of the New Hebrides.

Of the Santa Cruz Islands, which are usually associated with the New Hebrides, even less is known than of the latter, and they are chiefly memorable as the scene of Commodore Goodenough's murder. But Mr. Walter Coote, a gentleman of some experience in these waters, esteems the natives of Santa Cruz as foremost among the South Sea Islanders in physique and in the accomplishments of industry and war.

Of those "other large islands to the north and north-east of New Guinea," referred to in the Australian programme, the principal are New Britain and New Ireland. These are distinctly tropical in climate and in products, and their inhabitants closely resemble the people of New Guinea. Travellers, however, have rarely visited them, and we practically know nothing about them. But as New Guinea is desirable from its contiguity to Australia, so would New Britain and New Ireland be desirable from their contiguity to New Guinea. That and the possibility of undeveloped natural wealth form the attractions to the Australians.

New Britain is about three hundred miles long by thirty broad, and New Ireland is about two hundred and thirty miles long and only about twelve miles broad. They were discovered by Dampier in 1699, and described by him as mountainous, richly wooded, well watered, and apparently densely populated. Until the Wesleyan Missionary Society sent Mr. Brown there in 1876, we knew almost nothing more. And what we know now may be very shortly summed up. New Ireland consists practically of a range of mountains rising to between two thousand and three thousand feet in height, while New Britain is even

loftier, and possesses at least one active volcano. The fauna and flora are, as we have said, similar to those of New Guinea—that is to say, marsupials and birds abound, and a luxuriant vegetation includes cocoa-nuts, bananas, yams, mangos, and other tropical fruit. The people are of two shades of brown—dark and light—the variety being due to mixture with Malayan blood. In New Ireland, at any rate, they are cannibals, and probably in New Britain also. Both languages and chiefs are numerous, and not one of the latter seems to have any considerable power or following. There exists on these islands the same sort of caste distinction as prevailed among the aboriginal Australians; the whole population being divided into two classes which do not intermarry. Mr. Brown, a missionary, tells that a curious custom exists among them of shutting up young girls at the age of six or seven in cages, and keeping them there until they are ready to be married. The cages are kept in large houses surrounded by fences, and the only attendants are old women, who permit the girls to come out of the cages, but not out of the houses, once a day to wash. On a small island between the two larger islands there is now a station of the Wesleyan Missionary Society of Australasia, but there is, as yet, practically no trading.

Immediately to the north-east of the last-named group lie the Admiralty Islands, consisting of one large island of about five hundred and fifty square miles, and a number of small islands. This group had been little visited by Europeans until the Challenger went there in 1875, and perhaps the best account of it is to be got in Moseley's Notes on the Challenger Expedition. The formation is low, the shores swampy, and the climate excessively damp, but the vegetation is rich. The natives were found not unintelligent, and exhibit considerable enterprise, but are somewhat greedy and disposed to thieving. They are curiously devoid of weapons, but they are expert at carving, are adepts in fishing, and have good canoes. Their houses are good, and built on the ground, not on piles as on the adjacent island of New Guinea. On the whole, the Challenger people got on very well with them.

We have spoken of Beachcombers and Blackbirders. The first are the semi-savage white men who have settled from nobody knows where among the islands of the South Pacific for pearl-fishing and other purposes, and who have mated with

the natives. According to the author of Coral Lands, they are hardy, healthy, powerful, and bronzed. "They have the strength to lift a kedje-anchor, and to carry a load of two hundred cocoa-nuts out of the forest in the heat of a noon-day sun. They climb trees like apes, and can dive almost as well as the natives with whom they live. They wear no shoes, but go at all times bare-footed on beaches of sharp gravel and reefs of prickly coral. Some of these men have as many as twenty children, with huge frames and gipsy countenances." Their intellect is of a low order, and their morals very lax, and, in every respect, they are as different as possible from the lotus-eaters of poetic fancy, who are supposed to dream away a sensuous existence on the balmy islands of the South Seas. The Blackbirders are the kidnappers—wholesale stealers of men for labour purposes, to watch and frustrate whose doings used to be the principal occupation of Her Majesty's vessels in these waters. Theirs was, in short, a species of slave trade, and they themselves were among the worst rascals unhung. We are told that the race is now practically extinct, and we sincerely trust it is. But these two classes—the Beachcombers and the Blackbirders—have done more to bar the progress of white influence and civilisation in Polynesia than any amount of cannibalism and fetishism.

In their present attitude the Australians are virtually adopting the spirit of the scheme which Sir Julius Vogel, in 1873, submitted to the Governor of New Zealand. This scheme was for the formation of a company with a large capital, under the auspices of the Imperial Government and the Government of New Zealand, for the development of the Polynesian island trade. But in its preamble broad principles were laid down which the Australians have adopted. They were, in brief, that the unsettled state of the South Sea Islands is calculated to cause uneasiness in the colonies. These last cannot regard without anxiety the disposition evinced by some foreign nations to establish a footing in their neighbourhood amongst the islands of the South Pacific. Therefore it is necessary to take steps, "First, to prevent, by anticipatory action, the establishment of European communities with lawless tendencies; second, to develop the self-governing aptitudes of the Polynesian natives; third, to encourage them to labour and to realise the advantages which labour confers; fourth, to stimulate the production of the islands; fifth, to

introduce a uniform government throughout Polynesia; and sixth, to stop the traffic in forced labour." In Sir Julius Vogel's scheme, the idea was British protection and New Zealand management. In the Australian scheme the idea is British annexation and Australian management. The principle underlying both schemes is the same, viz., that eastern Polynesia should be under the sway of the British flag for colonial security and colonial commercial advantage.

There is unquestionably a great deal to be said in favour of the scheme from the colonial standpoint. The annexation of the Melanesian islands promises many advantages, both of a political and a commercial character, and we may admit that none of the wealth of the South Seas will be developed as it might be, and as it was doubtless intended to be, without the active interference of some strong white race. Nor without such political interference can the aboriginal races be civilised and Christianised in other than a slow, partial, and unsatisfactory manner. But all these things may be admitted without enforcing the corollary that England should undertake the work. Our responsibilities as an empire are already great and grave. The protection and government of these proposed additions would be a huge task, and one attended with enormous anxiety, not to speak of the expense. It is a task which must be undertaken by Europeans some day, but it is a task which, in our opinion, rightly belongs, as well as the glory and profit of it, to the Dominion of Australasia. Towards the formation of that Dominion it is gratifying to find the colonists at last making a decided move.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER XI.

AND here we had better go back a little for a full explanation of the mystery of which Jane Thompson was not to have a clue for many and many a day.

When Hetty recovered from that fainting-fit at the lodge, the servants busied about her were still talking of the event which filled all their minds; and as the full meaning of their comments and ejaculations took shape and form in her own brain, a feeling of utter lonely helplessness and horror came over her, combined with

a strong sense of guilt, or rather of a guilty consciousness, which made her afraid to open her eyes lest those around her should see it written in them, and gave her strength, sooner than otherwise she would have thought it possible, to sit up and announce herself well enough to go to her own room.

It was some comfort to be there, away from everybody and with the door locked between herself and intruders, that she might sit down and face the new problem which the last few minutes had unfolded before her.

Plainly put, it was this:

At the time Captain Pentreath was arrested, Hetty fully believed him to be guilty of the crime of which he was accused, and she grounded that belief on his own words and actions, to which she had been an unseen and most unwilling witness on that terrible night when he paced to and fro in his room, muttering curses and threats against the man who had insulted him, while she, Hetty, crouched trembling with terror behind the door of the closet where she had sought a refuge. Who the offender might be, or what the offence he had given, she had of course no means of guessing; but the effect they had produced on Captain Pentreath was so much beyond any ferm of anger that she had ever witnessed or imagined, and the language to which he gave vent, when uncontrolled by any suspicion of an auditor, so shocked and appalled her, that it was all she could do to keep herself from crying out to him to desist and keep silence. Twice she heard him inveighing against some "Carstairs," who had prevented him from taking the other fellow by the throat and horsewhipping him then and there. But immediately afterwards he muttered:

"Well, well, it can't be helped now; and I'll run up the first thing to-morrow, go straight to his rooms, and either make him write out an apology or shoot him like a dog. I wish it were to-morrow now!"

Then there had come a rustling sound and silence, and Hetty had just had time to think, while drops of cold perspiration gathered on her brow, was he going to undress and go to bed? and, if so, how—how should she ever manage to escape? when he spoke again, this time aloud, and so near to the closet-door that she almost screamed.

"By Heaven, I'll do it to-night, after all! There's time yet, if I catch the next train; and I can't sleep under this dis-

honour. I should go mad. He shall retract!"

And then there were a few hasty movements about the room, and the steps passed away again into the hall. A puff of cold air fanned Hetty in the face, showing her that the hall-door was open. It closed again, but quietly and with a dull sound, as if he did not wish to disturb the house; and then—

Thank God! thank God! she was free—sick, faint, and dizzy with suspense and agitation, but free at last to escape from her prison and regain the shelter of her own room. Not to sleep, for the terrible experience she had passed through made any thought of slumber impossible to her, but to lie trembling with emotion and pouring out heartfelt prayers of thankfulness through the remaining hours of the night.

It was this that made her so white and languid on the following morning, and filled her with such longing to see George Hamilton, that she might tell him the whole story of his cousin's persecution and her adventure; and, while giving him the photograph, for which she had paid so high a price, implore him to find out Captain Pentreath, and prevent him from carrying out the threats, the mere utterance of which had filled her with such dread and horror on the previous night.

It was this, too, which gave such a strange colour to her manner, and forced those incoherent exclamations from her which had so puzzled her lover, when he came to her with the tidings which seemed to her a mere consumption, even more prompt and ghastly than she had expected, of those very threats.

And then Mrs. Pentreath had interrupted them, and in the scene which followed, all opportunity for an explanation was lost; nor, as we have seen, did Hetty get another till, in that brief interview in the hall, she learnt that to say anything of this knowledge which she alone possessed would be to condemn the man who, whatever his faults, had been her friend once, and was still the only son and hope of her benefactress.

She was glad then not to be obliged to do it. Even on her own account, and for the sake of every maidenly instinct within her, she would have shrunk unutterably from telling anybody but one very near and dear to her, of how she had been hidden in a man's room at night, when that man was there also, though unaware of her

presence. Now indeed that it was over, she began to reflect that she had run a great risk for a very small gain, and that George Hamilton might well be angry with her for doing so. To be obliged, therefore, to keep it in her own breast for the sake of others, and of that poor heart-broken mother in especial, was a real gladness and relief to the girl's heart. With all her horror of Captain Pentreath, a horror intensified into something like actual disgust by the insight she now had into his real character, she could not feel herself obliged to come forward and injure herself for the mere sake of injuring him and bringing him to justice. George should know all the rest, all that could be told, on the very first opportunity, and that one fact—the fact of her presence as a witness to Captain Pentreath's otherwise unguessed-at visit to his house—should remain a secret, till such time as she might whisper it safely in her husband's ears.

So she thought, so she determined, even thanking Heaven in her innocent fashion that the right way had been made the easiest to her; and now—now, as if in mockery of her gratitude, there had come Mrs. Pentreath's sudden change of manner to her, her cruel insinuations, each one piercing like a poisoned arrow to the girl's inmost soul, and stabbing her feminine pride and rectitude at every dart; her lover's cold standing aloof, and colder sterner looks; and then their forsaking her, their driving away with the woman who had maligned her, and leaving her behind as unworthy even to share with them in their sorrow and anxiety at the very time when it was in her power, and hers alone, to render them a greater service than any other human being could have done.

For the inquest, which had resulted in a verdict of wilful murder against Ernest Pentreath, had also shown to her—aye, in opposition to all her previous beliefs, that he was utterly innocent of it; and that she, and she only, could have proved him so had she spoken earlier.

The doctor's testimony—and before she went upstairs she made Hickson repeat it over again to her in all its details—had shown beyond disproof, not only that Major Hollis's death-wound might have been self-inflicted, but that it had been inflicted—no matter by what hand—an hour, if not more, before the time at which the body had been discovered.

Now that time was a quarter to twelve, and at a quarter to eleven, one hour

previously, Captain Pentreath had only just entered the train at Kew Gardens station on his return journey to town.

Mr. Carstairs, who left the club with him, had already accounted for his actions till a little after nine, the hour at which they had parted, and as Hetty knew that the train by which Ernest arrived at Kew left Victoria at thirteen minutes to ten, at which time Major Hollis was still at the club, it was manifestly impossible that he could have committed the deed of which at present he stood accused.

As Hetty thought over it, seeing bit by bit each feature of the story in all its terrible significance, her cheeks and hands seemed to become icy cold, a great sickness and shuddering came over her, and for a moment she was in dread of swooning again.

For it was impossible that she could speak now. So much was certain, and as soon as she could recover her scattered senses she told herself so with such nervous haste and vehemence that she might have been silencing some unseen monitor within.

If nothing else had compelled her to silence, that painful scene with Mrs. Pentreath, and the aspersions to which she had been subjected before the lawyer and her lover, would have done so.

Was it likely that her explanation of the facts she had to tell would be credited by the woman who only yesterday had pronounced her word worthless, and who had already accused her of a private understanding with a man to save whom she would be risking her own good name?

But, even without this, her lips were sealed, for how could she, a girl of nineteen, without father or mother, and with no fortune or dependence but her own unsullied reputation, be expected to go into a witness-box and swear that she was in a man's bedroom at nearly eleven o'clock at night, and when the rest of the household supposed her to be in bed; a man, too, whom she detested, to whose cowardly trickery about her photograph all this trouble was owing; who boasted of women's favours even before they were received; and whose whole reckless and libertine character had, since that fatal quarrel in the club, been made so public to the world in general as to render it impossible for any modest woman to put herself forward as engaged in what, to outsiders, would at best seem a silly flirtation, without serious and lasting injury to her own good name?

And then her story itself! How far-fetched and improbable it sounded even in her own ears! Would anyone believe it? or would it not rather appear as if she had trumped it up at the last moment as the only means of saving the life of a man who had been her lover?

Thinking of what might be said, or worse, of what might be insinuated, by those who were not kind enough to believe the whole thing an invention, of the colour which even his mother, however grateful she might be for her son's escape, might put on the testimony which had rescued him, Hetty shivered and moaned, hiding her hot face in her hands as though the mocking sceptical faces which she saw in imagination were actually fixed on it; and telling herself with almost passionate vehemence that it would be absurd, impossible, for anyone to expect a girl in her situation to speak out now, and ruin all her prospects in life by doing so.

For one thing, George Hamilton would never care to marry any woman who had put herself in the position of being talked of and gossiped about as having been concerned in so questionable an adventure. She knew that well, and, though something told her also that in any case all must be at an end now, she had enough of her native pride and spirit left to desire that their parting, if it must be, should be of her doing, not his; that she should set him free of her own will, not give him the right to put her aside at his.

So, over and over again went the weary round of her mind, sometimes losing itself in a half-stupefied maze, sometimes breaking down into passionate weeping, but always coming round to the same conclusion, and holding on to it with a firmer and more desperate hand. The silence which hitherto she had kept for Mrs. Pentreath's sake and her own she must keep now for the latter alone, and to do so she must go away at once from the house which belonged to the man she was leaving to his fate, and to which, if that fate were kind to him, he would return.

With all her heart she hoped that he would. She had no wish to injure him by her silence. If it had seemed clear, or even probable, to her that by keeping it she must inevitably condemn an innocent man to shameful punishment, she could not, whatever the temptation, have persisted in it; but it was not so. Hickson himself had assured her that the decision of a coroner's jury told for nothing in the

subsequent examination before a magistrate; that all that they were really called together for was to find out the cause of death, and that, but for the unusual haste with which this inquest had been held, the point which might have exculpated Captain Pentreath would have been foreseen and provided against.

"But don't you take on so, miss," added the kind-hearted butler, blubbering a little himself at the thought of his master's situation. "Nobody don't pay no attention to the finding of an ignorant lot o' men like them. Why, you never see such a set—little greengrocers and pork-butchers, and the like, without an H to their name among the whole of 'em. The case is to come on before the magistrates to-morrow, and they tell me as Sir Thomas Ingle, as is a real gent, and come of a good old family, miss, is on the bench. The captain will only have to call his own witnesses—and no doubt as he's got plenty—to prove his being down here that evening, and the case will be at an end. You make your mind easy about that, miss."

And Hetty was trying to do so—trying with all her might, telling herself over and over again that Hickson must know more of such things than she did, and that nothing could be more probable than that Ernest Pentreath had no need to rely on her to prove an alibi for him, nothing more quixotic than to sacrifice her own reputation simply to strengthen the hands of a man who had no slightest claim on her generosity, but was, as she also knew, guilty in will, if not in deed, of the crime for which he had been arrested.

In any case he deserved some punishment, and a brief period of suspicion and detention was no very severe one after all. Her penalty was far the hardest—hers, which was to leave home, and friends, and lover, and go forth into the wide world alone on his account. And it must be done at once, before Mrs. Pentreath or the vicar returned. Such a secret as she had to keep could not be kept under the roof of a woman so nearly concerned in it as the prisoner's mother; neither could she look in her lover's eyes and keep it from him; nor affect to give him the explanation he had said he should require, and withhold the most important part of it. Between those who were to be husband and wife there could be no half confidences; and with all her would-be security in the rightfulness and necessity of her decision, she felt only too keenly that, submitted to

George Hamilton, it would not hold water for one second.

No, her only safety from herself was in flight. The remaining question was where, or to whom? and it was like a gleam of light across her wearied brain and spirit worn out by long watching and mental conflict, when suddenly there came into her mind the thought of one of those relatives of her long-lost mother to whom her memory had once before turned when Captain Pentreath's persecution first impelled her to leave his mother's roof.

She had never seen any of them since her father came down to Deal one day when she was a child of nine years old, and took her away to live with him; and shortly afterwards Mrs. John Thompson had returned to India and her husband, taking with her their three elder children. Now and then, at rather rare intervals, Hetty had written to her aunt, and had received letters from her, and though most of her cousins were too much her seniors for there to have been much sympathy between them, there was one, the youngest, and a girl, for whom in childhood she had felt so much affection, that it was a real pleasure when, a few months previously, this cousin had written to her, saying she was married and living at Brixton, and expressing a cordial wish that Hetty would come and stay with her for a time. Hetty had answered the letter very cordially, sending "Cousin Mary" a pretty present, and saying how much she should like to accept the invitation; but on its being communicated to Mrs. Pentreath, such decided cold water had been thrown on it, that the girl had not liked to press the request, and since then nothing more had been said upon it.

Now, however, the case was different, and as she got out Mrs. White's letter and read the address, Number Ten, Paradise Villas, Brixton, the words stood out before her fevered and tear-dimmed eyes, as though written by an angel's hand.

She would go to Mary. Mary would take her in and advise her; perhaps would keep her till she could find some honest means of keeping herself, which, with her good health and good education, could not be difficult; and with this thought in her mind she rose to her feet, and drew back the curtains from the window. Outside it was already morning, a cold blustering winter's morning, with no suggestion of sunrise in the grey leaden sky, no rosy tinge on the dark outlines of distant gables, no chirp of

early bird to break the dreary silence. Even Nature seemed against her in its hard unfriendly grimness. Even the tall trees seemed to frown at her, and shake their leafless boughs in mocking disdain for her wretchedness; but at least there was light enough to see by, and the unkindness of the surrounding things only made her more anxious to be gone. Jaded and spent as she was, she had but one desire in her tired brain and bruised and wounded heart, the desire to escape from all these complications, and people who had been so cruel to her, and with this strong upon her, she began hurriedly and noiselessly to change her dress, and to put up a few things in a little hand-bag before starting on the journey she had before her.

Her clothes, with the exception of those she had on, she was obliged to leave behind her, also her ornaments—all but a tiny pearl cross which Mr. Hamilton had given her on one of her birthdays, and her own mother's betrothal-ring. The rest had been presents from Mrs. Pentreath; and in leaving her roof thus, she felt as if she had forfeited any further right to them. What little money she possessed was part of a regular allowance paid to her quarterly by her guardian from the day when that lady told her that she was to be her "little companion;" and to this, therefore, she knew she had a plain right. It was only a couple of sovereigns and a few shillings; but that would be enough, and more than enough, the child thought, for the present emergency; and having put on a black dress under her neat dark-coloured Newmarket, and covered her pretty curls with the simplest little hat she possessed, she slipped quietly downstairs into the library, opened one of the long French windows, and drawing it to again behind her with as little noise as possible, departed.

The tears were running over her cheeks as she did so; and, even at the risk of being seen, she could not leave the garden without making a detour to press her lips to the cold rough wood of a rustic bench under a lime-tree, where she had passed many a happy idle hour in summer days

gone by. But her resolution was taken, and by the time the late-rising servants at Guelder Lodge were beginning to creep downstairs and set about lighting fires and opening doors, Hetty was already in the train en route for Brixton.

Of how she fared in her enterprise, of her consternation at finding only an empty house where she had hoped for a kindly welcome, and of her subsequent wanderings and adventures, in which her youth and timidity, her ignorance of London streets and utter unaccustomedness to going about alone and unprotected, were all so many enemies in her path, we have already heard in the brief disconnected account given by her feeble, faltering lips in Jane Thompson's room, and listened to with sympathetic interest by her two cousins. But the rest of her story, which we have known from the beginning, where she came from, what was her trouble, who were the people she had been living with, whether they had sent her away from them, or whether they were still unaware of her departure, all these things were still a mystery to Jane and her sister, and were destined to remain so for far longer than they expected. Morning came, and Hetty wakened; but only to high fever, wandering, and stupor. Her throat, too, seemed so much swollen and inflamed that when she did speak, the words were scarcely audible; and greatly alarmed at her appearance, Jane sent off the servant in hot haste for a doctor, and went herself to break the news to her father.

What time outside every little newspaper shop and library were exhibited big posters bearing among other huge black-lettered advertisements of exciting events, "The Shooting Case in Albion Street: Committal of the Prisoner."

At the same moment Mrs. Pentreath and the vicar were driving past the ironmonger's shop on their way back to Kew.

In the course of next Month will be commenced

A DRAWN GAME, A NEW SERIAL STORY,

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XIX. "HOW SHALL I MY TRUE LOVE KNOW!"

THEY lived their daily round, quietly, unvaryingly, prosaically, but not unhappily, for some weeks. As soon as Mrs. Ray got accustomed to the environs of her new abode, she grew bolder, and indulged in more distant walks and omnibus rides. And when once she had mastered her nervous dread of getting into wrong or doubtful localities, where she might be seen, recognised, and misunderstood, there were no limits to the courage with which she conducted her metropolitan explorations.

It was a source of never-ending pleasure, of eternally fresh, ever-springing delight, to the quietly reared old country lady to pace the streets, and speculate as to where the different barks afloat on the great tides of life for ever ebbing and flowing were bound. It was quite a charming diversion to watch the changes of fashion in the different shop-windows. And those days when she went to concerts with Jenifer, on whom Madame Voglio lavishly bestowed tickets, were white ones indeed in Mrs. Ray's uneventful calendar.

Jenifer meantime studied, practised, slaved unceasingly at the cultivation of her art, and though Madame Voglio still said little or nothing commendatory or encouraging, the girl knew that her mistress did not desire nor design to dishearten her, or in any way to throw cold water on her hopes and aspirations. But Jenifer fully realised—and well was it for her that she did so—that Madame Voglio would never hold out delusive promises for the

that she would never give honour until honour was very much due indeed.

"You will find plenty of people, who know nothing about it, to tell you that you are a second Patti without her opportunities. I will only tell you of your faults and follies of style, of your failures, and absurdities, and ignorances, and I shall do you the most good," the mistress would say to the pupil sometimes, when the latter knew in her own inner consciousness that she had done well enough to please even her mistress. And then Jenifer would redouble her efforts and application, and take natural delight in the expression of satisfaction which would beam forth from every feature of madame's fat, flat, ugly, clever, good-humoured face.

They had no social life, these two women who had been the centres of the best social life in the region round about Moor Royal. Day after day rolled over their heads for many weeks, bringing them absolutely no change in their home-life—or rather lodging-life—save a chat with Mrs. Hatton.

Of Hubert and Effie, to Mrs. Ray's soft, pained regret, and to Jenifer's indignation mixed with contempt, they saw nothing.

Sometimes a hurried note would come from Effie, dated from some watering-place hotel, or from the Jervoise's London house, saying that "Hugh and herself hoped to be in London shortly," or "purposed leaving town in an hour or two," as the case might be, but invariably making some excuse, which had not even the merit of being plausible, for not coming to Hamilton Place. Sometimes a note would arrive spasmodically from Effie in a hansom—a note that did not contain a particle of intelligence that would not just as well have kept till

sending telegrams, and notes in hansoms. The doing so threw an atmosphere round her, the sender, of living at high pressure, and of being in hourly request in some beautiful world of gaiety and festivity of which Mrs. Ray and Jenifer could naturally know but little.

One other social episode there had been from which Jenifer had permitted herself to hope much, and expect a little. Mrs. Archibald Campbell had called with her brother, Captain Edgecumb, and had found Mrs. Ray at home alone. The visitor had said a little, but said it warmly, about "hoping soon to make Miss Ray's acquaintance, and to be fortunate enough to find her at home the next time" she came. But either some accident had occurred to dislocate Mrs. Archibald Campbell's intentions, or she forgot the object of them. For many weeks had elapsed since her first visit to the Rays, and she had not paid a second.

As for Captain Edgecumb, though he had called two or three times, he had not been rewarded by a sight of Jenifer. On one occasion she was at home, but she was practising, and so, for all the good her being at home did him, she might as well have been at Madame Voglio's. On other occasions both she and her mother were absent. But Mrs. Hatton received and entertained him, and thought so little of the labour involved in this good work, that she said nothing at all about it to those for whose sakes she avowedly incurred it.

She was undoubtedly an adept in the art of not only making friends, but of making them useful, this clever, enduring little lady in whose house the Rays lodged. When, through what he then considered "an unfortunate combination of circumstances," Mrs. Hatton received him in the absence of his friends the first time, Captain Edgecumb was more struck with her dignified reserve, than with anything else about her. The next time he was fortunate enough to find her acting as the Rays' representative, he was surprised and exquisitely charmed to find her breaking through this reserve, and treating him with an admixture of cordiality and confidence that was infinitely bewitching.

She had no settled plan, no defined object in striving to win this extremely casual acquaintance to be if "less than lover," certainly "more than friend." But she had an impulse to do it, knowing that, in her life especially, fortuitous circum-

stances were very apt to combine to unsteady and upset any position to which she might through much tribulation have attained. That she obeyed her impulse was not extraordinary. Her powers of reasoning and sense of self-preservation alike impelled her to obey every impulse which might propel her on to a pleasant landing-place, provided there were no dangerous spots to be overleapt in getting to it. As to what might be beyond the apparently safe and pleasant place, that was a matter for after consideration! All she concerned herself about was the goal in sight that looked good. And it looked good to her now to be sufficiently friendly with Captain Edgecumb to get him to introduce her to his sister, Mrs. Archibald Campbell.

Mrs. Hatton had absolutely no design beyond this at present, and she might have achieved her aim without further thought or trouble had she been contented to run straight, or play fair.

But she had got out of the habit of doing these things, therefore she went as it seemed out of wilfulness into devious paths, and strove to count by tricks rather than honours.

That the Rays knew nothing of his visits was a fact of which for her own purposes Mrs. Hatton kept Captain Edgecumb in ignorance at first. After a time or two he ceased to express any very bitter disappointment about missing them, either by word or look, and Mrs. Hatton argued that she did her friendly duty by them all round, in entertaining her lodgers' friend during her lodgers' absence.

"It was so kind of him to stay and enliven a poor little solitary woman when he had nothing better to do," she would tell him, so pathetically that he really believed himself to be a kind and magnanimous fellow at heart, for keeping up this sort of underhand intimacy with Mrs. Hatton. He pitied her profoundly. He did not know why exactly, or indeed at all, but still he frequently found himself saying, after an hour's chat with her in her pretty, well-arranged sitting-room—the furniture and adornments of which "were all in memoriam of those brighter days she had known," she told him—"I do pity that poor little woman, after all." "After all" what, he would have found it difficult to tell himself. But his assurance to himself that he "really did pity that poor little woman," seemed to do away

with anything that savoured of being surreptitious in the nature of their intercourse.

Meantime he was as firmly and fixedly determined as ever to propose to Jenifer Ray at a fitting opportunity. That the fitting opportunity was long in coming was not his fault. He would be quite ready for it whenever it should come.

Not only this, but he was really making plans for his future, and generally rearranging his own life, so as to make it more in accordance with the one she had projected for herself. It was no part of his design to have to go off to India or South Africa with his regiment at any given moment, leaving a wife singing like a syren in public. Accordingly, as he had made up his mind that Jenifer should be his wife, and should at the same time increase their income to the best of her vocal powers, he retired from the service, and looked out for remunerative employment in London.

It was while he was occupied in looking out for this, having at the time his headquarters in his father's house, where he found life rather dull, that he lapsed into the habit of beguiling the tedium of existence for Mrs. Hatton, for an hour or two, two or three times a week.

His estimate of Jenifer was a juster one than one would have supposed his slender knowledge of her could have formed. He knew that she was over Mrs. Hatton's head altogether, as far as the finer, stancher, and truer qualities were concerned. He knew also that Mrs. Hatton's objectless borrowings, and evasions, and concealments—though harmless enough, he considered—would be repulsive and ridiculous, cowardly and contemptible, in Jenifer Ray; and at the same time, though he did admire Jenifer Ray more for knowing this, he did not admire Mrs. Hatton less. If Jenifer ever became his wife—"When Jenifer became his wife," was the way he worded it to himself—he should not scruple to tell her that he had grown to be friendly with "poor little Mrs. Hatton, while she, Jenifer, was absorbed in her praiseworthy endeavours to fit herself for the concert-boards." Naturally, if Jenifer had not been so much absorbed, he would not have fallen into the habit of such intimacy. As it was, there was nothing reprehensible in the habit: on the contrary, there was much that was excellent about it, for without Jenifer being bothered and distracted to tell him herself, he heard of her and of her well-

being, and of the sure progress she was making in her studies.

For Mrs. Hatton fed him freely with the conversational food he liked best. She had very early in their intercourse discovered that he liked nothing better than to talk of himself, and to hear of Miss Ray, and she, Mrs. Hatton, gratified him deftly. He would not ask any questions about the girl he wanted for his wife of the woman he intuitively felt to be a lesser one than Jenifer. But he would show, unconsciously, by the way he listened that it pleased him to hear how she was, and how she looked, and what she was doing.

While it pleased him to do this, Mrs. Hatton was very well satisfied to give him the pleasure. It was not for her to rebuff anyone who called in a friendly spirit on ladies who were lodging in her house, and at the same time it was really laudable on her part to make an effort to make friends to herself now in comparatively fine weather, who might prove useful should the weather become rougher. For, as she always reminded herself, she was a solitary, uncared-for, unprotected little specimen of humanity. Self-help was the first law of nature, expediency, and taste with her. And in helping herself to as large a share of Captain Edgcomb's interest, and good-hearted desire to smooth any portion of her path that he possibly could smooth, without doing detriment to any other or any others who might have the closer claim on him, was truly not doing anything unworthy.

Distinctly not! Mrs. Hatton gave herself the assurance that her line of procedure was not only not unworthy, but even essayed to prove to herself that it was not even censurable, which was saying a great deal more. A vast number of unworthy deeds may be done, and are done daily and hourly—as for example when a carefully calculated snub is administered by some unappreciative but potent family or circle, to a struggling, writhing, impotent, sensitive young aspirant for something beyond that which the family or circle deems within reach or secure. But there is nothing that calls for censure on the part of the snubbers. They have acted according to their lights, and unworthy, cruel even as their act may be, they are as a rule very much applauded for what they have done, by all right-minded people.

So Mrs. Hatton sailed her light little pleasure skiff—the frail little boat in which she had embarked with Captain Edgcomb

—easily and agreeably over a summer sea. He thought her a "charming, good-hearted, much-to-be-pitied little woman," and she thought him an estimable, possibly useful, and amenable ass! And they neither of them thought that any third person could be injuriously affected by their thoughts of, or manner to, each other.

Jenifer coming home one day at an untimely hour, thrown out of her reckoning by reason of a hastily but severely developed cold in Madame Voglio's head and throat, found Captain Edgecumb in the act of knocking at their door.

To say that her heart "bounded" would be saying too much. As a matter of fact, hearts in a state of physical healthiness don't "bound"; but it is true that the girl experienced a sense of sudden elation. It was only a few weeks, after all, since she had left Moor Royal, and all that living at Moor Royal meant to a Miss Ray. But during those few weeks it had been ground into her that she was a very unimportant person in the scheme of humanity, and that few, if any, of her old friends remembered or cared aught about her. Now, suddenly before her eyes, in the act of seeking her, rose the form of the well-looking young soldier, who had played tennis with her in Devonshire, and had been (according to Effie) rather more than a little in love with her. Jenifer had not the slightest intention of responding to that love. But she was essentially human and womanly, and she was delighted to see him on the door-step, looking, from her point of view, ready to proffer it again.

He met her beautifully, taking the circumstances into consideration—the circumstances being that at the moment he caught sight of her, he was in the act of enquiring if Mrs. Hatton was at home. But now he disregarded Ann's answer in the affirmative, and met his true-love beautifully.

"Fortune smiles on me to-day; you're not with that eternal Madame Voglio, who must be looked upon as a hated rival by all your other friends." Then they shook hands, and he followed her into the house and on to the drawing-room, where her mother was sitting with her bonnet on, waiting for Jenifer to go with her to the "old masters."

Captain Edgecumb followed Miss Ray with his head well up, and manly integrity strongly expressed in every line of his face and movement of his figure. But at

the same time, for all this vivid expression of manly integrity, he was acutely conscious of a certain grim sense of amusement depicting itself on Ann's visage. It was sternly suppressed almost immediately, but not before Captain Edgecumb had seen it, and gathered from it the humbling conviction that Ann knew, as well as he did himself, that he would not tell Miss Ray that, but for her unexpected appearance, his visit would have been paid, "as usual," to Mrs. Hatton.

However, Ann, whatever depths of design she might fathom, was comfortably reticent about making public the result of her investigations. So, though he knew Ann had found him out to a certain extent, he knew that her fidelity to her mistress would prevent her making awkward revelations to anyone else. Accordingly his visit was accepted and treated by the Rays as if it had been the genuine, unforced article which it was not.

Jenifer's cordiality and pleasure at seeing him again were genuine enough. He was a gracious bit of the old life, let in easily and skilfully to the new. He admired their rooms as freshly as if he had not seen them half-a-dozen times under Mrs. Hatton's auspices, and asked as many questions about their daily routine, and Jenifer's progress under Madame Voglio, as if Mrs. Hatton had not informed him on these points to the fullest extent of her own knowledge. And all the time the Rays did not think of their complicated little landlady, and Captain Edgecumb did not speak of her.

By-and-by he escorted the two ladies to see the "old masters." He walked away by Jenifer's side with a hopeful air of part-proprietorship in that young lady, that was infinitely amusing to Mrs. Hatton and Ann, both of whom were regarding the exit of the trio from behind Mrs. Hatton's well-arranged curtains. Mrs. Hatton betrayed neither surprise nor annoyance at having been thus ignored by the man who had been her frequent visitor of late. But Ann had studied her mistress for many years, and she boded no pleasant things for either Miss Ray or Captain Edgecumb, from the merry smile with which that mistress turned aside from her post of observation.

"How thoughtful and kind of Captain Edgecumb to make no demand on my time and attention to-day, isn't it, Ann?" she asked demurely.

"I should hope his thoughtful kindness

will put a stop to any more conjuring and romancing about him," Ann replied sourly. Then as her mistress exclaimed impatiently "that she had so little pleasure in her desolate life, it would be hard indeed if she was to be deprived of the change and distraction which a little fresh society gave her," the old servant's face relaxed, and her voice shook with emotion, as she answered :

"If one could be sure that master was dead, I'd never say a word ; but he's one of those deep ones, he may come at any time, and I want you to be in the right with him as you've always been."

"You never objected to Mr. Boldero coming to see me, and being kind to me."

"Because Mr. Boldero thinks you what he'd like his sister to be, and Captain Edgcomb doesn't."

SOME THINGS OF OLD SPAIN.

QUITE at the opening of the eighteenth century, the Countess Danois, a lady of high social position at the French Court, was minded to pay a visit to a kinswoman married to a Spanish grandee of rank and influence, who resided for the most part at Madrid. The countess appears to have possessed considerable powers of observation, combined with the tendency to hasty generalisation which characterises the French people, but which also imparts an indescribable vivacity and sprightliness to their narrative correspondence. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to premise that in all comparisons the Spaniards and their usages are pronounced decidedly inferior to Frenchmen, though accredited with many excellent qualities and accomplishments.

At that period no country in Europe had much reason to boast of its city streets or country roads, but Spain seems to have enjoyed a peculiarly bad pre-eminence in that respect. Even in Madrid, the streets are described as "long and even, and of a good largeness, but there is no place worse paved. Let one go as softly as possible, yet one is almost jumbled and shaken to pieces. There are more ditches and dirty places than in any city in the world. The horses go up to the bellies, and the coaches up to the middle, so that it dashes all upon you, and your clothes are spoiled, unless you either pull up the glasses, or draw the curtains very often. The water comes into the coaches

at the bottom of the boots, which are open." Notwithstanding the filthy condition of the streets, it was a common practice for dashing young cavaliers to walk by the side of a carriage containing ladies to whom they desired to be particularly attentive, and it may be imagined that their brilliant costumes were not beautified by the operation. A worse fate often befell those who at nightfall threaded their way through the dark thoroughfares with the intention of serenading the object of their passing adoration, for in Madrid, as in Edinburgh, it was customary to empty the slops of the household out of the windows.

Apparently to compensate for the slowness of locomotion in the capital, fashion exacted a tremendous pace in the country, with the not unfrequent result of an upset, or, at least, of a broken axle-tree, or a wheel coming to grief. Mules were in greater request than horses, six being harnessed to a carriage in rural districts, but only four in the capital. The traces, made of silk or hemp, were outrageously long, so that the interval between each pair of animals exceeded three ells. The coachman, instead of occupying the box-seat, rode one of the foremost mules, lest he should overhear the conversation going on behind his back, as happened in the case of the coachman of the Duke d'Olivares, who revealed a matter of great importance with which he had thus become acquainted.

Country houses, when not actually inhabited, were shut up and abandoned to the winds of heaven. The Escorial itself was practically left unguarded. Travellers were thus obliged to take with them whatever provisions they were likely to require during their excursion, for even bread was seldom procurable, and never of good quality. Country inns were simply detestable. The entrance was always through the stable, in which mules and muleteers were huddled promiscuously. Access to the habitable part of the house was obtained by means of a ladder, at the head of which stood the hostess in holiday attire, having made the new arrivals wait in their litters until she was presentable. Having at last got thus far, "you are showed a chamber whose walls are white enough, hung with a thousand little scurvy pictures of saints. The beds are without curtains, the covertures of cotton, the sheets as large as napkins, and the napkins like pocket-handkerchiefs : and you must

be in some considerable town to find four or five of them; for in other places there are none, no more than there are forks. They have only a cup in the house; and if the mule-drivers get first hold of it, which commonly happens if they please (for they are served with more respect than those whom they bring), you must stay patiently till they have done with it, or drink out of an earthen pitcher."

The only fire at which a wet and shivering traveller could hope to dry and warm himself was in the kitchen, to which there was no chimney, the smoke escaping through a hole in the ceiling. "I think," the countess remarks, "there cannot be a better representation of hell than these sort of kitchens and the persons in them; for, not to speak of this horrible smoke, which blinds and chokes one, there are a dozen men and as many women, blacker than devils, nasty, and stinking like swine, and clad like beggars. There are always some of them impudently grating on a sorry guitar and singing like a cat roasting." The women had their hair dishevelled and hanging about their ears, with glass necklaces "twisted about their necks like ropes of onions," but which served to "cover the nastiness of their skin." They were also given to pilfering, and regarded the eighth commandment as a dead letter.

No matter at what hour the traveller arrived, he would find nothing in the house fit to eat or drink. A messenger had to be sent round to the different shops to buy meat, bread, groceries, and wine, and then the cooking spoiled everything. Mutton was fried with oil, partridges were dried up to a cinder, roast joints were served up as black as smoke and dirty fingers could make them. The fish-pasties might have been good had they not been stuffed with garlic, saffron, and pepper; while the bread, though white and sweet, was so badly kneaded and baked that it lay "as heavy as lead in the stomach." It was made in the shape of flat cakes, about the thickness of a man's finger. The grapes, however, were large and of delicate flavour, and the lettuces so excellent that the whole world could not afford better.

The militia may have been good food for powder, but the description of them reminds one of Sir John Falstaff's tattered demalions. "You shall seldom see," said Don Sancho Sanniento, "in a whole regiment any soldier that has more shirts than

that on his back, and the stuff they wear seems for its coarseness to be made of pack-thread. Their shoes are made of cord; they wear no stockings; yet every man has his peacock or dunghill-cock's feather in his cap, which is tied up behind, with a rag about his neck in form of a ruff; their swords oftentimes hang by their sides, tied with a bit of cord, and without any scabbard. The rest of their arms is seldom in better order."

The postal arrangements left much to be desired. Letters were put into a sack, tied with rotten cord to the shoulders of the postmen, or "foot-posts" as they were called, and as these worthies were in the habit of drinking themselves drunk, the contents of their wallets often fell into wrong hands. It seems strange to us at the present day that the Countess Danois and one of her companions, Don Frederigo de Cardonna, should have diverted themselves with opening and reading some letters which had accidentally been dropped on the staircase, and that one of them should have been translated for the benefit of the countess's correspondent in France. Neither the lady nor the cavalier appears to have thought that there was anything objectionable in their conduct. The countess had barely finished transcribing the purloined letter when she received a visit from the Alcalde's son, who is described as a gump, corresponding to our dandy or exquisite.

"His hair was parted on the crown of his head, and tied behind with a blue ribbon, about four fingers' breadth, and about two yards long, which hung down at its full length; his breeches were of black velvet, buttoned down on each knee with five or six buttons; he had a vest on so short that it scarce reached below his pockets, a scolloped doublet, with hanging sleeves, about four fingers' breadth, made of white embroidered sattin. His cloak was of black bays and he, being a spark, had wrapped it round his arm, because this is more gallant, with a very light buckler in his hand, and which has a steel pike standing out in the middle; they carry it with them when they walk in the night on any occasion; he held in the other hand a sword, longer than an half-pike, and the iron for its guard was enough to make a breast and back plate. These swords being so long that they cannot be drawn out unless a man has the arms of a giant, the sheath therefore flies open in laying the finger on a little spring. He had likewise a dagger, whose blade was very

narrow; it was fastened to his belt on his back; he had such a straight collar that he could neither stoop nor turn about his head. Nothing can be more ridiculous than what they wear about their necks, for it is neither a ruff, band, nor cravat. His hat was of a prodigious size, with a great band twisted about it, bigger than a mourning one. His shoes were of as fine leather as that whereof gloves are made, and all slashed and cut, notwithstanding the cold, and so exactly close to his feet, and having no heels, that they seemed rather pasted on. In entering he made me a reverence after the Spanish fashion, his two legs cross one another, and stooping as women do when they salute one another; he was strongly perfumed, and they are all so."

A few leagues from Madrid, Countess Danois was invited to dine at a fine house belonging to an old gentleman named Don Augustin Pachelo, who had lately married his third wife, Donna Theresa de Fegueros, a lovely young girl of "sweet seventeen." Although it was ten o'clock the lady had not yet left her bed, to which the countess was conducted, while the gentlemen remained in the gallery, "because it is not the custom in Spain for men to go into women's chambers while they are in bed; even a brother had not this privilege, unless his sister be sick." So particular were the Spaniards in some matters, that before Donna Theresa ventured to put on her stockings and shoes she locked and bolted the door, saying that she would rather die than that the gentlemen should see her feet, which happened to be remarkably small. The first thing in the morning and the last thing at night was to take a little cup full of red paint, and with a good-sized pencil lay it on cheeks and chin, under the nose, over the eyebrows and tips of the ears, and even inside the palms and fingers of the hand. Donna Theresa confessed that she would rather dispense with all this painting, but could not do so as the custom was universal. One of her women perfumed her from head to foot with the smoke of choice pastilles, while another squirted through her teeth a shower of orange-flower water over her face. Dinner was served at an early hour, a cloth being laid on a table for the gentlemen, and on the floor for the ladies—a reminiscence of the Moorish times when women occupied a very inferior position in the social system. The countess, however, was unable to accomplish the feat of dining with her legs under her, so that in the end the ladies

were likewise promoted to the dignity of sitting at the table, though Donna Theresa was a little awkward at first, and explained that she had never before sat on a chair.

In Madrid the number of domestic servants that every rich man was expected to maintain was an intolerable nuisance. The menial servants, indeed, were paid no more than two reals a day for food and wages, or about sixpence of the English currency of the period. Nor did the "gentlemen" attendants receive above fifteen crowns a month, "with which they must wear velvet in winter and taffaty in summer, but then they live upon onions, pease, and such like mean stuff, and this makes the pages and footmen as greedy as dogs." Indeed, the Spaniards were exceedingly temperate when eating and drinking at their own expense, but were not so easily satisfied when feasting at another's cost. "I have seen," remarks the countess, "persons of the highest quality eat with us like so many wolves, they were so hungry." They themselves ascribed their voracity to the excellence of the French ragouts. For the most part the Spaniards drank very little wine, and that much diluted. At the death of the head of a family the servants were transferred, as an addition to the household of his son and successor. The women servants usually were taken over by a daughter, or daughter-in-law, when the mother died, and so on to the fourth generation. Very often they were not required to do any work at all, but were expected to present themselves now and again to show that they were still in the land of the living. The Duchess of Ossuna told the countess, who was astonished to see so many chambermaids and waiting-women, that she had got rid of five hundred, and had then only three hundred in her service. The king, it was said, had fully ten thousand persons dependent on him in Madrid alone. For all that it was forbidden, save in the case of ambassadors and strangers, to go out with more than three attendants, of whom one must be a groom, to walk or run by the side of the horses, "to hinder them from putting and entangling their legs in their long traces." The groom was not suffered to carry a sword as the footmen did. All three were middle-aged men, of a tawny hue and clownish aspect, with their hair cut close on the top of their heads.

A truly oriental custom existed in those days, which was often attended with much inconvenience. If one inadvertently praised any article belonging to another, the latter was bound to urge its acceptance on the admirer. The Countess Danois chanced to compliment Don Antonio of Toledo, son to the Duke of Alva, on the beauty of his harness, which was of an Isabella colour. He replied that he laid them at her feet, and that same evening she was informed that his six horses were in her stable, and it was with great difficulty that she induced him to take them back again. She herself, at the very outset, had a disagreeable experience of this custom. She was in the habit of winding up her watch at noon, the ordinary dinner-hour, and one of her women brought it to her as usual for that purpose. It was a striking watch of Tompion's make, and cost fifty louis d'or. Her banker, who was seated beside her, expressed curiosity to look at it. Whereupon she carelessly handed it to him, with a few words of civility. To her dismay he rose, made her a profound reverence, avowed his unworthiness to receive such a favour, and protested that he would never part with the watch under any circumstances. He then kissed it, and dropped it into his capacious pocket.

Male and female dwarfs constituted a never failing feature in every rich household. Both sexes were hideously ugly, but the women looked especially repulsive from their hair hanging loose about their ears, and reaching to the ground. They were clad in rich apparel, and being in their mistress's confidence, were denied nothing they coveted.

Farthingales were no longer of such a prodigious bigness that hardly any doors were wide enough for them. At that time the overgrown article was worn only in the presence of royalty. Elsewhere ladies contented themselves with a vestment of much smaller dimensions, "made of thick copper wire in a round form, about the girdle; there are ribbons fastened to them, with which they tie another round of the same form, which falls down a little lower, and which is wider; and of these they have five or six rounds which reach down to the ground, and bear out their petticoats and other garments."

The Spanish women being, as a rule, of short stature, they supplemented nature by walking on tall pattens, as high as small stilts. They have certainly improved

in their gait since those days, when they kept their elbows close to their sides and glided along with great rapidity, without raising their feet, though they made slow and awkward progress with their six-inch high pattens. Not unfrequently they wore a dozen under-garments, and never fewer than seven or eight in the hottest weather. The fashion of their dress was quite unsuitable to their abnormal leanness, which they regarded as a beauty. In front their bodies were shaped very high, but behind they were cut very low, and made a great display of the brown skin "glewed to their backs." Their shoulders, however, were relieved by red paint. Their hands were small, white, and well-shaped. People of quality indulged in very fine linen, which was so scarce and dear that the commonalty, whose vanity made them ape their betters, were constrained to make shift with a single garment, and while it was being washed they either remained in bed or went about without one. In the matter of jewellery, Spanish ladies were very extravagant. Precious stones, however, were badly set, being over-framed in gold. It was not enough, as in France, to possess one costly set. Fashion demanded that a Spanish lady should have eight or ten sets, some of diamonds, others of rubies, emeralds, pearls, and turquoises. "The ladies," as we learn from the Countess Danois, "wear at the top of their stays a broad knot of diamonds, from whence there hangs a chain of pearls, or ten or twelve knots of diamonds, which they fasten at the other end to their sides. They never wear any necklace, but they wear bracelets, rings, and pendants; the latter of which are longer than a person's hand, and so heavy that I have wondered how they could carry them without tearing out the lobes of their ears, to which they add whatever they think pretty. I have seen some have large watches hanging there, others padlocks of precious stones, and even your fine-wrought English keys and little bells. They also carry upon their sleeves, their shoulders, and all about their cloaths Agnus Deis and small images. They have their heads stuck full of bodkins, some made of diamonds in the shape of a fly, and others like butterflies, whose colours are distinguished by various stones."

In the best houses the ladies were accustomed to sit on the ground cross-legged. Visitors were announced by a dwarf, kneeling upon one knee, whereupon all the company rose from the ground, an opera-

tion repeated fifty or sixty times during a call. There was no kissing, lest perchance they might rub the colour off one another's faces. The ordinary form of salutation was with ungloved hands, and in conversation the second personal pronoun, thou or thee, was always used. They never addressed one another by their titles, but by their christian-names, Donna Maria, Donna Clara, or whatever it might be, so that all acquaintances were deemed to be socially equal. At the same time a wide gulf was fixed between the nobility and members of the different professions. "The wives of the gentlemen of the long robe never so much as visit the court ladies, and a man of inferior birth never marries with a woman of quality; you never see those who are not gentlemen mix with the nobility, as in France."

The toilet-table was meagrely furnished. The Countess Danois observed in the bed-chamber of the Marchioness of Alconnizas, "one of the neatest and richest ladies," that, although the toilet-service was laid out upon a silver table, it consisted only of a small piece of calico, a looking-glass not larger than one's hand, two combs, a little box, and a small china cup containing the white of an egg beaten up with sugar-candy, which was used to take the dirt off the face and make it shine. Notwithstanding the refinement of Spanish manners, ladies and gentlemen picked their teeth at table "with grave looks," no matter who might be present. Gravity was held of great account. To acquire a look of gravity quite young ladies had huge spectacles on their noses, fastened to their ears, but through which they were never minded to look. Another curious fancy was to eat quantities of medicinal earth. Penitents were sometimes enjoined to abstain from eating this unwholesome stuff for a whole day, which was considered a severe penance. It was believed to be an antidote to poison, and to cure all manner of diseases. Countess Danois had a cup made of this earth which spoiled the flavour of wine, but purified water, and being exceedingly porous would quickly absorb all the liquid poured into it.

Some ladies went a dozen times in the day to hear mass, but paid little attention to what was going on sacerdotally. A fan was indispensable, summer or winter. Their muffs, made of the finest martens and sables, were above half an ell in length, and cost four or five hundred crowns

apiece. In church they squatted on the ground, and were continually taking snuff, though without letting it fall on their dress. Each time the elevation took place both men and women struck their breasts with their fists, and seemingly with great violence. At the termination of the service the professed gallants, who were marked by a piece of crape round their hats, ranged themselves round the place where the holy water was kept, and presented some to each lady as she passed, together with a little complimentary speech to which a courteous reply was usually returned. Some jealous husbands, however, complained of this practice to the Pope's nuncio, who forbade its continuance under pain of excommunication.

Lent was a very trying season for the French travellers, though they observed only Passion Week. For one thing, butter was scarce, dear, and bad. It was brought in hog's bladders from a place thirty leagues distant, and was full of worms. Most people, therefore, preferred olive-oil, when capable of digesting it. Salt-water fish was seldom procurable, though sometimes salmon pies, seasoned with spice and saffron, could be had and were not much amiss. But nobody who could afford to pay a shilling to the Pope's nuncio for a dispensation ever thought of fasting in Lent, especially as the same license gave permission to eat the head, feet, and inwards of poultry every Saturday throughout the year. We are not told, however, what became of the nobler and daintier parts of the bird. Butcher's meat was as easily obtainable in Lent as at any other period—that is to say, the purchase was effected with the same trouble and annoyance. The meat was not exposed to view, but was shut up in the shop. The bargaining was transacted at a little window. The customer asked, perhaps, for a loin of veal and paid down the money. After a while, a leg of mutton would be offered to him, to be succeeded, if rejected, by a short rib of beef. If this too was refused, his money would be thrown to him, and the window shut down. The usual plan was to mention the quantity of meat, and leave it to the butcher to give what he pleased. In any case it was sure to be lean, dry, and black; but it made better soup than French meat. Good wine was not to be had in Madrid. It was strong, and both tasted and smelt of pitch from being kept in bags made of buckskin. It was retailed in very small quantities. The stuff sold to the

poor was made worse than it would otherwise have been by being allowed to stand all day in an open basin, so that it became sour, and emitted a pungent odour.

Religion and gallantry were curiously mixed up together in those days. The disciplinarians were a fantastic reminiscence of the flagellants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They were attired rather gaily and walked with mincing steps, but when they stopped before their mistress's window they showed themselves very much in earnest, and were encouraged by their lady-love to flay themselves alive. "When they meet a handsome woman they whip themselves after such a rate as to make the blood fly about her. This is esteemed a particular civility, and the lady acknowledges and thanks them for it." By way of variety some of the disciplinarians stuck needles into sponges, with which they pricked their shoulders and sides as if they enjoyed the operation. Some of the young sprigs of nobility were in the habit of sallying forth at night, attended by friends and footmen with lighted flambeaux of white wax, and carrying the instrument of penance, ornamented with streamers of ribbon, presented by their mistress. Having taken up their station beneath her balcony, they would lay on with might and main until their blood flowed copiously. Other penitents, like the Indian jogeos, would walk about with as many as seven swords run through the skin of their arms and body, and as they went barefooted over the sharp uneven stones they occasionally tripped, and in falling hurt themselves grievously. A good deal of irreverential familiarity was combined with the religious traditions of the Spaniards of that period. On the occasion of the Corpus Christi festival the king and the whole court followed the Holy Sacrament through the streets, carrying each a lighted candle of white wax. After the procession had returned to the church whence it started, everybody hurried home to dine, and then hastened to witness an open-air performance of a curious jumble of things sacred and profane. The one at which the Countess Danois was present purported to represent an assembly of the knights of St. James, to whom came the Saviour with a request that he might be admitted into their order. The knights drew apart and discussed the application. Some were in favour of receiving the Saviour into their order, but the elder men objected that the applicant was an individual of

very humble extraction. His father, they said, was a poor carpenter, while his mother was a sempstress, and worked with her needle. Meanwhile the Saviour testified extreme impatience at the delay, and was quite overcome on learning that their final decision was unfavourable. To soothe his wounded feelings, however, they agreed to institute a new order, to be called the Order of Christ, and the proposition appeared to give satisfaction to everyone.

It is quite intelligible that the countess should be unable to control her painful emotions on beholding for the first time the horrors of the bull-ring. At that time lives were wantonly thrown away in the hope of winning a smile or the flutter of a handkerchief from an indulgent mistress. Men of noble birth then entered the arena, and prided themselves on their dexterity in avoiding the rush of the infuriated beast, and on their steadfast courage in accepting death when escape became impossible. The horses that were then pitted against the bull were valuable and thoroughbred animals, easily manageable, though of a bold and unflinching temperament. They were frequently gored, and even tossed, amid the rapturous applause of high-born lords and dames, who had no ruth for the sufferings of man or beast, so long as they themselves were thrilled with inhuman excitement.

The working-classes were naturally brutalised, not only by such hideous spectacles, but also by the extreme poverty and scanty fare to which they were reduced. In Madrid, indeed, they were better off, and might have earned a tolerable livelihood, could they have divested themselves of their besetting sin of laziness. Their great delight was to bask in the sun and discuss public affairs with great vehemence and considerable shrewdness. "You cannot," the countess remarks, "see a joiner, a saddler, or other sort of shopkeeper, without his velvet and satin suit like the King's, with his long rapier and dagger, and his guitar hanging up in his shop." After idling through the week they would work on Sunday, or any other sacred festival, and carry their goods to their employers. "If it is a shoemaker, and he has two apprentices, he takes them both with him, and each of them carry a shoe; nay, if he has three they must all go along with him, and it is with much ado that he will stoop to try the shoes he has made."

It is surely nothing wonderful that such a people should have vanished from the political firmament of Europe, almost as completely as the lost Pleiad from the starry heavens above and around us.

THE VOICES OF THE SEA.

ALONG the shell-wreathed, shining strand
The old and young went to and fro ;
The sinking sun filled all the land

With evening's rich and ruddy glow.
The hot clouds in the amber west
Lit up the sea-kissed shingly bars,
And weary ones who longed for rest
Waited the dawning of the stars.

There came the murmur of the sea
Along the soft sands of the shore ;
'Twas laden with deep mystery,

And music strange was in its roar.
And, as the voices of its waves
Were borne upon the listening ears,
They sang alike of songs and graves,
Of sunny hearts and sacred tears.

There passed a little blue-eyed boy,
As sank the sun on ocean's brim ;
Naught but the sound of endless joy
Across the red waves came to him.
For his bright fancy chased the sun
O'er seas of emerald and gold ;
And the sweet life he had begun,
Its first fair scenes had now unrolled.

With merry heart a maiden came,
The shining, sunlit sands along.
To her the sea bore one dear name
Amidst the burden of its song ;
And the ten thousand glitterings
That stretched across the sunlit bay,
Seemed messengers on golden wings
From her true loved one far away.

There came a man of full fourscore
Into the twilight all alone,
To him the sea broke on the shore
With solemn away and sullen moan ;
The voices of the bygone years
Came faintly on its sad refrain ;
Yet when he called, mid rising tears,
On friends, they answered not again.

Still sank the sun. Then rose the stars,
And looked down on the cold grey shore ;
Still solemnly the moaning bars
Wailed low their music as of yore.
And some with sad eyes met the night,
To pass its watches all forlorn ;
And some there slept mid visions bright
Till dawned the fragrant, rosy morn.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART XII.

WHAT a sight met our eyes as we came on deck in the early morning, and found the Sea Mew gently steaming along by Spithead, the narrow waters all bright with sunshine, and studded with countless sails ! It was the time of regattas, and the sea was alive with yachts of all sizes and shapes, among which big ironclads at anchor showed like birds of prey among the fluttering, quickly darting flock. Crowded ferry steamers were wending their way

among the press of sailing craft. The roofs of Ryde were glittering in the morning sunshine, and the long pier stretched towards us as if to tempt us to land on the pleasant green shores. A band in the distance played the part of Circe, but Captain Mac, as Ulysses, held us firmly to our course, and Ryde was left behind, and the wooded slopes of Osborne appeared in view. Everywhere white sails were piled higher and higher on tapering masts, as the gentle breeze raised a curling ripple on the blue waters. Cowes was hardly to be seen for the cloud of sails, and the mouth of the Medina was full of the cobweb-like tracery of spars and rigging. Everything cried out "Stay !" but cried in vain, for the indicator showed "Ahead full speed," and except when some adventurous cutter or schooner with all her spread of canvas thrust herself across our course, full speed ahead continued to be expected from the labouring engines. For Captain Mac had promised Hilda that she should sleep under the roof of home that night, and the prospect of losing his passengers before nightfall stimulated him to unwonted energy.

And so the varied panorama of the coast passes before our eyes, with its white cliffs and grey, its red cliffs and blue ; the coast-line that has no equal in its variety, brightness, and charm in all this hemisphere—that is, when the sun shines as it does to-day, while the shadows of the clouds rest softly on land and sea. And thus we pass along the Solent and out of the narrow neck of water with Hurst Castle threatening us from the mainland with ancient majestic force, while we run close under the guns of the modern forts on the island. And then the pinnacled rocks of the Needles with their tall lighthouse are passed, and we steam across Christchurch Bay with its perplexing tides, where there is high-water four times a day. And then Bournemouth appears in the distance with its dark pine-woods ; and Swanage Bay opens out, while the round-backed limestone hills rise solidly in the background ; and then we stretch out to sea to negotiate the Bill of Portland, the sun flashing messages to us from the upper windows of Weymouth, whence I started to look for Hilda. How long ago is it ? It seems a lifetime since. And we take the flashes from Weymouth as congratulating signals testifying satisfaction that what was begun there is in the way of being brought to a happy conclusion. And

then the broad back of Portland Island shuts out everything else from view; that island with its grand and portentous outline, with its associations of misery and despair entombed in its rock-cut terraces. We run close to the rock, and Hilda shudders as she sees a long line of convicts slouching along under the rifles of their warders. A terrible island that of imprisoned sighs and groans, and yet with a stern grandeur of its own, its cliffs crowned with frowning forts and towers. Now we stand out across Lyme Bay, with its rigid wall of cliffs affording here and there a gap, hollowed out by some plodding little river, where a little town has crept in with a clump of red roofs and a cluster of masts and sails; and then we make Berry Head by Brixham with a fleet of fishing-boats disporting in the sunshine, and look back across Torbay, with its ultra-Protestant memories, to where Torquay rises, glittering from the blue waters, embosomed in wooded hills, with foliage feathering down to the very edge of the sea.

A long summer's day was coming to an end, a perfect and halcyon day of rest and languid enjoyment, and still the coastline stretched on before us, an unbroken line of cliff and beetling precipice, with Start Point as the farthest headland, showing stern and grim against the orange glow of the setting sun. We were slipping westward, indeed, at a pretty good pace, with no sign of a friendly harbour anywhere near. The man at the wheel had hardly moved a little finger for the last half-hour, and the engines drummed along monotonously, as if they had got well into the way of working, and wanted nobody to drive them now, and, indeed, the engineers had come on deck for a breath of fresh air, and were taking this prolonged breath, tempered with tobacco smoke, in company with the cook and a couple of sailors, in a light-hearted manner. Captain Mac was in his cabin, supposed to be locking over the charts, but in reality, I fancy, indulging in a kind of cat's sleep, when suddenly, as if she had sprung out of the rocks, a huge ocean steamer appeared round a jutting point. A piercing scream from her steam-whistle showed that she had caught sight of us at the same moment. Captain Mac sprang from his cabin, the engineers scuttled downstairs, while the steersman began to haul at his wheel, the natural impulse of man under such circumstances being to port his helm. But,

"Stand your course, John," cried our captain like one demented, and then, "Starboard a little," as we felt the throb of the huge steamer, that seemed to throw a darkness upon us as she came between us and the setting sun. The orders given carried us right athwart the track of the big steamer, and far from slackening speed our captain, as he grasped the handle of the indicator, seemed to want to have it "ahead fuller speed," if such a signal were possible. One could see a bustle on board the big steamer, and a crowding of heads over her bulwarks, and then our little steamer begins to dance in the swell of her as she passes harmlessly astern.

Sundry gold-banded heads, from the bridge of the big steamer, now peered over at us, and expressed uncomplimentary opinions of our gallant captain, who contented himself with burying his head between his shoulders and wriggling half apologetically and half defiantly. And then from the poop-deck we were held in view, and addressed in more or less emphatic chaff, by a crowd of bronzed and bearded faces, with a sprinkling of sallow unbearded ones among them, with here and there a dark ebony face, lighted up with gleaming ivory, or the stolid mahogany visage of some Arab traveller; bright plumaged birds chattered and screamed at us, and a monkey, loose among the rigging, joined in the general confusion of tongues.

"Now," said Captain Mac, approaching us in a deprecating manner, "if ye'd been all cast away ye'd have blamed me."

The probability was, that we should not have been in a position to blame anybody; but the old squire, who had just come on deck, shook his head, and remarked:

"You should have put your helm down, captain—hard down."

"And if I had," rejoined the captain, "where would you have been?—ashore now on a bank of rock. Now, the sailing-rules, and common-sense, moreover, bid me keep out of the way of the other packet, which was on my starboard bow, mark you."

The result justified Captain Mac. It was certainly much pleasanter to be sailing merrily along towards our port than to be stuck on a rocky shelf waiting to be salvaged by a congress of rapacious tugs. The wonder still remains at meeting such a huge craft in these quiet seas, and so close

inshore; but our captain allays the wonder by explaining that no doubt this packet was one of the East African steamers straight from Mozambique and Madagascar, at least as straight as the Cape of Good Hope will allow, with her port of call at Dartmouth, thus bringing the quiet coast of Devon into direct relations with Africa's coral strand.

And now we head up for the northward, straight for the rocks as it seems, but presently the rocks open out as they might do in some Arabian Nights' enchantment, and we pass suddenly from the open sea into the quiet and seclusion of a romantic river gorge. Twilight has suddenly come upon us, and rows of lights are shining from the hill above, where houses rise terrace above terrace, looking over each other's roofs, and the bold headland with its castle and quaint St. Petrox rising above are thrown in clear obscurity against the evening glow. Yachts are floating gently to their moorings, folding their pinions as they come to rest; the sound of oars echoes from the rocks, and the ferry steamer is taking her last trip across the harbour. All this is in wonderful contrast to garish Trouville. The quiet old-world town, not much altered in general aspect since the Crusaders sailed thence for the Holy Wars; the stiff and solemn deportment of the natives, seamen, fishermen, and coastguardsmen, their slow soft way of talking, and energetic way of working; all are widely different to affairs on the other side of the Channel.

But we have no time to lose if we mean to reach Combe Chudleigh to-night. The tide is making up the river, and a gentle sea breeze is rippling the tranquil cove, and a boat is lowered from the yacht, and with a sprit-sail, and the occasional help of a couple of seamen at the oars, we sail forth towards Totnes. Hilda sits at the tiller, she knows every wind and turn of the beautiful stream, which in the soft gloaming recalls some tropical river with its vegetation so luxuriant that it seems here and there as if we must force a passage through the foliage, until another reach opens out like a lake, all embowered in trees.

But it is quite dark when we reach the little cove which opens out towards Combe Chudleigh, and the boat is made safe in the half-ruinous boathouse, and the sailors are sent off to make themselves comfortable for the night in the village ale-house. The village is still wide awake, and we can

hear the harvest-men singing over their cups after a long day's toil. And presently as we walk slowly up towards the house we hear the bells of the village church tolling one after the other, and then breaking out suddenly into a merry peal. Hilda clutched my arm nervously.

"Why should they be ringing the bells to-night?" she asked. "It can't be for our coming back. Is it possible Mr. Chancellor has come down to look at his new purchase?"

Sure enough when we reached the hall door we found a fly standing there that had just come over from the station. But Mrs. Murch was in the doorway ready to receive us. She had been told to expect us any day, and everything was in readiness—the small suite of rooms in the west wing were all prepared for our habitation. But who was the other arrival? Not Mr. Chancellor indeed, but a gentleman connected with him, a certain Mr. Wyvern, with a solicitor and a surveyor from London. They had been looking over the timber and everything in the house, and now they were hard at work writing and calculating in the library.

"Oh, I wish I hadn't come," sobbed Hilda, "to hear of strangers appraising the old timber, and putting a price on the family pictures! I knew it would come to this, but the reality is too appalling, and our people ring the bells for it!"

"Well, that shall be put a stop to anyhow," said Mrs. Murch grimly, and a small boy was dispatched to the village to give notice to the ringers. But presently the youth came back grinning from ear to ear.

"It warn't for he," with a pantomimic indication by a thumb over his shoulder of some contemptible person—presumably Mr. Chancellor; "it warn't for he, but for young miss, and Master Frank, her sweetheart, that the bells were set a ringing, and they warn't going to stop—no, not if anybody was to offer 'em a sovereign first."

Here was joy for Hilda; her people had not forgotten her, they had not gone over to the enemy! After all this it would be more of a trial than ever to leave the place. The old squire, strange to say, did not seem to care a bit about the home of his ancestors. He grumbled that there was no evening paper—he grumbled at poor Mrs. Murch's honest but misguided attempt to send up an appetising repast. Everything was much more comfortable in

Westbourne Terrace, and even on board the Sea Mew things were better arranged. And certainly the old hall struck one as uncommonly dreary. A thin fine rain had come on, a soft misty cloak enveloping everything. Hilda went to bed with a headache, and the old squire retired to the society of a tub of hot water and a basin of gruel.

In a general way, when some unavoidable evening engagement takes you out, an overpowering desire for rest takes possession of the soul. In the same way, when there is nothing else in the world to do, the idea of going to bed and trying to sleep becomes absolutely repulsive. And then I came to know that other people in the house were passing their time in a more amusing way. The professional people from London had been invited to stay the night and make themselves comfortable in the old hall, and they seemed to be quite equal to the occasion. A pleasant smell of tobacco took away the rawness of the air, and now and then a gentle waft of laughter gave evidence that some quiet joke had been perpetrated or good story told. At last, unable to endure the solitude of the place any longer, I got Mrs. Murch to take in to these merry people an offer on my part to join their society, and I soon made a fourth among them. At first, of course, my presence acted as a wet blanket; the flow of talk and anecdotes was checked. But then I was a fourth, and the fact suggested whist, and whist we played into the small hours. The London solicitor and myself were partners, and we punished Wyvern and the surveyor so handsomely that my partner seemed charmed with my prowess. As dawn had now broken we took a turn round the grounds to admire the different points of view, and watch the vapours curling over the river, and floating away to the distant sea.

My new friend was well up in all the news of the day, and not at all reticent. He knew all about the breaking off of John Chancellor's engagement, and was able to tell me that so little had Hilda's former lover taken his loss to heart, that he was already engaged to marry the Hon. Miss Wyvern, an alliance which would bring him most distinguished connections. The Wyverns were certainly poor and somewhat rapacious; but still their political influence would be of immense advantage to a man in John Chancellor's position. And to bind the families more firmly

together, it was proposed that young Wyvern should marry Chancellor's sister.

I wondered what Tom would think of this, for he certainly was wonderfully taken with Miss Chancellor. And then I objected that as the Wyverns were poor, surely it would hardly be a good match for the youth, seeing that Miss Chancellor could not have much.

"Oh, I beg your pardon there," said my friend the lawyer. "She has twenty thousand pounds. John Chancellor was not the sole architect of his fortunes. There was a cousin who made a great fortune, and took up John Chancellor, and this cousin left his sister, Fanny by name, the score of thousands."

Another item of information I drew from my new friend. John Chancellor's capital was mostly locked up in commercial enterprises, and he had not sufficient money lying idle to pay for the Chudleigh estate. So that he proposed to borrow his sister's twenty thousand from her trustees, and the lawyer and surveyor had come down to value the security. They were tolerably well satisfied, it seemed; but as the young lady had just come of age, it would be necessary to consult her on the matter. The purchase was to be completed in the following week, and in the meantime the lawyer would have to run over to Trouville to obtain Miss Chancellor's signature and assent.

And if, for any reason, the twenty thousand pounds were not forthcoming? Well, in that case, Mr. Chancellor would have a great difficulty in completing the purchase—in fact, perhaps he would have to declare off altogether. And that would be a pity, for, as it was, the purchase-money would pay all mortgages, and leave a few thousands over for the old squire; whereas, with a forced sale, land being just now heavy in the market, perhaps he would get nothing at all.

Upon this I offered to take the lawyer with the rest of us in the Sea Mew and land him at his destination at Trouville, and Banks, as our friend was called, accepted the offer with much pleasure. I doubt if he would have shown such alacrity if he had divined the notion which was running in my head, and which was to keep him afloat till the day for ratifying the sale of Combe Chudleigh had passed, and so to give myself a chance of getting hold of the property.

As it happened, this buccaneering plan was never carried out, for next morning

came a telegram from Tom demanding our congratulations. Fanny had promised to be his; and so on. We determined, Hilda and I, to carry our congratulations in person, and so that afternoon we dropped down the river with the tide, and found ourselves once more on board the *Sea Mew*, our party increased by the presence of the lawyer, to the great disgust, I fancy, of Captain Mac, who had been looking forward to a week of solitary musing in harbour. This time we made a direct course from point to point, and saw no land after leaving behind the red cliffs of old Devon, till we made Cape la Hève and the chalky downs about the mouth of the Seine. Trouville was still more bright and gay, and a good deal more crowded than when we left. Tom and his sweetheart were on the pier to watch us in. Tom had been busy enough since we left. In addition to winning his bride, he had won a trotting-match against an American with Contango at the Deauville races. The count had gone away to Vichy to drink the waters and to recover from the effects of his immersion. But Mr. Banks had his journey for nothing, except the pleasure of the cruise. For Miss Chancellor, when she heard how matters stood, firmly refused to have anything to do with the Combe Chudleigh property. And so Mr. Banks took back with him an offer to let the whole business of the purchase be cancelled, returning the money already paid, which otherwise might be forfeited.

While we are waiting for Mr. Chancellor's reply, to keep the *Sea Mew* employed—a ravenous kind of bird that in the way of coals, and stores, and harbour-charges devours as much as any of the celebrated sea-monsters of ancient days—to keep her employed and Captain Mac from too much metaphysics, we determine upon a run up the Seine, starting with the first of the flood-tide. To catch the tide we must lay up for the night in Havre, where we get a berth alongside the Southampton steamer (into which we ship poor Contango, who is to travel from Southampton to Devonshire by easy stages), and then in the early morning the *Sea Mew* slips out just in the wake of the little teamer Chamois, which makes the voyage to Rouen every other day.

The tide is hardly stirring as we leave the harbour, but before we are in mid-stream it is rushing in with tremendous power, racing over the flat sand-banks, and

bending the tall poles that mark out the channel. The Chamois has to call for passengers at Honfleur, on the other side of the estuary, and so we get the start of her, and race along at the very head of the flood. We have got a pilot on board, a jolly old fellow, who is always cracking jokes with Tom—dimly understood on either side, but none the less relished. And, indeed, the navigation at the mouth of the Seine, what with shifting sand-banks and the tide, that runs like a mill-race, requires the skill of a pilot who can study the tides and the channels from day to day. A noble river, too, is the Seine from the very mouth—with no low country of flats and marshes to pass through, and amphibious regions, half-sea and half-river, but running in a noble well-defined valley up to, or rather down to, the junction with the sea.

Hardly is the channel fairly entered when the English-looking spire of Harfleur appears under the distant hills—the Harfleur of Henry the Fifth, the once girded Harfleur, the royal port and great mart of the Seine, but now left high and dry in a little nook by the lazy river Lézarde. And then come the towers of Tancarville rising proudly on their bold headland, while the hills and cliffs on either side approach as if this were once the outlet of a mighty lake that filled up the whole valley above. Then we hurry past Quillebeuf, a neat and taking little town, drawn up on its strongly-built quay, and from Quillebeuf, the river narrowing rapidly, the tide rises suddenly in a huge wave, a bore that stretches from bank to bank, dashing in surf along the banks on either side, while foaming breakers hurry along in its wake. Just in the rear of these troubled waters the *Sea Mew* drives along with all the speed that Captain Mac and his engineers can get out of her. There is a pleasant breeze too from the west, and the *Sea Mew* stretches out her canvas, and with sail and steam bids fair to outrace the tide, and the little flotilla that is urging on behind.

Everywhere along the banks of the river we hear the cry, "Le fiôt, le fiôt," in a soft melancholy cadence, carried from mouth to mouth, a warning cry that has echoed along these banks no doubt for countless generations, and was heard by the men in Caesar's galleys, and by the fierce Northmen as they followed the tide with sail and oar on their mission of plunder and destruction. Then as the river takes a sudden bend to

the north we see a vast forest stretching to the right, while on the other bank great white cliffs rise behind a margin of verdant prairie. Yonder is Villequier, a pleasant village with a venerable church, and a little quay, with an inn looking over it, where the pilots sit, we are told, playing picquet all day long, and waiting for a turn; and here we drop our jolly old pilot, and take in another with his belongings all packed up in a round bag, whose business it is to take the ship to Rouen.

Candebec now appears on our left, brightest of little towns, with its broad quay, and avenues of trees, and comfortable old-fashioned houses, aligned in the rear with gardens and green shrubberies, and here there is a signal-mast that shows the depth of water on the bar farther on, the signal man stringing up one ball after another as the tidal wave changes the state of affairs all of a sudden from dead low water to nearly full tide. And here we come upon a railway train that races with us and with the tide for a while, but leaves us as we take another great bend to the south, and so come upon the forest again, which occupies the whole peninsula; and then we see the strange twin towers of Jumièges, with a film only of the central tower remaining—Jumièges that was once the nursery of English prelates, with its traditions that stretch back to the very infancy of the Christian faith.

And then there is another great bend of the river, with stupendous chalk cliffs, first on one side and then on the other, rising sheer from the margin of the stream on one hand, and on the other a stretch of green prairie, with tall poplars rising in long lines. And above the level of the water meadows, the valley is one vast orchard, a perfect garden of the Hesperides, all now bright with golden fruit. At Duclair, which lies at the top of the bend—another pleasant-looking little town, with its quay, and its little steam ferry-boat shooting to and fro, its white houses with their green persiennes, and a snug-looking hotel overlooking the quay—at Duclair there are English steamers loading up with fruit, conical baskets of plums and the first of the apples. The huge cliffs that rise above the town are quarried and excavated into great caverns, and farther on the chalk assumes all kinds of fantastic shapes of feudal castles and grey, time-worn towers.

From this point the hills are all covered with forest, where the deer and the wild boar can roam up to the very gates of Rouen, and where William the Conqueror would find himself still very much at home, the ancient art of vénerie having changed but little since his days.

At the bottom of the bend we come to La Bouille, a nice little place lying in the very elbow of the river, with an hotel which has a great verandah overlooking the river, where it is pleasant to sit and watch the ships coming up with the tide. By crossing a narrow isthmus here, you cut off a bend of the river of some twenty-four miles, and here when Henry the Fifth was besieging Rouen he dragged his ships across, so as to shut in the ships of Rouen on both sides. Close by is a grand and ancient earthwork known as the Château of Robert le Diable, where there was a fierce encounter during the Prussian war. And at La Bouille our captain proposes to anchor the ship, to avoid the delays of a crowded port, and also no doubt to give him an interval of quiet reflection, as from this point numerous steamers ply to Rouen, which is just at the top of the bend.

And so we finish our course on one of the river steamers, a pleasant sail under wood-crowned heights, with green islands dotting the river, and so take a rapid glance at Rouen, familiar to most of us, and then drive across the neck of the isthmus to Duclair, for the sake of the magnificent view of the city of Rouen, and its network of valleys, from the heights. At Duclair the Sea Mew picks us up again, and we descend the river in a more leisurely way, anchoring again at Candebec to explore the picturesque old town and admire the charming panoramic views from its wooded heights, and then towards morning, when the points of flame on headlands and capes are just beginning to die away in the soft light of dawn, we double Cap de la Hève, and boldly steer out again to sea, this time with our prow directed straight for the South Foreland.

At first we skirt the long wall of chalk cliff—the ruddy tinge of Cap de la Hève giving place to the pure white of the cliffs above Étretât, where we can make out with our glasses the bathing-cabins on the beach, and monsieur, madame, and bébé taking their early morning swim. And then Fécamp opens out its narrow cleft in the great chalk escarpment, and we work into mid-channel and lose sight of land altogether.

As evening draws on the coast-line of England becomes visible, and presently the bright electric lights of the South Foreland flash out upon us. At the sight, the world on board, hitherto inclined to silence, and dozing in solitary corners, revives and becomes sociable and cheerful.

"It is a very comforting reflection," Mrs. Bacon remarks, "that everything should have gone off so well." Her nephew John and her niece Fanny so likely to be so well allied, and that poor count not likely to suffer from the effects of his ducking, and even the young lady in spangles able to ride a bare-backed horse already, and jump through a couple of hoops—this according to Mr. Courtney's account, who kept up a correspondence with Zamora's employer—all these things the good lady found it pleasant to think of.

Finally, Mrs. Bacon asked of Hilda confidentially, but doubtfully:

"Are you satisfied, my dear?"

"Perfectly," replied Hilda with a proud smile. "I have got my Frank, and I don't want anything more."

And so as night comes on we gather on the poop, while lights flash upon us out of the gloom from the fleet of fishing-boats that are silently gathering the harvest of the deep. Dover Castle is faintly visible against the evening glow, and by-and-by Ramsgate shines out gaily with its rows of diamond lights. Before midnight there is a dark shore line on either hand, and shore-lights on each side twinkle forth cheerily, and presently we glide softly to our moorings off Gravesend.

Next morning Hilda and I pay a visit to our friendly solicitor in Bedford Row, who receives us most cordially. Everything is going on well. John Chancellor, finding a difficulty in getting together the purchase money for Combe Chudleigh, and having other objects in view, is quite ready to give up his bargain, and by paying off and consolidating the mortgages, we can secure a sufficient income for the old squire—quite enough anyhow for the modest establishment in Westbourne Terrace, which is the limit of the old man's desires. And Hilda and I are to occupy Combe Chudleigh as soon as the wedding comes off, while Redmond is to try his fortunes and develop his talent for cattle-dealing at the Antipodes.

We are going to sell the Sea Mew as too expensive, and purchase a nice little sailing craft, in which we hope to make many another cruise Along the Silver Streak.

DAVOS AM PLATZ.

THE great conflict among doctors at the present time is whether a warm climate or a cold climate is better for diseases of the chest. For those who have the latter opinion the Alpine mountain cure is the great resource, and in Switzerland Davos has a great reputation both summer and winter, though in the summer most patients go higher up in the Engadine:

I have lately been spending a little time at Davos. According to the new fashionable theory, consumption is caused by the living germs, the bacteria, and in this cold rarified air the germs will not be generated, or, if generated, will be destroyed.

Davos am Platz, so called to distinguish it from Davos-Dörfli, a mile and a half off, is the favourite health resort for the winter. The two places are precisely alike, except, perhaps, that Davos-Dörfli is a trifle colder and a trifle cheaper. The resort of patients to Davos in the winter is great, greater even than that of summer tourists in the holiday season of the year. Some people are beginning to apprehend that the influx of patients is too great. The valley of the Landwasser is of very limited length and breadth, and the presence of a large population would go far to destroy the healthy characteristics of the place. The point of danger is, however, far distant, and most visitors may console themselves with the reflection that the healthiness of the place will last their time.

Davos was originally discovered about seventeen years ago by a German physician and a friend, who, with difficulty, found an abode in the solitary hotel which the place then possessed. The doctor was suffering from lung-disease, and being marvellously cured, he drew public attention in Germany to the merits of a cold climate in pulmonary disease. In Germany the new idea received eager discussion and welcome. Davos Platz became essentially a German watering-place, and to the present day it retains this characteristic, though the English are now first, or at least a good second. The place is now made up of a number of hotels and pensions. The peculiarity of the place is that everybody has been very ill, and is now getting rather better. It is claimed that some eighty per cent. of the visitors receive decided benefit. The whole population, more or less, consists of patients. The very hotel-keepers came here originally for their health. The small shonkeeners are poor

industrious people, who being unable to support the expense of living here as visitors, have opened houses of business to enable them to make the two ends meet. I know that there are many patients who can live in comfort at Davos, and cannot live anywhere else at all. If you get acclimatised to Davos, you must henceforth always breathe mountain air under similar conditions.

The climate of Davos is one of extraordinary and violent contrasts. In winter it is often like summer, and the summer is often like winter. I am writing at the end of June, and the snow is falling and the wind howling through the valley. In these high Alpine districts we are two or three months behind the season. There is a brilliant variety of flowers, but the wild strawberry-blossoms are hardly come yet. The advocates of Davos claim for it a health-giving climate all the year round, except, perhaps, May and the first half of June. In the summer the cold climate is supposed to invigorate and brace the patient for the endurance of an English winter. It is in the winter, however, that we have the large resident population of health-seekers.

The world of Davos is a white world for seven months. There are constant falls of snow—light, dry, feathery snow, which you shake off, and which does not make you feel at all wet. In the old Rathhaus there are, or were till lately, thirty wolves' heads set up, and one of the prettiest spots in the neighbourhood is called Wolfgang, so called because it was a haunt of wolves, trooping from valley to valley. Bears are brought in occasionally, for which a large reward is given. One of the hotels, a year or two ago, gave bear for dinner on Christmas Day. Both fishing and shooting are attainable, but they are placed under costly restraints.

The most extraordinary thing about a Davos winter is, that while the whole country is under snow, the weather is often extremely hot. The sun beats down powerfully, undimmed by any intervening moisture in the air. Ladies, who are delicate invalids, bring out their parasols, sunshades, and broad garden-hats. They saunter along the promenade, or lie in hammocks in the woods, reading the newspapers and novels, which come with much regularity from England. The doctor will even recommend moonlight walks.

There are plenty of winter amusements.

Skating ranks first. At Davos-Dörfli there is a lovely little lake, about three miles in circumference, very pleasant for picnics in the summer, and for rinking in the winter. There are two rinks in the town or village itself. The Canadian game of tobogganing is the great amusement of Davos. The joke consists in dashing down a steep slope in a sledge propelled by your own weight. The Alpine passes afford capital ground for this kind of amusement. Even if an invalid tumbles into the snow he does not mind, for the snow of the country is quite unlike other snow.

The winter population of Davos, from England alone, is from two to three hundred, chiefly staying at the inns. People are thrown into close intimacy, and there is a great deal of pleasant society. One can hardly realise, looking at the tanned faces and brilliant eyes, that the great majority of the company are chronic sufferers from phthisis. The fact afterwards becomes sadly significant, and it is impossible to watch the cases without sympathy and interest.

In May the winter invalids go away, and the summer visitors do not arrive till the end of June or July. Many of them return to England. Many more go to the Upper Engadine, for a still greater height, a still keener air, and find grand quarters at such places as Samaden, Pontresina, St. Moritz, and Silvaplana.

Davos is well situated for excursions. It has several lateral valleys, where you may trace the stream through the waterfalls up the mountains. On either side of the valley there are easy paths cut through the pine-woods, from which you emerge into upper valleys, where you may always find bread and milk in the chalets, and fronting them are the higher Alps, wearing their snows. A number of Alpine passes converge on the Davos Valley, the more important of them being traversed by diligences over good roads. For those who are not members of the Alpine Club, or otherwise mighty mountaineers, these mountain roads are easy and delightful travelling. They are often much more beautiful than the short cuts which the guides will show you. You are on the line of hotels and vehicles, where you can always get rest, refreshments, or a lift. It is easy to descend to the margin of the stream, to hunt the waterfalls, to climb to a vantage point of view. From the hospice on the Flüela Pass, whither we may take

the post-diligence, there is the easy ascent to the glacier-girt Schwarzhorn. On the Landwasser Pass there is the ascent of the Schiahorn, and also the beautifully vaulted Silvretta glacier. Near the former the Alpine Club has built a hut. In the neighbourhood of the passes there are various little spas and watering-places whose mineral springs are devoutly believed in by their visitants, and which give ample opportunities to travellers for the study of both Nature and human nature. A local guide-book enumerates some twenty or thirty distinct expeditions.

There has been a great deal of discussion about the drainage of Davos, which is of course a most important matter. In the three English hotels the drainage seems to be very good, and in the town generally there have been great improvements. There is an idea of canalising the Landwasser, which at times overflows and converts the meadows into a marshy swamp.

It is to be regretted that the medical value of Davos, as a sanatorium in chest cases, has never been ascertained with any approach to exactness. It would be a good thing if some English doctor would carefully tabulate the cases and give the world the results of his experience. A number of years ago the Committee of the Brompton Hospital for Consumption, sent out a set of patients to test the climate of Madeira. Why should not the Committee send out some selected cases to Davos next winter? The conflict of opinion between warm and cold climates ought to be settled. If the Davos theory is correct, a good deal of medical practice will have to be revolutionised.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

By THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER XII.

"At the Central Criminal Court, before Chief Justice Braby, Ernest Pentreath, captain in Her Majesty's —th regiment, was brought up on a charge of manslaughter, for shooting Major James Hollis, late of the same regiment, with a pistol."

So, in brief, read the announcement published in a score of newspapers, repeated on many scores of posters, and read by many more scores of curious or idle people, with much pleasure at the prospect of something rather more interesting than the ordinary cases of vulgar commonplace

murder among the lower orders; read also, with such shrinking, such mental anguish and shame, by the few most nearly connected with the prisoner in question, as those idle ones would hardly care to know, even if they had the power to do so.

The three weeks which were to elapse between the magistrate's examination and the next sittings at the Old Bailey were over. Christmas, the saddest, woofullest Christmas that had ever dawned on the little household at Kew, had come and gone. It was now the second week in January, and in all this time no trace of Hetty had been discovered, and no further evidence in support of Captain Pentreath's statement had come to light.

It was not that time or trouble had been spared in the search for either. Mr. Lorton, indeed, had hardly left a stone unturned in the energy of his quest after corroborative evidence for the defence; but the results were so slight as scarcely to repay him for his trouble, while the vicar, though more successful at the beginning of his enquiries, was doomed to double disappointment by finding them come to a dead lock almost at the very outset.

It was easy enough to track his missing sweetheart to Brixton. That tear-blotted little letter of hers, combined with his aunt's information about the cousin, had given him the right clue; and a very little research among South London directories further supplied him with the address, Number Ten, Paradise Villas, in conjunction with the name he wanted. Then, too, the ticket-clerk at Kew was able to fix the train by which Hetty had travelled—having taken particular notice of her, and wondered what could take the young lady, whom he knew by sight, to town at such an untimely hour of a winter's morning—so that, had Mrs. White been really living in the villa aforementioned, there is little doubt that, despite Hetty's anxiety to keep the place of her destination a secret, the vicar would have descended on her within little more than twenty-four hours after her flight. His disappointment, therefore, at being confronted with an empty house covered with notices "To Let," may be better imagined than described, and nearly equalled that of poor Hetty herself.

In vain he made enquiries about the Whites, hoping that in finding them he should also find her in their company. These enquiries only proved the truth of that well-known saying, that a man may live three years in London without knowing

the name of his next-door neighbour, or being known by sight to his opposite one. All that the other denizens of Paradise Villas could tell him of the Whites was that they were a youngish couple, and very quiet; that they kept to themselves, and didn't seem to have any acquaintances in the neighbourhood; that the man looked like a clerk and went into town every day, and that the woman did her marketing herself, and brought home the provisions in a basket, instead of having the tradespeople call. In addition to all this the lady at Number Twelve added the one piece of information which was of interest to him—namely, that he was not the only person who wanted to know what had become of the people next door, for no farther back than yesterday a young woman had driven up in a cab, and had knocked and rung, and seemed in a dreadful state of mind at finding the house empty. But she had said she was a relation, and as the good lady in question did remember to have heard tell that Mrs. White came from India, where all her folks were, maybe the young party had just arrived from there too; and, if so, no wonder she turned so white—which a sheet was nothing to it!—and looked as if she should faint at finding her relatives were gone, and that no one could tell her anything of them. Did the lady kindly imparting this information know what had become of the young woman in question? No, the lady didn't, barring that she had walked away, having dismissed her cab first, and that she looked so frightened and miserable like—for all she was a pretty little creature too—that she, the speaker, had felt quite sorry for her.

How the vicar felt need not be told. He too remembered that in speaking of her childish days Hetty had referred to an aunt at Deal, who had afterwards returned to India; and this, in conjunction with what the woman told him respecting Mrs. White's people, and with his own entire ignorance of the very existence of the Uxbridge Road Thompsons, filled him with an amount of distress and anxiety respecting her, which it needed no description of the poor child's scared and unhappy face to intensify.

As time went on, that anxiety became increased a thousand-fold rather than lessened, for, try as he might, he could obtain no further clue, no hint, even, as to the whereabouts of the missing girl. If she had melted into the ground on

turning the corner from Paradise Villas she could not have more utterly disappeared, and never before had he realised how fatally easy such disappearances are made by the very hugeness and crowding of this great metropolis, where a person has only, as it were, to walk out of his own house and vanish straightway from all sight and ken of everyone connected with him.

He advertised, of course, and by-and-by he even went so far as to employ a detective on his own account; but, with regard to the advertisement, he was greatly hampered by the necessity of diverting any chance of scandal from Hetty's name, or of causing her disappearance to seem like an elopement to the people in the neighbourhood. For this reason the notices had perforce to be couched in so guarded a form that they were of little use in catching the eye of the person for whom they were designed, even had she been capable of reading newspapers or anything else at that time; while, owing to the detective's instructions leading him to chiefly concentrate his attention on the south side of London, while poor little Hetty's wandering feet had early carried her across the river and travelled westward, his researches proved, if anything, even more futile.

But though the vicar was thus occupied on a seemingly hopeless quest—hunting high and low, visiting even workhouse infirmaries and mortuaries in the search for his lost sweetheart, and haunted in all places and at all hours by the vision of the little frightened figure, with its white unhappy face, wandering homeless and penniless among the thousand pitfalls and horrors of the London streets—it must not be supposed that he neglected either his parish, or the widowed and bereaved woman who had never needed his kindness and services more sorely.

It was an unhealthy season, with much rain and little bracing frost and cold, so that the vicar was in more than usual request among his sick and poor parishioners; but if some of these missed Hester's sunny ministrations on their own account, they found no additional cause for doing so in any slackness on their clergyman's part, or for guessing how acutely he on his side missed her too.

Some among them, indeed, said that "Parson had never worked harder or seemed more kindly and sympathising like with them," and even Mrs. Pentreath felt

inclined at times to forget that her nephew had any special interest in the girl whose loss she herself bemoaned so frequently, or any cause for resentment against the young man to whose defence and encouragement he devoted so many willing if fruitless hours.

Ernest, however, took the matter differently. Since his committal for trial he had lost all his bravery and defiance, and had become even more depressed than his circumstances, bad as they were, seemed to warrant; saying openly that if it were not for his mother he had almost rather the charge had been for murder instead of manslaughter, as then it would be all over with him the sooner, and scoffing with dreary cynicism at the efforts to hunt up evidence in his favour when, as he said, none such was forthcoming.

"If those railway people wouldn't recognise me in the beginning they aren't likely to do so now, such a haggard wretch as I've grown in these weeks," he said bitterly. "And as for the home folks, what's the use of making them perjure themselves for me? Don't I tell you I didn't want them to know I was in the house? Why, I was so sore and savage that when I got to the door I had ten minds not to go in at all, and it was only the remembering that my mother and Hetty were out, and that, therefore, I couldn't be bothered with their questions and small-talk, that made me do so. A latch-key isn't a noisy thing, and our hall is carpeted like a drawing-room. I don't suppose for a moment that the servants heard me, and I was glad they didn't at the time, for I couldn't stay. The whole cursed affair was next door to ruin for me in any case; but I thought if I could manage to coax or bully Hollis into some sort of apology and retraction before it had time to get abroad, I shouldn't be obliged to leave the service at any rate. As things are at present, I'd just as soon be hung as not, and I wish you'd tell my people not to bother about me. I suppose the poor mother—God help her!—can't avoid doing so; but after all, my cousin George will be a much better son to her than I've been. She spoilt me."

"Your cousin is in too much trouble himself to be very cheering for her at present; though I must say he bears up under it in a very manly way," said Mr. Norton. "I suppose you know that the young lady he was engaged to has disappeared?"

"The young lady! Who? Not——"

"The one who lived with your mother—Miss Mavors."

"Hetty Mavors! But—good God! what do you mean? Disappeared! I don't understand you."

The lawyer told him very quietly the facts of the case as he had heard them himself, and certainly the effect upon Ernest was startling. He could hardly rest until the next visit from his cousin, and, when the latter came, plied him with such eager questions that George Hamilton was almost compelled to tell him the whole story.

Briefly as he did it, however, and without comment, there was something in the very intensity of his self-repression which told its own story of what his feelings were on the subject, and Ernest struck his hand against the prison grating and groaned in late and unavailing remorse.

"It was all my doing," he said, "every bit. The poor child never gave me a scrap of encouragement after the mother showed she didn't like it. It was I who wouldn't let her alone; but I thought she really did like me in her heart, and of course it never entered my head that she could be in love with you."

"Of course not," said the vicar dryly, and was too generous to add more. It was no time for rebuking the egotism which had become second nature in the man before him.

"It was her telling me so, and that she had never cared a hang for me, that riled me. A man doesn't like to feel he has been making a fool of himself; and when I had hoodwinked the mother and got up before daylight on a beastly winter's morning just for the sake of meeting a girl and walking home with her, I did think she'd have been at least flattered and grateful instead of ordering me off as if I'd been a chimney-sweep. All the same I oughtn't to have bullied the child and behaved like a coarse brute to her; and I did—I own it. I wonder she didn't tell you."

"So do I," said the vicar. His face had flushed a little, and the fingers of his right hand were clenched tightly into the palm; but he kept his self-command.

"She did threaten to complain to the mother. It was that that made me so mad; but I suppose, after all, she was too kind-hearted to do it when she heard I was in this trouble."

"I suppose so, but by your leave, Ernest.

my aunt must know the whole truth of this matter now."

"As soon as you like. You can tell her her own over-suspiciousness was at the bottom of the whole business, and that I'll forgive her for it as soon as I can forgive myself. I wonder, though—upon my soul, George, I do—that you can speak to either of us while you don't even know where she is."

The vicar drew a long breath. "We won't discuss that now," he said quietly; and so went away. With all his efforts at charity and self-control it was rather difficult to maintain either at that moment.

And now the day for the trial had come: a raw, bleak day, with occasional gleams of sunlight, pale and wintry as all else, piercing the heavy slaty masses of clouds which rolled up from the north-west, and casting a strange white gleam down on the streets where shivering people passed and re-passed, hurrying for the sake of warmth, and drawing closer round them the garments they wore—furs or rags, fustian or broad-cloth—in an attempt to keep out the bitter wind which swept round every corner and made little whirlwinds in the centre of every crossing.

But if it was bleak and dreary in the street, where the sunbeams had full play, it was bleaker and drearier still in the largest of the courts of the Old Bailey where the case was to be tried, and where not even those fitful sun rays could avail to brighten the ghastly dinginess of the whitewashed walls, the faded red canopy with its golden blazonings over the judge's seat, or the greasy blackened deal of the desks and benches; still less that grim railed-off place on which every eye of all those gathered there would be concentrated throughout the day—the prisoner's dock.

The case had already begun. The judge, a solemn ponderous-looking man, whose severe glance seemed in itself to forbode no good to the accused, was seated on the bench, with, beside him, the sheriff, gorgeous in black velvet and glittering chain; and beyond, a group of stylishly-dressed people, elegant women with fans and smelling-bottles, and languid fashionable men, some of them so-called "friends" of the Pentreaths, but brought to the seats awarded them on the bench by just the same vulgar curiosity, the same thirst for excitement, as that moving the lowest of the general public who filled

the high gallery opposite and pressed forward with unwashed faces and greedy eyes to get a glimpse of the tall, slight young fellow with the pale face and fair moustache, who stood there with head erect and folded arms, more like a soldier on parade than a prisoner standing forth for trial in a felon's dock.

But though he was trying to carry it off well, and though he succeeded to the admiration of those who were watching him, it was a difficult task; and, despite all his efforts, his glance would wander from the judge's table, on which he had first fixed it, to the counsel for the prosecution, already launched upon his opening speech, and the close-packed rows of barristers' wigs behind and on either side of him, with, prominent among them, his own counsel, Sir James Haycroft, leaning back with half-closed eyes, as though too languid to be even kept awake by his opponent's eloquence; to the jury on whose judgment—or want of it—his whole fate was to depend; and to that other row of privileged faces up there behind the barristers, among which were certain of Major Hollis's relations and friends and the Guelder Lodge servants, with, at the extreme end, his cousin George Hamilton, conspicuous by his Roman collar and clerical dress, no less than by the grave intensity of his expression as he stood immediately behind, and as though supporting, an elderly lady habited in deep mourning and with head bowed so low that only the white hair and piteously wrinkled brow were visible even to those nearest to her.

Mrs. Pentreath had persisted in being present; but the sight of her was too much for her son. His lip quivered, and his face, which had gradually flushed to fever-heat under the opposing counsel's lofty and impassioned denunciation, turned as white as death. He looked away again directly.

The speech for the Crown was coming to an end at last. In stern and scathing language the learned serjeant had drawn a brief sketch of the prisoner's previous life, adverting to the general looseness of his habits, the want of honour conspicuous even in his vices, and the continued and unbridled indulgence in his passions; all leading up to and preparing the minds of the audience for that disgraceful scene at the club, where, as the serjeant expressed it, "one honourable man, strong in the feelings of a soldier and a gentleman, had

stood boldly forth in defence of the sanctity of home-life against the wanton boastings of a libertine." Then, after recounting the threats used by Captain Pentreath in passing through the club hall—threats as to which, he observed, nearly a dozen witnesses could testify—he had gone on to the discovery by the landlady of poor Major Hollis's body, and of her encounter in the passage with the prisoner, whose subsequent recognition by Colonel Patterson, together with the words used by that officer, had led to his arrest and detention for the crime which only a few hours previously he had sworn, and repeatedly sworn, to commit.

"And who among you, gentlemen," cried the learned serjeant, his voice rising to almost indignant appeal, "will dare, after such evidence, to say that he did not commit it, but rather that, despising the entreaties of his friend, who, as will be shown you, endeavoured, but in vain, to induce him to go home and think no more of the slight he had received, he proceeded to Albion Street, where Major Hollis resided, and then and there deliberately provoked another quarrel, ending in the fatal manner I have described? Gentlemen, I do not say that the prisoner entered the house, having in his mind a fixed intention to bring about that end. Far be it from me to exaggerate in any way the guilt of one whose criminality, as you will soon see, has already been so amply established, or to lend any additional blackness to a case which the prisoner, if he have any feelings left, must, however it terminates, deplore to the end of his life—a life which, had this charge been urged in a more vindictive spirit, might have found a fearful and ignominious termination almost at its very outset. But we have to look at facts, at the nature of the people concerned in them, and at the circumstances connected with them; and when we review these, when we see this young man challenging and threatening to shoot his brother-officer, besides uttering other vengeful denunciations against him for an insult which, however well deserved, would, unless retracted, go far to ruin his subsequent career in the service to which he belonged; when we hear him declaring that that insult must be retracted or paid for in the life-blood of the man who had inflicted it upon him; and when, a couple of hours afterwards, we find that very man lying dead in his own parlour, shot through the head and weltering in his gore: when

we see the pistol on the table, the open pistol-case, the absence of any sign of robbery or other disturbance suggesting the presence of a stranger; more than all, when we find actually present on the spot, detected, indeed, in the very act of escaping, and in such a state of terror and agitation as to be almost incapable of answering or giving any account of himself whatever, the very individual of whom we have been speaking, what can we, and, gentlemen of the jury, what must we think but that he, and no other person, committed the deed for which he now stands before you? True, no weapon was found upon his person. True, those that were found have since been proved to belong to the deceased, facts which are extremely fortunate for the prisoner in bearing out the merciful assumption of the prosecution that the fatal affair was the result of a duel, and not a cowardly and revengeful murder. But even in countries where duelling has been practically legalised as it never has been in this, these sanguinary encounters are fenced round with a code of rules and provisions preventive, if not absolutely exclusive of any possibility of foul play or treachery; and, gentlemen, it is my duty—my painful duty—to remind you that in this duel no such rules or preventives were observed; that it had neither seconds nor witnesses, and that though, from the circumstances already described, it may be charitably assumed that Major Hollis was willing, as a gentleman and a soldier, to afford his adversary that revenge for his wounded honour which the latter exacted, yet—as must not be forgotten—his own pistol was not discharged; neither is there the slightest evidence to show that he had any intention of discharging it, while the medical evidence goes indubitably to prove that, from the nature and direction of the death-wound, the unfortunate gentleman must have been taken at complete and most unfair disadvantage by the person who inflicted it."

The learned counsel sat down at last after a brief but eloquent peroration, during which one lady fainted in court, and several burst into tears; and the witnesses were called.

The first to be brought into the box were those connected with the club quarrel, and their evidence—which we already know—was so uniform, and so marked by an entire absence of animosity towards the prisoner whom it so terribly incriminated—

Lieutenant Carstairs indeed being moved almost to tears in his reluctance to bear witness to his friend's threats or his obstinacy about returning home—that Sir James Haycroft hardly cross-examined at all, and the case began to look very black for the defence.

The landlady made it no better. Her evidence we are also acquainted with ; and though Sir James handled her pretty severely, especially as to whether the prisoner's face had been turned to or from Major Hollis's room when she first saw him, and also as to his dress and general appearance, he failed to shake her testimony in any material degree ; and she went down in a state of triumph strongly in contrast to the pained and serious demeanour of the officers who had preceded her.

The doctor's was a longer and much more important matter, involving many technical details, and exciting intense interest, as it was known that on this evidence the case for Captain Pentreath's defence would be built up. Sir James Haycroft, indeed, woke to his work with a will at this point, and by a quick fire of questioning and cross-questioning, showed the line that he was going to take, i.e., that Major Hollis's death was purely accidental, being caused by the fact of his pistol going off while he was cleaning or examining it. Having extracted from the witness an admission, not only that this might have been the case, but that there was nothing in the appearance or position of the wounds to make it in any way improbable ; having, by aid of a pistol which he held in his hand, and a plan of the room showing its shape and size, and the exact position of the body with respect to the fireplace and table, demonstrated how, after being discharged, the fatal weapon might have been jerked out of the hand of the deceased as he fell backward, and so have been lodged in the grate where it was found ; he put on his most solemn manner, and appealed to the witness to tell the jury, on his oath, as an unprejudiced

observer, whether, had there been no quarrel at the club, or even had the prisoner been proved to have been with friends from the time of its occurrence, he, the doctor, would have hesitated before accepting the theory above set forth as the cause of death, in place of seeking any other explanation such as murder or the like.

The witness said, "Certainly not. I should have thought it the most natural one," and seemed about to add something more, but was instantly stopped with :

"Thank you. That is all that is necessary, and I am much obliged to you."

The counsel on the other side was up again in an instant, however, and put the poor doctor through his facings anew, but with little effect beyond proving the learned serjeant's previous statement that the shot, if fired by the prisoner, must have been discharged at murderously close quarters, the powder having singed the deceased officer's whisker and coat-collar ; a point which produced the passionate exclamation from the prisoner of "Is it likely !" and the incident was over.

This had been the most exciting bit in the day's proceedings, and what followed—the examination of the two cabmen and of the servants from Guelder Lodge—was not particularly interesting to the general public ; while poor old Hickson's extreme reluctance to say anything at all, and Mowcher's persistent attempts at shuffling, rather darkened the case for the prisoner than improved it. And with this the case for the prosecution closed, and the court adjourned for lunch, it being then past two o'clock.

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XX. IN SOCIETY AGAIN.

MRS. HATTON wrote what is called "a very good letter." Her style was lucid, terse, and telling. The morning after Captain Edgcomb accompanied the Rays to the "old masters," Mrs. Hatton penned one of her periodical epistles to Mr. Boldero.

"MY DEAR JOHN,—I have received the cheque; it is more welcome to me than anything else in the world would have been, always excepting your presence. Good old friend that you are, in befriending these ladies who live with me, how nobly you are helping me!

"I can still give you the assurance that they are very happy. They have resigned themselves to the new routine in a way that is admirable, and that I can't emulate. I am ungrateful, discontented, to say this, am I not? But it is true. That one little word justifies the utterance.

"As far as I can judge, Miss Ray has improved in singing marvellously. She is indomitably persevering in practising. Her heart is in her work, I feel sure, otherwise, perhaps, I should shrink from telling you that Captain Edgcomb went with her to the old masters yesterday, and dined with them afterwards. He is quite a 'beau sabreur;' still, if she were not so thoroughly absorbed in her studies as to be quite indifferent to him, from what I know of him I should be sorry to have to tell you he visits the Rays.

"About my hidden trouble. It is a hidden one still. Would that I could know for certain that it was a buried one. But this is a sad topic, and I will not enlarge upon it to you who have broided

my life with brightness lately. Old Ann is still with me. The faithful creature regards you as my Providence, and insists upon it being my duty to tell you all that befalls me. In obedience to her I tell you now that I am going to break through my almost conventional rule. I am actually going to an At Home, an omnium gatherum of celebrities in art, literature, and the drama. It does not do for desolate women to rebuff those of their own sex who are well placed in the wicked world's estimation. Such an one has sought me—poor, humble, obscure little me—now.

"This is all my news. If you think I am wrong in letting the clouds lift themselves around me for a brief period, tell me so, and they shall gather over my head again without a break.—Believe me to be, my dear John, yours always sincerely,
MILLY HATTON."

"I have just written to Mr. Boldero, Ann, and I've told him all about knowing Captain Edgcomb, and meaning to go to Captain Edgcomb's sister's party; are you satisfied?"

Ann grunted a partial assent, which she instantly modified by asking:

"Have you told him you've let Captain Edgcomb think you're a widow?"

"There's no necessity for me to enter into the subject of other people's surmises about me," Mrs. Hatton said, putting herself into one of her pet postures representing hauteur; "besides, I don't know that Captain Edgcomb does think I'm a widow."

"If he thinks you're a wife, more shame to him to go getting you invitations to party-going without getting them for your husband too," Ann answered gruffly. But again Mrs. Hatton's seraphic smile disarmed even the servant who knew her well.

"You will go your own way—you always would; and, poor soul! I don't blame you for it now when there's little else left to you. But I wonder, that I do, that you're so ready to go to a frolicking at Mrs. Campbell's, considering the way her brother walked by your door, as if he hadn't entered it dozens of times, when he had his Miss Ray with him only yesterday."

"Her brother won't do that again, and his sister can't help his having done it once," Mrs. Hatton replied with that broad sense of justice which people are apt to display, when the display of it marches with their own ends. Then she folded and addressed her letter to Mr. Boldero, and laughed to herself the while at the thought of the vexed feeling which he could neither conceal nor express whenever she addressed him as "John."

She knew it annoyed him that she should do this, and yet though she had substantial reasons for not wishing to annoy him, she could not refrain from this small assumption of familiarity. He was too just a man ever to punish her for a trifle, however much the trifle annoyed him; and she knew this, and acted on the knowledge, and called him her "childhood's friend" and "John" whenever she had an opportunity, to his infinite distress.

Mrs. Archibald Campbell was very fond of her brother, in an easy, light, irresponsible way that never gave either herself or him any trouble. In the days past, when he had been semi-engaged to Effie—the present Mrs. Hubert Ray—Bell Campbell had, to please him, gone a little out of her way to show attention to the girl, whom she had never liked. It was her pleasure to try and please her brother. She never regarded such attempts as committing herself to anything, and so, when he had, on an unguarded occasion, told her that he "wished she'd be civil to an awfully nice little woman, a Mrs. Hatton, who lived in the same house as the Rays," she promised to be so.

"You mean you want me to invite her to my house, I suppose, don't you?" she asked. "Well, I don't mind doing that a bit; but will she care to come? Won't she be rather out of it?"

"Not at all. She's clever, and amusing, and interesting. She always gives me the idea of having tried two or three ways of life before she settled down to this one," Captain Edgecumb explained.

"And she's a great friend and ally of your Miss Ray's. That's reason enough

for me, my dear boy," his sister said, and Captain Edgecumb did not think it needful to enter into laborious explanations.

Now, it so happened that at this present juncture Mrs. Archibald Campbell was organising one of her monster meetings. She was quite sure of the presence at it of a vast majority of her own set, but, as usual, it was unavoidable that there should be a good sprinkling of outsiders. Her intimates asked for invitations for their intimates, and she was very good-natured, knowing the capabilities of her house to be great.

"I've sent cards to the Rays, and to their friend, Mrs. Hatton," she said pleasantly to her brother; and he, knowing that Jenifer had not a particle of inquisitiveness in her, felt that the intimacy between Mrs. Hatton and himself would now come about, and be accounted for in the easiest and most natural way. Mrs. Hatton, he felt sure, would glide into his sister's house, and take up her position there with a graceful readiness that would never suggest a doubt as to the length and strength of her acquaintanceship with Mrs. Campbell; and as Jenifer would ask no questions, Mrs. Hatton would offer no explanations. As for Bell, she would be too much engaged by her duties as hostess to be innocently awkward.

The perfect tact of the woman on whom he relied, and the perfect integrity of the woman he half-unconsciously honoured above her, came to his aid here. When Jenifer, seeing Mrs. Hatton in their own drawing-room one evening, said to her: "My mother is tormenting herself about getting me up fitly for an At Home I'm going to on Saturday at a Mrs. Archibald Campbell's. She has ideas about floral decorations that don't coincide with mine. If she consults you, please don't approve of wreaths of white roses round a black tulle dress," Mrs. Hatton replied:

"I thought white roses had ceased to grow on black tulle ages ago. You're going to Mrs. Archibald Campbell's; so am I—that is, I mean to go to-day, but society has few charms for me now, and perhaps by next Saturday I shall have chosen the better part, and decided on avoiding it."

"Oh, you know Mrs. Campbell, do you? We only know her brother, Captain Edgecumb. It's through him the courteous invitation has filtered to us," Jenifer said carelessly, and Mrs. Hatton intimated that she knew Captain Edgecumb also, but did

it so airily that Jenifer did not feel the slightest surprise or curiosity on the subject.

Old Mrs. Ray was suffering from a little perturbation of spirit. She knew that it was right that she should go with her daughter to this gathering, to which they had been invited by Captain Edgcomb's "people," as she called Mrs. Campbell; but the thought of going distressed her sorely. At the same time, it was not at all according to her idea of the fitness of things that Jenifer should appear alone. Therefore she hailed the announcement of Mrs. Hatton's going also with delight.

"You will be kind enough to chaperon my daughter, won't you?" she asked in Jenifer's absence, and Mrs. Hatton murmured:

"Gladly, if I go; but society has few charms for me now, and when the time comes I may not be able to overcome the shrinking I feel from it."

However, when the time came either the anticipated access of nervous timidity did not set in, or Mrs. Hatton made gallant efforts, and overcame it. Whatever the cause, the effect was that she went to Mrs. Archibald Campbell's At Home, and Jenifer went with her.

"You're not to be persuaded to sing for these people," Madame Voglio had said to Jenifer, when the latter said something about going to this gathering. "Remember, you are not to be either flattered or forced into singing in any public or semi-public way until I give you permission, and I shall not give you permission for many months to come."

"I don't want to exhibit, be sure of that, but this is a private affair, madame."

"Nonsense! private! nothing is private where press people meet in multitudes; moreover, I know the style of thing as well as if I had been on Mrs. Archibald Campbell's visiting-list all my visiting life. Her husband is a journalist, a dramatist, a musical critic, a magazinist, a pretty versifier, a clever general-utility writer, in fact; and her parties are good representative ones. Those who will write you up and down by-and-by will be there, and they must not have a chance of prejudging your singing and style. That they should see you is well; you are one whom men will want to see again. You will be thought of and talked about, but you must not be heard."

As they rolled along in the little

brougham which Mrs. Hatton had decreed must be hired for the occasion, Jenifer repeated a portion of what Madame Voglio had said to her about not singing, and added:

"So I sha'n't be able to pay my shot, as my sister-in-law calls it; and I can't help thinking that if my singing isn't worth hearing now, when it would be rendered gratis, it will never be worth anyone's paying to hear it."

"If you feel that the contribution of your presence, of your youth, and good looks, and freshness, won't be ample payment, what must I, a poor, worn-out, faded plant that has been out of the sunshine, and so grown weak and weedy for years, feel?" Mrs. Hatton said plaintively.

"For one thing, you talk better than I do," Jenifer said critically. "I shall be quite at sea, among all these people who all do something definite more or less well. I shall be afraid to open my mouth to anyone but Captain Edgcomb—indeed, I'm not sure that I sha'n't be a little in awe of him, too, as being, if 'not therose,' very near to it. Tell me of the most secluded spots in Mrs. Campbell's rooms, in order that I may know where to go when it's too painfully borne in upon me that none of them want me."

"How I envy the high spirits and self-confidence which enable one to contemplate a possible mortification from a humorous point of view," Mrs. Hatton said abstractedly, and Jenifer, feeling that she had affected rather than meant to depreciate herself, forgot in her contrition to pursue her enquiries as to the geography of Mrs. Campbell's rooms.

It was past ten o'clock when they arrived, and to Mrs. Hatton's genuine dismay they found themselves among the always-to-be-commiserated first-comers. It is all very well to callously aver that someone must be the first to put in an appearance at every place where men and women gather together for mutual entertainment. No statement of the kind does away with the suffering engendered by the circumstance. It is bad enough when nothing is likely to occur to throw down any little airy fabric that one may have erected; but under the conditions which fettered her this night, Mrs. Hatton found the situation horrible.

She grew nearly desperate when she heard herself announced, and found herself walking into the room with Miss Ray in her wake. Walking into a room in which

there were only three people—a gentleman and lady, whom she took to be the host and hostess, and Captain Edgecumb.

Nerving herself to the effort, she swept up swiftly to the lady who was leaning in an attitude of careless grace against the mantelpiece, and was beginning to behave as a guest should in spite of the gross negligence of the supposed hostess, when an exclamation from the latter checked her.

"Jenifer! Hugh, just imagine Jenifer being here and not letting us know she was coming! Why didn't you tell me!" Mrs. Hubert Ray continued, abruptly turning to Captain Edgecumb.

Then, as Effie looked Jenifer all over and questioned her closely as to the reason of her being at Mrs. Campbell's now, when, on a former occasion, she had refused to come with her (Mrs. Hubert), Captain Edgecumb and Mrs. Hatton got over their meeting and greeting unobserved.

"You thought Mrs. Hubert Ray was my sister, didn't you?" he asked, half-laughing at the mistake she had made.

And Mrs. Hatton, who was intensely mortified at having made it, answered less smoothly than usual:

"I took it for granted that as we are at least an hour after the time she put on her cards, that Mrs. Campbell would have been ready to receive her guests."

"Bell's often late. I tell her it's bad form in her own house. But you see most of the people who come here know one another so well, and know her so well, that it doesn't make much difference to them. You'll fall into the flow of the thing when you've been here two or three times. Do you know, I'm awfully glad to see you here to-night."

A little vindictive gleam flashed from her eyes; but he was looking away at Jenifer, who had been drawn to the far end of the room by Mrs. Hubert, and didn't see it. He only heard the tones, which were soft and smoothly pleasant as ever, in which she said:

"Are you glad? I had grave doubts as to the propriety of coming, I can assure you. Your memory is so bad, that I half feared I might hear you say to your sister, 'Who is that woman?'"

"My memory will never be bad where you are concerned."

"Then, is it your sight that is defective, and you couldn't see your way to my quarters the other day? Never

mind; I am not revengeful. My tone in speaking of you to Miss Ray was the extra essence of commonplaceness. My knowing you is a matter of no more importance in her eyes than the crossing-sweeper's knowing you, or a dog wagging friendly recognition of you."

"It's a matter of great importance in my eyes, at any rate," he said in a way that looked like ardent flirting.

At the same moment he grew conscious that Jenifer and Mrs. Hubert Ray were looking at him, and he wished the lady, whose friendship was so important to him, at the bottom of the sea.

Meanwhile Effie had catechised her sister-in-law.

"Who's that woman you came with, Jenifer? You live in her house, do you? Flora always said Mrs. Campbell got queer people about her. Did you see she thought I was doing the honours and receiving Mrs. Campbell's guests? A woman who could make that mistake would do anything. I stood like a stone and never moved a finger, yet she would have gone on smirking and palavering her way towards introducing herself if I hadn't called out to you. Look at Captain Edgecumb flirting with her now. Have you thrown him over, and is she catching him in the rebound?"

"I haven't thrown him over, but I think she is catching him," Jenifer said indifferently.

And then the room began to fill rapidly, and presently Mrs. Campbell was gliding about among the guests, giving to one and all the right words of welcome.

Not quite to "all," though, it must be confessed, for coming upon her brother and Mrs. Hatton in close conversation, she fell headlong into error, and gratified Mrs. Hatton intensely by saying:

"Miss Ray, of course? Shameful of me not to have been down to receive you. But Harry will tell you that I'm not to be relied upon, in consequence of my husband often giving me sudden work to do for him. Harry, introduce everyone who'll amuse her to Miss Ray, until I can come back and see to her well-being myself."

"This isn't——" Captain Edgecumb was beginning, but his sister was off before he could explain, and though he looked discomfited, Mrs. Hatton was suavely smiling.

"Don't be vexed," she whispered; "I will not be unduly elated at being mistaken for the queen of your soul! I will draw

the line sharply and clearly between what is meant for her and what is just ceded to me."

"Now you're unjust again," he muttered. It seemed to him that through the stupidity of others he was being forced into a sentimental situation for which he had no desire. But though this possibility annoyed him a little, he found it difficult to detach himself from Mrs. Hatton's side until he could secure someone to take his place.

In the course of her rapid progress through the rooms, Mrs. Campbell came upon Mrs. Hubert Ray and Jenifer.

"Ah, Effie," she began in her swift way, "it's like old times to see you here again; only it's not like old times to see Harry absent from your side; he's devoting himself to your sister-in-law to-night, my dear child; and though she is your sister-in-law, I can't endorse his opinion of her."

"What in the world do you mean?" Effie cried sharply; "this is my——" But Bell Campbell was a yard or two away from her by this time, greeting with more cordiality than she had displayed towards anyone else, a quiet-looking man who had just come in, and who seemed a centre of attraction.

"Never mind, Effie," Jenifer laughed, "I assure you I can readily resign my identity for the evening, and Captain Edgecumb for ever to Mrs. Hatton."

"But I won't have her taken for my sister-in-law," Effie said loftily. "Imagine a woman who could blunder as she did when she came into the room, being supposed to be connected with me! Hugh, come and hear how Jenifer's letting herself get merged in Mrs. Hatton." Then she told her husband of Mrs. Campbell's mistake, and he laughed at it.

"That will right itself soon; Jenifer's light won't be under a bushel long," he said, looking at her with wondering pride. He was astonished to find how much he was struck with Jenifer's looks, now that he saw them for the first time amidst these new surroundings. Perhaps the "surroundings" had a little to do with this. They were "distinguished celebrities," but beauty was not the rock on which they were likely to split.

"I suppose that man has just painted a picture, or written a book, as Bell Campbell is erecting triumphal arches for him?" Effie asked contemptuously; and someone standing near told her:

"That's the new American actor, Josiah H. Whittler." Then a hum of approbation arose, as the American actor had agreed to give a recitation.

PORT ROYAL.

A REMINISCENCE OF JAMAICA.

BEFORE going there, the name of this beautiful West Indian island always brought to my mind's eye visions of tropical grandeur, of stately breezy dwellings bowered in palms, of lavish, generous hospitality, with troops of smiling black servants, civil, kindly, oleaginous, and lazy—the Jamaica of fifty years ago, before the emancipation of the slaves, before the flourishing sugar-planters woke to find themselves penniless, and compelled to seek a home among the back-streets of London.

Of Port Royal, whither we were bound for a three years' stay, accounts had not been so rose-coloured. "There were the palisades, where one was buried; a sand spit; sharks; not a soul to speak to; not a flower or a blade of grass; and one's death usually took place within a month of landing"—such had been the cheering information I had previously received.

I was, therefore, the reverse of disappointed on landing at Port Royal one hot, steaming morning in February.

The voyage out is generally without incident, so admirably are those splendid West Indian mail-steamers navigated. Our fine vessel, the Tasmanian, going a steady thirteen knots, never stopped her engines, but for one five minutes, between Southampton and St. Thomas's. Her boilers never primed, her tubes never went wrong, her engines never gave out, but night and day throbbed smoothly, economically, and without effort, for fourteen days. Why cannot our men-of-war do the same?

Of the captain of the Tasmanian, now in his grave, it would be impossible to speak in too high terms—kindly, gigantic, courteous, a splendid seaman and navigator, a stern disciplinarian, but by turns gentle as a child and rough as a bear, the terror of evil-doers and the delight of the children. I have never seen these latter specimens of humanity treated with the distinguished consideration accorded to them in the Tasmanian. There were certainly charming holes on each side of the bollards, just convenient for expending a spare child or two; but the small people in the Tasmanian had nine lives, and did not avail themselves of such golden opportunities.

Our passengers were of the usual species—English, American, Spanish, Prussian, and Chilian, a consul or two, and a Haytien general, six-foot-three, dressed like a Bond Street "swell," with an admirable Parisian accent and a coal-black face. He was afterwards killed at Port au Prince, in one of the half-yearly revolutions, while gallantly fighting his way through hordes of infuriated rebels to the British Consulate. One lady there was who consumed eighteen brandy-cocktails per diem in the seclusion of her cabin, till the hawk-eye of our captain found out and put a stop to it; and a vegetarian, who devoured all our cauliflower, beet, and carrots, at table, before our seats were well taken, and finished up with several platesful of dates and oranges.

Everyone turned out pretty early in the morning of the fourteenth day to sight the Virgin Gordas, a dreary uninhabited group, with no signs of vegetation on their arid soil. As the rosy, misty dawn, chill and damp, was dispelled by the rising sun, we steamed past the ghastly form of the Rhone, lying still enough now beneath the waters, with one mast standing—a grisly warning to all comers. We remembered with thankfulness that the hurricane season was passed during which she had gallantly put to sea, and being unable to weather the rocks from want of sufficient steam-power, had stranded on them with cruel force, her officers and crew perishing to a man.

The entrance to St. Thomas's has been likened to the neck of a bottle, through which you shoot into a confined oblong harbour, crammed with shipping; but the steady practised eye of our captain threaded the great ship through them without a scratch. Then began a perfect saturnalia. The intercolonial steamers, one on each side, transshipping those of our passengers and cargo bound either to the Gulf or the Windward Islands, made noise enough, to which may be added the importunities of vendors of curiosities, who took up a position on deck for the day, from which they never stirred. The heat on board was intolerable. You scarcely wondered that, when yellow fever does visit St. Thomas's, they have a pretty warm time of it. Very peaceful the little Danish town of Charlotte Amalia looked from the shipping—white houses with red roofs dotting the hillsides in the shape of a horse-shoe. We escaped the turmoil for a few hours, landing at Water Island for a picnic, and, before going on board, strolling through the town.

There was everything you could want, but at greatly enhanced prices in honour of the mail-steamer's arrival, even to a pair of skates, which must have been taken for a bad debt. There was an article, certainly, not considered of much value, offered at a "tremendous sacrifice"—viz., a baby. Under the shade of a spreading tree, past which meandered a rather suspicious-looking stream, suggestive of dirty clothes and soapsuds, sat a pleasant-looking black girl. She was giving the poor little coffee-coloured child on her lap "a lick and a promise," fresh water not being much in vogue at St. Thomas. It was rather a nice specimen of West Indian manufacture. Seeing a look of interest in my eyes, her mind was instantly made up, and starting forward, she offered to sell it for six-and-sixpence. There were more, apparently, from whence it came, but as I have frequently been offered a black child at prices ranging from four pounds to six-and-sixpence, I think the maternal instinct may be sometimes overrated. I should not recommend future travellers to visit Water Island, as some of our party were feverish and ill for nearly a fortnight afterwards.

The captain had no voice left by the time we were ready for sea at seven o'clock, so vigorous had been his efforts to get us cleared in time to shoot the neck of the bottle stern foremost, while yet a little light remained. We were nearly leaving one of our number behind, for the Haytien general, popularly supposed to be the Duke of Marmalade, had begged that S. might be allowed to go on shore with him. We had luckily declined; and when seven o'clock came, and we were outside the harbour, we were thankful enough, for the general lost his passage.

Jacmel was our next port of call. A boatload of Haytien officers, black as jet, bristling with feathers and epaulettes, came off to receive their general, and returned crestfallen at his non-appearance, but bearing his numerous boxes with them. The remainder of the passage was muggy, stifling, and rainy. We worked, looked at the sea and the sky, at the children who toddled about poking their fingers into the hen-coops, at the dawning flirtations; walked, ate, slept, and the day was done. Earlier still, on the morning of the seventeenth day, did we leave the steaming cabins, and, well wrapped up against the cool wet air, paced about till the light of Morant Point was clearly visible, just on

that particular bearing, on our bow, where the unerring judgment of our captain decreed it should be. The blue mountain showed at dawn of day clear against the sky, but all the ranges sloping up to it are so high that its eight thousand feet looks nothing particular. There is scarcely a smooth slope anywhere, the surface all being crumpled up, like gigantic ridges of crape, with deep ravines between, gullies and tumbling water every here and there. Newcastle looked cheerful, its white houses just touched by the newly-risen sun; it is the military hill-station, three thousand five hundred feet; the quarters are built one above another till the ridge is crowned, looking from the sea like white stones cropping out on the steep hillside. It is healthy but damp, the clouds frequently going in at the window and out at the door.

The steamer slowed in Port Royal harbour, almost before we were ready, and a barge from the flag-ship *Aboukir* soon took us all on shore.

"No trees! not a blade of grass!" Why, our cheerful friends must have been dreaming! The Admiralty House is literally bowered in cocoa-nut palms, scarlet cordia, grape, and almond-trees, while the *Bougainvillea* and a gigantic lilac-creeper stretched their arms and tendrils over the trellis-covered walls. Figs, oleanders, pomegranates, delicate plumbagos, blue and scarlet, cast a refreshing shade upon the creeping grass, while pots of blood-red caladium and lovely odorous wax-plant, the faint penetrating scent of whose flowers stole through the house at night with the first breath of the cool land wind, made a really charming array of verdure. The house is very large, cool, airy, and pleasant, the vast sleeping rooms inside, with a wide closed corridor running all round. In the dining-room are two valuable oil-paintings by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of George the Third and his queen, in the first days of their marriage. A numerous and smelling colony of bats had established themselves behind the king, and had made a convenient hole for exit and entrance under his majesty's august foot. They were very soon disestablished. The drawing-room boasts of a still finer picture, also a Sir Joshua, of Lord Rodney, on the deck of his ship, surrounded by officers and friends, the traditional cock perched on a ask crowing at the moment of victory. This splendid picture is lent to the Admiralty House by the Jamaica Government.

Through the commodore's office a steep succession of steps lead to the top of the tower, quite the best place in Port Royal after sundown. Forty feet above the baking sandy soil was a weary climb, but the reward was equal to the exertion. Here were convenient seats, cool air, and absolute freedom from mosquitos. It was tenanted by myself morning and evening, and by several hideous, bare-pated, red-eyed, dissipated John Crows, the Jamaican scavenger, in form and size like a turkey, during the broiling day, with an occasional visit from the signalman to work the semaphore on its summit. From here, spread out as in a panorama, may be seen the men-of-war at their buoys, peacefully resting after a long passage, boats passing to and fro; the clean dockyard at your feet, with its rows of cocoa-nuts, some lofty, and almost ready to fall with the next strong gale, the others young, graceful, and vigorous—each one with a black and white ring painted on the trunk about two feet high to preserve it from the depredations of the tree-ants. It cheered one to see the busy forges and carpenters' shops teeming with life and activity. From the tower also on "mail days" a sharp look-out was kept for the flag always hoisted on the lighthouse when the English steamer hove in sight—a blissful event that happened once a fortnight, but one that did not always bring the joy anticipated—so few of our anticipations do.

Our first miseries were certainly owing to mosquitos, who had thirsted in vain for many long years for the blood of healthy English children, and now claimed ours for their own. What a sight were their miserable legs, rather like unto variegated sausages—blue, black, green, red, and so painful that they had to have them swathed in cooling lotions, and laid upon the sofas! Never, in any other place, have I seen anything like the vast army which drifted through the house towards sundown, each singing its own peculiar note, and giving the idea of a multitude of bands advancing from the far distance. A friend and companion in the form of a bottle of spirits of ammonia is indispensable; applied immediately, it causes the bite entirely to disappear within an hour. The mosquitos here were considered particularly venomous.

Port Royal, containing the naval headquarters, dockyard, and hospital on the West India station, is situated on the extreme end of the long spit of sand

which protects and forms the fine harbour of Kingston. The spit, formerly nothing but a dreary waste of shifting sand, has by dint of infinite patience and convict labour, become even verdant and remunerative. Scarlet cordia, wild grape, the palisade flower, a lovely creamy blossom, with glossy succulent leaves and twisted tendrils, together with thousands of fine cocoa-nut trees, clothe the once useless palisade. The work is done by convicts nearly out of their time, who, together with their warders, live in huts clustered round the lighthouse, and pass a not otherwise than merry and careless time, well clothed, housed, and fed, and with enough to do to keep them healthy. The sea side of the beach is firm and even, a line of outer reefs and cays breaking the violence of the waves.

Here may be found by a patient searcher the most perfect and symmetrical flat, oval, white smooth stones in the world. In a place where so little is to be done, it was a great amusement to make up a party, land on the outer point about five o'clock in a body, and continue the search till dark. Amply rewarded did we consider ourselves to be by the possession of half-a-dozen really good stones, to be afterwards painted and etched with dogs, ships, and faces, and used as letter-weights. Another valuable treasure found here is the horse-eye bean, of which bracelets are made for friends at home, who are good enough to like any rubbish if it comes from Jamaica. There are no shells on this beach, the waves having ground them to powder on the outer cays. The harbour side is composed of a chain of lagoons still and mysterious, surrounded with mangrove swamp.

On Gallows Point may yet be seen the gibbet, with a bit of rusty chain attached, on which Dampier, the pirate, and many other gentlemen of his profession were hanged. Tradition still whispers of hidden treasure buried near the gibbet at Gallows Point by Captain Kidd and his followers. These mangrove islets and swamps, commonly called the cockle-ponds, are held in peculiar dread by the Port Royal people, who will on no account brave the dangers of night among them. Superstitious to an absurd degree, they declare that duppies—i.e., ghosts—wander to and fro, and leap from islet to islet. No doubt the explanation would be found in exhalations of the will-o'-the-wisp nature, so common in Irish bogs. It is considered a certain cure for fever and

ague to sleep upon the ground among the mangroves for a week or so. People, however generally preferred the fever and ague. Mangroves grow to a height of twenty feet or more, drooping gracefully down to the water, where they again take root and spring up ad infinitum. Fine tree-oysters frequently grow upon the lower branches, as the rise and fall of the tide is very small. They are generally unwholesome, however, and we were nearly poisoned on one occasion by some which afterwards proved to have been impregnated with copper from an ancient slave-ship, sunk in days gone by, and grown over by the mangroves.

A worse amusement for the winter might be found for adventurous yachtsmen than searching for West Indian hidden treasure.

Most of them are tired of the beaten track, and to every one it is not given an ardent desire to offer up their lives at the South Pole, or to perish miserably of grizzly bears, snow blindness, gaunt famine, and ice-packs in Prince of Wales's Strait. A well-found yacht, with two or three friends—in case of a temporary misunderstanding with A, there would still be B to speak to—each fired with the spirit of bye-gone navigators, might start from Cowes, say in November; with a fresh easterly wind, the chances are that Madeira is reached in ten to fourteen days, from thence to Barbadoes about twenty days would be consumed, and finally, including stoppages, Port Royal might be reached about the new year. Three charming months would then remain, wherein, with the consent of the Jamaica Government, search might be continued morning and evening on a radius of a hundred feet or so from the gibbet on Gallows Point. The naval authorities will probably be found not very hot upon the subject; energies soon fade away in such a warm place, and I never succeeded in stirring up any enthusiasm in the matter. Traditions have no place in the Queen's regulations or Admiralty instructions, or even in the Commodore's Port Order Book, complete as that manual may be. I should suggest an intelligent old Port Royal man, who, after a stream of involved conversation, mostly quite irrelevant to the subject, would finally remember something his grandmother told him long years before about "de pirate goold." He would also provide men, and prodding-irons for the search. Great sea-chests of solid oak are said to be buried near the point, each one full of gold in ingots and coin, of old silver

plate, and rich jewels. A hundred years have passed, but the chests remain as if wrought but yesterday, black as ebony, hard as bog-oak, preserved from decay by the nature of the soil, and under the inter-laced roots of the mangrove.

It was from Port Royal that Kidd and his daring men sallied forth to attack and conquer the Spanish ships, homeward bound from Cuba and the Spanish Main. For some years each fresh haul was brought into Port Royal, and carefully concealed till enough had been amassed, when they doubtless proposed to "retire from business with a competency." One unlucky day, however, arrived to the freebooters—perhaps they had sailed on a Friday that voyage—when circumstances over which they had no control made it impossible for them ever again, in this world, to revisit those glittering stores of gold and jewels, and thus the secret of the hiding-place perished with them. This is as it was told to me, with a finishing exclamation: "Yes, ma'; plenty of goold on the point, ma'!"

To pull through these cockle-ponds after sundown is a most gruesome business; all bird, insect, and reptile nature seems then to awaken, and to combine with the chill, black, glassy waters in giving you a "turn." Should you unwittingly have pulled too far, the black shadows on returning are so dense, that no opening or channel is visible till the boat's nose is pointed into the overgrown passage. We frequently contemplated with dismay the prospect of passing the night in the boat; frogs croak, birds scream, crickets and grasshoppers creak, while myriads of sand-flies and mosquitos make a furious onslaught on your flying forms. The landing-place is hurried past, where, in yellow fever times, each afternoon sees a fresh procession streaming up the path and into the graveyard. Don't land there after sundown, even in happier times, or you will be confronted by a quarrelsome line of land-crabs—not the edible ones—all on their way to spend the night among the graves, and turning aside to attack and tweak each other's legs off out of pure spite. They have even been known to show fight, and fly at the legs of passers-by.

The palisades, or burying-place, at Port Royal, once a forlorn and horrifying place, is now an enclosed and decent God's acre, where lovely young palms, scarlet cordia, and mimosa wave above and among the low graves of many young Englishmen, who

have found here their long home. Perhaps the handsomest tablet of red granite is sacred to the memory of poor Dr. Duirs, D.I.G., who perished at his post in one of the oft-recurring yellow fever epidemics, and whose death many a man in the service deplored. Gentle, courteous, talented, it seemed as if a better future awaited him than a lonely grave on the palisades. I very often went there in later days, after a little child of our own rested among the whispering branches of the palms, which nodded and swayed against the tombs, stirred by the first sighs of the cool land wind, and it may console many, whose dear ones lie here in their last sleep, to know that their resting-place is cared for, and even pretty.

Leaving the palisades, the coal-wharf is soon reached, where large ironclads can coal alongside in a few hours. There is now established here a club, reading-room, and canteen, where cricket and tennis, beer and skittles, can be indulged in, free from the delusions and snares of Port Royal. Passing the sea-wall of the dockyard, Fort Charles is the next feature of interest; called after our merry monarch, in whose time, and to protect the newly built town from the incursions of the Spaniards, Fort Charles was erected. The walls, enormously thick, have withstood the ravages of earthquake and tempest for two hundred years. What generations of roystering hard-drinking men have passed through the grey massive stone archway to carouse in the fine old rooms, and make night hideous, and the walls resound with their senseless toasts to "A bloody war and sickly season!" The tablets in Port Royal church, thick as they can stand, tell of the extraordinary horrors of yellow fever in the olden time. Fort Charles is silent enough now, except for the young artillery lieutenant, who braves the ghosts of men long dead—of whom there are several well known to the fortress—and paces the rotten floors and ramparts alone, his great anxiety being, not the ghosts, but how best to avoid the holes and pitfalls, and the tender places in the planks.

Between Fort Charles and the dockyard lies a waste of barrack-yard, officers' quarters, and powder-magazines, the latter extending to the point, where also are sick quarters for the military. The point and its cocoa-nut grove is rather a favourite rendezvous after sundown. From here it is curious to see a great ship come in, passing so close to the steep beach, here

running down like a wall into deep water, that it is difficult to believe she will not ground. Passing through the tumble-down collection of old houses called "the town," a delusive name which it certainly does not merit in these days, you reach the naval hospital, a well kept and admirably conducted range of handsome buildings. In the garden surrounding the deputy-inspector's house, and also those of the surgeons, a really surprising horticultural result has been obtained, by dint of the greatest patience; English roses in tubs, and many rare and lovely flowers, being tended and nursed with touching care. The soil is pure sand, sea-water appearing at a depth of eighteen inches; these gardens have, therefore, been made, as has also that of the Admiralty House, little by little, as a bird builds its nest, by means of black earth brought down in bags from Rock Spring, the naval watering-place at the head of Kingston Harbour, ten miles away, supplemented by manure from the only animal permanently resident in Port Royal, the dockyard mule. Every leaf that falls, every morsel of vegetable refuse, contributes to the general result, and were fresh water less precious, a Garden of Eden might rise out of the salt sea sand. Our sailors are extremely well cared for in this fine hospital, but they are by no means fond of being in one of the great wards alone, as, like Fort Charles, the hospital has a "bad name" for "duppies."

The streets of the town are narrow, dirty, and reeking with an indescribable odour of unwashed black people, goats, and stuffy houses. In each small room an average of eight people have slept; and as there is no spring in Port Royal, and every drop of water is brought from Rock Spring in fine sailing tanks, and sold by the naval department at a quattie (threehalfpence) a cask, there is naturally no unnecessary washing of bodies or clothes. Goats thrive apparently upon broken glass, match-boxes, and dirty rags; there seems, at all events, to be nothing else for them to eat, unless it might be a baby or two, whose absence would never be missed among so many.

A real, fat, shiny black baby is far from being a disagreeable object, but the mongrel type is. There is something absolutely uncanny in being stared at by a dull, dusky, muddy little face with reddish hair, rather light eyes, enormous blubber lips, and protruding stomach propped upon spindle-shanks, with the leg

in the middle of the foot. The two types do not assimilate. There are perhaps few countries under English rule where to marry and be given in marriage is considered so superfluous an affair. Fresh from home it is rather a shock on reading the local papers to see announcements made quite naively and as a matter of course, that with us would be concealed not only till death, but long after: "The friends and acquaintances of Mr. W. T. Taylor are requested to attend the remains of his mother, Miss Mary Cole, from his residence, Number Five, Lower East Street, to the place of interment at four-thirty this evening. Please let your carriage attend." Returning the call of a visiting acquaintance once, I was presented with much formality to "my wife's mother, Miss Barnes," and received with affability by a starched saffron-tinted female of severe aspect. Among the lower orders a stray child or two comes as an accidental occurrence, and it is the mother, poor thing! who has to bring it up and feed it; beyond this its wants are few: one little ragged shirt per annum, a corner under the bed, a tuck-out of yam and mealie per diem, and a bit of sugar-cane to suck at, is all they ever get. A wedding is far too expensive an affair to be entered upon lightly; everything must be en règle, or not at all; thus it is often put off from year to year, because nine pounds is required for a stiff white corded silk for the swarthy bride, and another ten pounds for expenses, none of which is forthcoming. The bride's attire in a general way does not suggest a necessity for such splendour; a black cotton garment, washed and worn to a dirty green, together with a gay turban smelling much of cocoanut-oil, usually adorns her person; but it is the custom, and they will not be persuaded that to hoard for long years, only to squander all on the wedding-day, is wasteful and ridiculous. Many good clergymen never take a marriage fee, hoping thereby to encourage weddings.

One of these half-caste women, a nurse in our family, and a widow—still, I am happy to say, flourishing in Port Royal—was the most patient, unselfish, and kindly of human beings, and an invaluable nurse in sickness. Lying dangerously ill for many weeks, and awake every half-hour during the long night, I never failed to see her, mute and motionless, sitting outside the mosquito-net, her mild eyes fixed on my face with untiring solicitude, quite heedless of the swarms of

mosquitos buzzing and whirling round within an inch of her face. Her watch over, she would glide noiselessly away, eat some food, and betake herself to bed, when, carefully wrapping head and face in a thick woollen shawl (thermometer about eighty-eight degrees in the shade), and placing her uncovered feet on the pillow where the head ought to be, she would sleep face downwards comfortably for many hours. Beloved by the children, she was certainly over-indulgent. I remember a small child of three or thereabouts snatching the turban off her head, and trampling furiously upon it—this was particularly insulting—but instead of administering condign punishment, the good creature sat herself quietly down on the floor, and lifting her eyes, full of sorrowful reproof, upon the small despot, said, "Dere's a trial—dere's a ting!" This was too harrowing, and brought the despot to terms and a flood of tears. This good woman's mother was a Haytian woman, black as night, her father an Englishman of the better class.

There are a few good-sized houses in Port Royal, in some of which, on the advent of any fresh ship of war, night is made hideous by the squeaking of fiddles and the distressing and worrying vagaries of a French horn, imported from Kingston for the occasion, consequent on a "dignity"—i.e., a dance—going on. I am not well up in dignities, but I was informed that towards morning the smell of active swarthy and perspiring humanity is quite too much for an English stomach.

The church is a cool, substantial building, but melancholy with reminders of yellow fever, the histories of which, as set forth on tablets erected by sorrowing relations, you can contemplate at your leisure during the lengthy service. We, however, always went to church on board the *Aboukir*, the stationary flag-ship. There is no school in this town, where there are three hundred children under twelve years of age. A few little ones of richer parents are collected together on Sundays by the Wesleyans and Church people; but this vast population is growing up, and has done so for several years, absolutely untaught, learning nothing whereby to make a living in the future, knowing nothing about God, except as a fearsome being invoked by drunken and profaning lips. If some of the enterprising men who waste their lives in trying to convert the unwilling Chinese, would only convey

themselves and their energies to Port Royal, our own colony, I can promise them a hearty welcome, and a positive assurance that they will here neither be put in a cage, nor roasted alive. It is astonishing what charms such a prospect appears to possess for some otherwise quite sane people.

Should some of these really self-sacrificing and excellent missionaries and scripture-readers prefer a heathen land, and therefore decline a well-known English colony, I can assure them that there are in Port Royal (I do not speak of other parts of Jamaica) many hundreds of pure heathens, but with the advantage of being, so to speak, able to comprehend and talk English; charmed beyond measure at any notice taken of them; delighted to listen; extremely fond of singing hymns, with most melodious voices of great compass, and really proud when they have, as they express it, "got religion." And as to climate, I can only mention the fact that we were one year and seven months in Port Royal before there was a funeral among the white people—and we had seldom fewer than four or five men-of-war at anchor at one time—to show that, except in a yellow fever epidemic, it is a very healthy place, though, of course, exhausting to an English constitution, and to those obliged to be out much in the sun.

The subject of schools was very near my heart, and I laboured scarcely less hard than a galley-slave, to make money enough to re-establish the schools. Aid was asked from the Government of Jamaica and from the Board of Admiralty, but the Church being disestablished, and board schools with Government inspection reigning in its stead, a standard had to be obtained before a Government grant could be given. How could any standard at all be arrived at, even the lowest, where none of the children could read or write, and the very school-house was occupied by some department of the colonial service?

The Admiralty reply was, that they had no available funds. All efforts were, I grieve to say, quite fruitless, and Port Royal remains as I found it, school-less; but plus a sum of money lodged at interest in the Kingston Bank.

It is often spoken of, especially by those who contribute to make it so, as a godless place, a sink of iniquity. We should be little better ourselves, had we never known the difference between right and wrong, between shame and a reputable life, if we

saw everybody doing just as they pleased without rebuke. It is hopeless to turn the course of a life passed in crime, except by a miracle; but we can train up the little ones, and so form a new generation—new in habits, in feeling, in speech, who will insensibly influence the old, and thus in time bring about a better state of things.

NOTE—Since the above was written I rejoice to say all is changed. I have in my possession, sent me by the bishop, a photograph of the nice new school-house erected close to the church, and opened a few months ago. An account written to me by the able and excellent archdeacon represents an awakening of better times for Port Royal, which has given me the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

THE LOVE-BIRD.

A LOVE-BIRD came to the window-pane,
His song rose sweet and clear,
Ever again the strange refrain
Fell on my listening ear.
Tweet, tweet, look up, my sweet,
Your love is near.

Ah! but my love is far away,
Sailing the summer sea,
Many a weary night and day
Must pass ere he come to me.
Peace, peace, love-bird, and cease,
It cannot be.

He only shook his golden wings,
His song rose loud and clear,
As if he knew and heard the things
I could not know and hear.
Tweet, tweet, look up, my sweet,
Your love is near.

Ah! but my heart is full of tears,
My life of misery;
My nights are haunted by the fears
Of wind, and waves, and sea.
Away, away, love-bird, I say,
It is not he.

A step, a climbing up the stair,
Whose voice is this I hear?
The love-bird shook his pinions there,
And, ah! his song trilled clear.
Tweet, tweet, look up, my sweet,
Your love is here.

ON COMING BACK TO TOWN.

THE holiday season is drawing to an end. Once again the streets, for a few weeks empty, though neither swept nor garnished save by wisps of straw and litter of paper, re-echo to the rattle of hansoms and four-wheelers returning, more or less encumbered with trunks, portmanteaux, and perambulators, from the various big railway-stations. Drawing-room windows are being stripped of their barricades of brown paper; and clean curtains and bright-coloured asters and evergreens take the place of fly-speckled shutters and skeletons of summer flowers dead and dried through lapse of long, unwatered weeks. Starving cats cease to prow round

the areas of deserted mansions, and smart servant-maids bemoan their mistress's return, and exchange confidences as to the festive days of their past freedom. It is paterfamilias's turn to look grave, as, having doffed the careless bonhomie of the irresponsible idler with his suit of grey and straw hat, he tots up the amounts of accumulated hotel and lodging-house bills with a brow ominous of briefer holidays in the year to come; the while mamma and the girls hold anxious conclave over torn dresses and sun-faded hats, and assert with emphatic decision that the summer is over, and they "have not a thing to put on." Truly the gay glory of the Park is over for the year; and even the trees, still robed in richest green in country lanes, begin to shed their dry and yellowing leaves upon the dusty pavement. The theatres are opening one by one for the reception of their respective "stars." Campbell's "last man" has ceased to smoke the solitary weed in his deserted club, and friends "who happen to be in town" to shun a casual rencontre as they might the conviction of a shameful sin. Our summer holiday is over, and as we settle down again to the old routine of life it is pleasant to look back on the changeful scenes through which we have been passing, and compare experiences with our friends as to the relative merits of the hotels at Windermere, Brighton, or Baden-Baden, where, for the time being, we have merged our respective individualities, and enjoyed that thorough rest and change from domestic cares and the reserves and prudences of domestic life, which is in itself a novelty and dissipation to the normal Englishman and Englishwoman.

Is it, I wonder, for the very charm and boon of an escape from these that year by year these swallow-flights from home become more common and more frequent, extending downwards in the social scale at the same time that they increase the outer margin of their radius in an ever-widening circle?

It used to be only London, which once a year disgorged a portion of its dust-dried, soot-smothered inhabitants and sent them forth in quest of green pastures and pure air; only the upper classes in London, too, who made themselves an object of envy to their poorer and humbler brethren by this coveted indulgence; but nowadays the good people of Wigsby-under-Coombe find it as needful for their healths to seek the gaieties and salt-breezes of Brighton or

Bournemouth as those of Bloomsbury and Paddington do to emigrate to the green woods and meadows which the former have vacated. Jim Muggins leaves his eel-pie shop in charge of the boy, and takes "his missus and the little 'uns to Margate for a blow" at the same time that Lord Norman Bluegore puts himself and my lady into a Pullman's car 'en route' for Argyleshire or the Engadine. Billingsgate is no longer to be outdone by Belgravia; and in the epidemic of running away ladies and gentlemen leave their pretty country homes, just as the roses are blooming and cherries ripening, with as much eagerness as though they were over-worked East End clergymen escaping with their pallid wives and pasty children for a brief breathing space from the smell of slums, and babel of brick and mortar.

The fact is, it is not so much pure air, or green leaves, or even sea-water and sea-breezes that people crave for nowadays when they go from home, as fresh ways of living, fresh habits, and fresh minds. Fashionable physicians prate of change of air, but fashionable patients care far more for change of faces and change in everything, down to manners and even morals, if possible; and if they get these by leaving a wholesome air for an unwholesome one, and a comfortable house with every luxury in it for the fourth floor of an overcrowded hotel, and a hundredth part in the attentions of an overworked waiter, they are content. Why not? They couldn't get them by staying at home, and what is more, forty-nine out of fifty of them wouldn't if they could. They get quite as much good, and they know it, by the holiday from Tyburnian twaddle and tepidity, from South Kensington superciliousness and Belgravian "big swelldom," as the costermonger's baby does from its roll on Rams-gate sands, or the Rev. Simeon Stylites from his new-laid egg in a country farmhouse.

For ever so many scores of years, we, worthy Englishmen and Englishwomen, have been boasting of our domestic virtues; singing of our domestic bliss; hugging ourselves on our domestic decorum; crying up in season and out of season our reserve, regularity, and ultra-exclusiveness, and, by comparison, crying down the freedom of manners, easy etiquette, and suave sociability of less favoured countries; until this legend of decorous domesticity has become so much an article of faith with us that even when we would like to break through it we cannot. At any rate we dare not!

So it is that we go abroad, or to mountain-places and watering-places, and put ourselves to a vast amount of trouble and inconvenience as the only means of casting off our time-honoured trammels for a while, and enjoying in hotels and boarding-houses the novelty and freedom, the ultra-republicanism and un-English familiarities of table d'hôte life.

Take one thing alone. It really is very pleasant to be able to speak or be spoken to by our neighbour, if we feel inclined, even though he be a stranger to us, without the sensation of doing something improper and unheard of, or that terrible consequences may ensue from the liberty. Yet, till the last year or two, this was just one of the things most impossible to the ordinary English man or woman, by whom anyone attempting, un-introduced, to enter into conversation with them was set down as a thimble-rigger, sharper, or Lothario of the darkest dye, and answered, according to sex, by an immediate buttoning of pockets, or a stony glare, and the "Unhand me, sir!" of outraged virtue fifty years ago. Of course, people may laugh and say that we have altered all that, but I am not so sure that we have; or that the idea, even if less dogmatically enunciated, is any less recognised in practice than it ever was.

But at a table d'hôte all that sort of thing is done away with, and A talks to B, and C to D, in a free and spontaneous manner, and acquaintances are made, and even friendships contracted, without either knowing the name of the other, and with an ease and rapidity which are perfectly startling when one considers the national reserve under ordinary circumstances; and that it is quite possible for the very people so sociable here to have lived next door to each other in London for the last dozen years, and never to have exchanged word or glance. On the other hand there are, of course, people—don't we all know the severe family that one meets every now and then: papa, mamma, and two or three grown-up daughters—who would like to carry out the latter "régime" abroad as well as at home; whose one idea in travelling seems to be to consider that they are in a barbarous country, and metaphorically to entrench themselves as far as possible from any communication with the savage inhabitants thereof?

You may know these people by their invariably going about together in a compact body, as though there were some danger in being separated, and by their always

bringing with them a large quantity of needlework and dull, improving-looking books, with which they retire as far from the rest of the company as possible; and which they proceed to get through with an industry and regularity which is evidently the ordinary routine of their home habits. They never by any chance speak to any one outside their own circle, and to each other they discourse in aggravated whispers, thus recognising the presence of the enemies whom, otherwise, they ignore, or answer (should the latter be bold enough to address them) in the shortest of monosyllables. The daughters are generally plain, and the father carries a large watch, which shuts with a very loud click, and which he continually consults to make sure that the fixed hours for reading, reflection, and recreation are properly adhered to. The aim and end of their outing is summed up in one sentence in the ponderous diaries which they each and all keep: "We found X—delightful, and were able to keep strictly to ourselves and our own home ways and habits."

A wide contrast to these people are the sociable couple, who will make friends with everybody, and talk to everybody, and pour out their most private affairs to you, whether you want to hear them or not, even to "what the doctor thought of my husband's complaint before we left," and such matters. People of this sort are quite intimate with the waiters and chambermaids, call them by their christian-names; are distressed because the landlord has lost a brother; nod and smile to new comers as soon as they enter the room, and leave behind them the sense of their being old residents and habitués of the hotel, even if they have been only three days there. Besides these people, however, and besides the pretty, fast married lady, with the pretty, fast married friend, and the accommodating spouse, who is never too near her; besides the widow, whose weeds are so fresh that you think she can only just have buried her husband, and the widow whose weeds are so utterly wilted that you almost doubt her ever having been a wife; besides the newly-married couple, still so dreadfully spoony that they are always exchanging tender glances over their soup-plates, and make you feel as if you ought to knock at the door or cough before coming suddenly into their presence; and besides the prim old maid with ringlets and palpably false teeth, who looks as if no one had ever felt spoony towards her in

his life—besides these commonplace types of society, whom we meet at every hotel at home or abroad, there is generally a good deal of amusement for the observing mind in watching the individual oddities, or adventures of those about it; and to this the gregariousness and easy sociability of table d'hôte life certainly lends itself in a very pleasant and facile manner. One soon gets to know people by nicknames—such as "our friend with the nose," "Ringlets," or "the Snorter"—and even to speak of them as such to the neighbour on our right or left, who has become for the time being—and only by reason of such propinquity—quite a confidential friend; while to discover a secret understanding between the young man who sits third from the carver and the young woman who has Number Nineteen on the first floor, and arrived a week before him, and to make wild guesses as to the relationship between the handsome lady of five-and-thirty and the slim young man of twenty whom she calls "George," but whose surname (on his portmanteau) is Jones, while hers (on her letters) has been ascertained to be Smith, is as exciting as a new play, and much more amusing than a three-volume novel. I well remember one hotel where we were all taken in by a young widow, whose lovely face and deep mourning habiliments excited universal sympathy and admiration. Her manners too, and her way of alluding to her husband, and her great and recent "loss," were the very perfection of gentle sorrow and sweetness; and the women were as much won by her as the men, until one day it was discovered that her widowhood was of the order known as "grass," and that the husband, so touchingly alluded to, had been lost to her, not by the tragic hand of death, but through the more prosaic agency of the divorce court.

Of course, however, the table d'hôte is not always either amusing or exciting. Occasionally you come across people who either bore or annoy you unspeakably; and it is not always easy to escape from them: people whose talk is unpleasant to you, and who will talk, regardless of any one's presence or occupation, in a loud, blatant voice against which there is no shutting one's ears; selfish people who invariably clutch at the only easy-chairs as their right, insist on the windows being shut on a broiling day, or open in a fog, and make everyone else uncomfortable; "bad form" people who take a pleasure

in scouting the proprieties; and prudish people who pull long faces at everything and want to turn the hotel into a conventicle. By-and-by, also, the constant succession of changing faces, in the beginning as amusing as the scenes in a play, begins to grow a little wearisome; and the elaborate dinners à la Russe, which at first tickled your palate and provoked odious comparisons as to the efforts of your own Mary Jane, pall upon you, and even make you wish once or twice for the variety of a homely meal, and the luxury of a single joint and pudding. There is a little difficulty too in deciding how far it is possible to know, or not to know, in London people with whom one has been friendly or even intimate at Homburg or Scarborough; and it is awkward if one has been flirting rather pronouncedly with the pretty lady-like daughters of a very pleasant old gentleman, to discover that the latter is a well-known West End tradesman living close to your own dignified mansion; and that the prettiest daughter tots up the accounts behind a little glass screen at the back of the shop. One doesn't like the idea of cutting those girls if one happens to meet them coming out of one's parish church on Sunday; and all at once the freedom and sociability of table d'hôte life seems to have its drawbacks. It has been very pleasant for the time, and has given us a host of new ideas and new feelings, which have a good effect on our nationally stagnant blood and narrow minds. But it is getting chilly. The thought of our own easy-chair at home, and the fireside where there are not a dozen strangers crowding to oust us from the most comfortable corner, glimmer pleasantly before our eyes. Even idleness loses its charm after too long a spell of it; and the old habits and occupations, which a few weeks ago were cast aside with almost exultant relief, rise up before one's mind with a sense of something pleasant and familiar. The final day comes. There is a hurried paying of bills, a rushing about of rapacious waiters and officious porters, a few hours of steam or railway, culminating in a view of towers and roof-tops looming through the well-known dim-coloured fog of old; and, suddenly as it were, we wake up in our own homes again with a feeling as if our ever having left them was nothing but a strange, bewildered, slightly improper dream; and with nothing left of the past weeks of idleness and variety, save a pleasant memory whose principal charm is, after all, that in

nine cases out of ten it makes the old life appear sweeter and even healthier for the brief experience of one so widely different.

WEREWOLVES.

THE idea of a being, half wolf, half man, and possessing also many demoniacal attributes, is a very curious piece of old-world superstition still to be found in very many European countries, and strengthened, no doubt, by the discovery, at times, of children who have been carried off and cared for by wolves who preferred the rôle of foster-mother to that of devourer—an occurrence of which there are frequent proofs on record. The wild and howling night winds, the Maruts that gave the name to our too familiar nightmare, may have given the first notion of demon wolves to the trembling listener as they passed shrieking by his solitary tent or hut. As these winds also represented the Pitris, the good patres or fathers, and the followers of Indra, the transition of thought by which the spirit-wolf and the human form became amalgamated is easily imagined.

There appears to be plenty of evidence that, at different times, a form of madness has broken out by which individuals have fancied themselves to be turned into wolves. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, describes this disease, which he styles *Lycanthropia*, as "when men run howling about graves and fields in the night, and will not be persuaded but that they are wolves or some such beasts." He quotes authority for many instances; one, among the rest, of "a poor husbandman that still hunted about graves, and kept in churchyards, of a pale, black, ugly, and fearful look. Such belike," continues the garrulous old writer, "such, belike, or little better, were King Proteus' daughters, that thought themselves kine; and Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel, as some interpreters hold, was only troubled with this kind of madness."

King James the First also speaks in a somewhat similar manner in the First chapter of the Third Book of *Dæmonologia*. Pliny states that men were changed into wolves, and again into men; Pausanias narrates a history of a man who remained a wolf for ten years; and Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, describes the transition of Lycaon, king of Arcadia, who was turned into a wolf as a punishment for offering human flesh to the gods.

A legend also speaks of one of the family of Anthos, who, selected by lot, proceeded to the shores of a lake in Arcadia, where, after suspending his garments to the branches of an oak, he plunged in and swam across. Changing into a wolf, he was condemned to wander for nine years; but should he have abstained from feeding on human flesh, he was permitted to resume his former shape by swimming back again, and regaining his clothes which were still in the tree.

Herodotus states that the Neurians became wolves for a few days once a year, and then returned to the form of men. Virgil and Propertius give the same transformation, and Petronius tells a story related by Niceros at Primalchio's banquet in which he (Niceros) set off to walk in the early morning accompanied by a "valiant soldier, a sort of grim water-drinking Pluto. About cockcrow, when the moon was shining as bright as midday, we came among the monuments. My friend began addressing himself to the stars, but I was rather in a mood to sing or to count them, and when I turned to look at him—lo! he had stripped himself, and laid down his clothes near him. My heart was in my nostrils, and I stood like a dead man; but he made a mark round his clothes and on a sudden became a wolf. Do not think I jest; I would not lie for any man's estate. But to return to what I was saying. When he became a wolf, he began howling, and fled into the woods. At first I hardly knew where I was, and afterwards, when I went to take up his clothes, they were turned into stone. Who then died with fear but I? Yet I drew my sword, and went cutting the air right and left, till I reached the villa of my sweetheart." Here he is told that a wolf had been at the farm and worried the cattle, but that a slave had run a lance into his neck, so he sets off home as fast as possible. "When I came to the spot where the clothes had turned into stone, I could find nothing but blood. But when I got home I found my friend the soldier in bed, bleeding at the neck like an ox, and a doctor dressing his wound. I then knew he was a turnskin (*versipellis*), nor would I ever have broken bread with him again—no, not if you had killed me."

The title "turnskin" is also in accordance with the Norwegian idea of the werewolf, as the change has always been supposed to have been effected by means of a skin robe, or sometimes a girdle, which could be put on or taken off. In the

Middle Ages the bandit or outlaw was said to wear a caput lupinum, or as it was called in England, wulfesheofod (wolf's head). King Harald Harfagr had a body of men called Ulfhednar (wolf-coated) to distinguish them from the Berseker (bear-skin shirted), and these men, according to Hertz, were originally supposed to put on the strength and fierceness of the animal with his skin. The myth of the giant wolf Fenris, the offspring of evil Loki and the giantess Angurboda, who created such a disturbance among the gods in Asgard, gave a semi-religious authority to the man-wolf idea in Scandinavia.

Professor de Gubernatis, in his excellent volume on Zoological Mythology, mentions a she-wolf in an Esthonian story who comes up on hearing the cry of a child, and gives it milk to nourish it. "The story tells us that the shape of a wolf was assumed by the mother of the child herself, and that, when she was alone, she placed her wolf disguise upon a rock, and appeared as a woman to feed the child. The husband, informed of this, orders that the rock be heated, so that when the wolf's skin is again placed upon it, it may be burnt, and he may thus be able to recognise and take back to himself his wife. The she-wolf that gives her milk to the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, in Latin epic tradition, was no less a woman than the nurse-wolf of the Esthonian story."

In Germany the transformation is believed to take place by means of a belt made of wolf-skin, and should this be unfastened or cut, the man-wolf immediately loses his wolf nature. Mr. Kelly, in his *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk Lore*, speaks of these girdles being once for sale. "A sale," says he, "was made by order of the authorities, of a heap of old things that lay in a room in the Erichsburg. Among them were old implements of the chase which had been taken from poachers, and also some werewolf girdles. The Amtmann's man, having a mind to try the effect of the latter, buckled one of them on, was immediately turned into a wolf, and started off for Hunnesrück. The Amtmann rode after him, and cutting at his back with a sword, severed the girdle, whereupon the man resumed his proper shape." Another story is told of a little boy who put on his father's girdle, and was transformed. His father overtook him and unfastened it. The boy afterwards said that, the moment he put

on the girdle, he became ravenously hungry. A common German story, also quoted by Mr. Kelly, is that of a charcoal-burner, who, believing his two companions to be asleep, fastened his wolf-belt round him, became a wolf, and devoured a foal. His comrades, who had only been feigning sleep, had observed him, and when, on their way home, he complained of an internal pain, they told him it was hardly to be wondered at when a man had a whole foal inside him. "Had you said that to me out yonder," replied the werewolf, "you would never have reached home again;" and saying this he disappeared, and was not again seen.

Another German tale tells of a farmer who was driving his wife through a wood, and who suddenly alighted, telling his wife to drive on, and to throw her apron to any beast that might attack her. She was attacked by a wolf, who tore her apron into shreds, and then retreated. Upon her husband's return she saw some threads of her apron sticking between his teeth, and knew he was a werewolf. Iron or steel thrown or held over a werewolf is, in Germany, supposed to split the wolf-skin, so that the man comes out through the forehead. *Loups garoux* are still supposed to linger in some parts of France, but during the sixteenth century many people were burnt to death, having been found guilty of assuming the form and habits of the werewolf. In Portugal, the legend of the *Lobis-homem* still survives, but it appears to be often confused with another superstition, that of the demon horse, the *phooka* of Irish tradition.

The following Polish stories are given in Naaké's translation of Slavonic fairy-tales. Some young people were dancing and enjoying themselves on a hill near the Vistula, when an enormous wolf seized one of the handsomest girls, and was dragging her away. Some of the youths followed and overtook them, when the wolf dropped the girl and stood at bay. As they had no fire-arms the young men stood irresolute, or hurried back for weapons, so the wolf again seized the girl, and bore her into the forest. Fifty years passed, and another feast was taking place on the same hill, when an old man approached. The people invited him to join them, but he sat silently and gloomily down. An old peasant entered into conversation, and was astonished when the stranger hailed him by name as his elder brother, who had been lost fifty years before. The aged stranger

then told the wondering peasants that he had been changed into a wolf by a witch, and had carried away his betrothed from that hill during a festival, that they had only lived together in the forest for a year, and then she had died. He showed them his hands covered with blood, and said: "From that moment, savage and furious, I attacked every one and destroyed every thing I fell in with. It is now four years since I again changed to human shape. I have wandered from place to place. I wished to see you all once more, to see the hut and village where I was born and grew up a man. After that,—ah, woe is me! Fly, fly from me. I shall become a wolf again!" He was instantly transformed, howled piteously, and disappeared in the forest for ever.

The second story is of a peasant with whom a witch fell in love. As he slighted her, she told him that when next he chopped wood in the forest he would become a wolf. He laughed at her threats, but they were fulfilled. He wandered about for some years, but would never eat raw flesh, preferring to frighten away the shepherds, and eat their provisions. At last he woke one day from sleep, and found himself once more a man. He immediately ran to his old home, only to find his parents dead, his friends dead or removed, and his betrothed married and with four children. In this and the preceding tale there is a trace of the Rip van Winkle incident and its older original. A third story is also given, but space will not allow its transcription.

In the story of the *Lésy*, or wood demon, given in Ralston's Russian Folk Tales, there is a strong resemblance to a portion of the former tale, which might suggest that the *Lésy* and the werewolf were not unconnected. The wood demon carries a girl off into the forest, where she lives with him until he is shot by a hunter. The story of *The Treasure* in the same volume speaks of a goat-skin uniting with the body of a pope or priest, so that he could not take it off, thus becoming half animal as in the tradition of the wolf-man.

Dasent, in the introduction to his *Popular Tales from the Norse*, shows that the belief in werewolves was common in Sweden in the sixteenth century. Going back into mythical times, he states that "the *Volsunga Saga* expressly states of Sigmund and Sinfistli that they became werewolves, which, we may remark, were Odin's sacred beasts . . . The wolf's skin . . . was assumed

and laid aside at pleasure." In *Morte d'Arthur* (Book xix., chap. 11) mention is made of "Sir Marrok, the good knyghte, that was betrayed with his wyf, for she made hym seuen yere a werewolf." In a Latin poem of the twelfth or thirteenth century (printed in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, ii., 103) there are some lines describing men in Ireland who could change themselves into wolves and worry sheep, and who, if they were wounded in their wolf form, retained the wound on regaining human shape.

Sir Frederick Madden, in his Note on the Word Werwolf (*William of Palerne*, Edit. 1832), states: "In *The Master of Game*, a treatise on hunting composed for Henry the Fifth, is the following passage, 'And somme ther ben . . . that eten children and men, and eten non other fleische from that tyme that thei ben acharmed with mannes fleisch . . . And thei ben cleped werewolves, for that men shulden be war of them.'" The ancient romance, to which this was a modern note, was translated from the French at the command of Sir Humphrey de Bohun, about A.D. 1350, and gives a curious history of a werewolf. Alphouns, eldest son of the King of Spain and heir to the crown, was bewitched by his stepmother Braunde (who wished her own son, Braundinis to be the heir), and turned into a werewolf. This wolf carried away from Palermo William, the child of Embrons, King of Apulia, swam the Straits of Messina with the boy, and took him to a forest near Rome, not doing him any injury. The wolf went to obtain food for the child, and, in his absence, a cowherd found the boy, took him home, and adopted him. William grows up, and is given by the Emperor of Rome to his daughter as a page. The romance deals with many adventures; but, at last, William and the Emperor's daughter, Melior, become lovers and elope together dressed in the skins of two white bears. They wander until they find a den, where they are hidden. When they are suffering from hunger, the werewolf finds them, and brings them cooked beef and two flasks of wine, of which he had robbed two men. The Emperor of Rome, who had betrothed Melior to Partenedon, son of the Emperor of Greece, still pursues the wandering lovers, who are guided and helped by the werewolf. After many adventures, they reach Palermo, which they find besieged by the Spaniards. William, who has a werewolf painted on

his shield, takes the King and Queen of Spain prisoners, and compels Queen Braunde to reverse her enchantment, and to restore the werewolf to his original human form.

Wolves have been so long extinct in England that it is hardly to be expected that there should now linger any tradition of them, but the old werewolf idea seems to have been closely allied with the horrible vampyre. Indeed, so prominent a personage as one of our kings—King John himself—is said, in an old Norman chronicle, to have wandered in this shape after death. The monks of Worcester were compelled, by the frightful noises proceeding from his grave, to dig up his body and cast it out of consecrated ground.

Some old story of a man possessed by the wolf-demon may perhaps have suggested to Shakespeare the outburst of Gratiano to Shylock, who was so vindictively pursuing his victim to obtain his flesh:

Thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf; who, hang'd for human
slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And
Infused itself in thee.

In Normandy, a hundred years ago, the vampyre-like *Loup Garou* was supposed to be the re-animated corpse of one who had died in mortal sin, and had risen from the grave to prey upon mankind. First, the corpse began to gnaw the face-cloth, then it wailed and shrieked horribly, burst open the coffin, and flames arose from the ground. This pleasant spectre then commenced its midnight murders in the wolf form, and these could only be stopped by the priest taking up the body, decapitating it, and flinging the head into a stream.

It is worth mentioning, in addition to the remark in the beginning of our paper, that the discovery of wild children reared by savage animals in the woods may have strengthened the belief in half-human animals, that Dr. Hubsch, physician to the hospitals of Constantinople, stated that in 1852 he saw a specimen of one of a Central African tribe which possessed tails and fed constantly on human flesh. Mr. Baring-Gould, in his article on *Tailed Men* (*Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*), gives the history of John Struys, a Dutch traveller, who, he states, visited the Isle of Formosa in 1677, and who thus describes a wild man whom his companions

caught, and who had murdered one of their number: "He had a tail more than a foot long, covered with red hair, and very like that of a cow."

Before taking leave of this interesting but ghastly superstition, I would mention the derivation of the prefix "were" in the word werewolf, as given by Sir Frederick Madden: "Wer," or "wera," a man, being the same as the Gothic "wair," Teutonic "wer," Francic "uara," Celtic "gur," "gwr," or "ur," Irish "fair," Latin "vir," etc.

Gervaise, of Tilbury, writing in the reign of Henry the Second, states: "Vidimus enim frequenter in Anglia per lunationes homines in lupos mutari, quod hominum genus Gerulfos Galli nominant, Angli vero werewlf dicunt; were enim Anglicè virum sonat, wlf, lupum."

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN the court reassembled that afternoon, the crowd, both inside and out, was so great, and the interest manifested in the proceedings so little abated, that, at first sight, it seemed as if not one of those who had mustered to hear the reading of the indictment and the opening speech were absent from what was felt would prove the closing act of a drama whose issues were of such terrible importance to the actors most nearly concerned in it.

This was a mistake, however, and while the process of calling over the names of the jury was being gone through, and the barristers were flocking into their places: while some people were wondering what sort of speech Sir James Haycroft would make for the defence, and deciding that it could not be expected to come up to that for the Crown, seeing what an unfortunate case he had in hand; and that, though he had done more for the prisoner than could have been expected in making so much out of that doctor's evidence, he could not but feel he was playing a losing game: while others were even beginning to speculate on what the sentence would be, or to whisper to one another that if it were true, as had been hinted, that there were really no witnesses worth naming for the defence, Sir James might think it more politic to call none at all, and in that case they would be out in time to get some tea before dressing for

dinner—at this time it became apparent to a few that the elderly lady in deep mourning, whom curious fingers had long since pointed out as "the prisoner's mother," was no longer in the seat she had occupied.

It was true. All through that cruel speech of the prosecuting counsel, and the subsequent examination of witnesses, Mrs. Pentreath had borne up with a patience and resolution which surprised even her nephew; never speaking or moving, and only once making a slight negative gesture with her head when, at some particularly trying part, the vicar bent down and gently urged her retiring; but immediately after the doctor gave that favourable answer to the leading question put to him, George felt a sudden and heavy pressure against his knee; and, looking down, saw that his aunt had fainted.

She was quickly and quietly removed—so quietly, indeed, that the incident did not attract the prisoner's notice at all—and, being taken into the air, was speedily restored to consciousness; but her strength had received a severe shake, and if it had needed more than the urgent entreaties of those about her to induce her to remain for the remainder of the trial in the room set apart for witnesses, it was supplied by a message from her son conveyed to her by Mr. Lorton.

"Beg my mother, as she loves me, not to stay for the rest of it. You must see how it will end; and the one thing I couldn't bear would be for her to be there and see it too."

She was not there, therefore, when Sir James began his speech—a very different one truly to that of the learned serjeant whose turn it now was to lean back and contemplate his finger-nails, or shake his wigged head in pitying severity over any point which he wished to emphasise as more than usually weak.

In bluff and hearty tones, just touched with indignation, as one who had been a boy himself, and had boys of his own, Sir James began by repudiating altogether the description of his client as given by the opposing counsel. That young man, he said, had been described (and he hoped the jury would look at him and see whether the description seemed likely to be a true one) as a libertine, a defamer of women, a liar, and a cowardly and treacherous murderer. Well, he thought the heaping up of epithets was always a mistake, as, though there was

certainly a proverb, "If you throw plenty of dirt, some of it is sure to stick," there was also a chance that if you threw too violently you might overshoot the mark altogether. For his part, therefore, without attempting to make a saint or an Admirable Crichton out of his client, he would simply say, that a young man who had served his Queen and his country with honour for nearly ten years, against whose character for uprightness and honesty in every transaction whether of business or play there rested not the slightest shadow; and whose kindness of heart and popularity among his fellowmen and servants had been so touchingly manifested that day by their reluctance to give evidence against him—such a young man could hardly be the savage, dishonest, and cowardly wretch described by the learned serjeant. Of course he had his faults, as "what young man," cried Sir James, "has not? Doubtless he has been too susceptible to feminine charms. Doubtless he has flirted as soldiers will; perhaps, at times, may not have been quite as reticent respecting his flirtations as a cooler or more practised libertine might have been; but this last is an assumption only, resting on nothing but the deceased gentleman's accusation; and, though far be it from me to cast blame on one who was also a gallant officer, and with regard to whom we may quote the saying, 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum,' still it must be remembered that even the worthiest are liable to error, especially in matters of hearsay, and that in this matter he gave the prisoner no opportunity to explain or right himself. Before a crowd of people, in a public room, he offered this young man the grossest insult one man can offer another, and coupled it with a still more insulting accusation. The prisoner is proud and high-spirited. He lost his temper, and threatened his defamer in return in hot and violent language. Friends, however, interfered, and he was induced to leave the club, and even to allow one of them to accompany him for a considerable portion of the way on his homeward route. Unfortunately—most unfortunately for the prisoner—that friend did not go the whole way with him, and so did not see him into the train which, as we contend, was actually carrying him many miles out of London at the very time the fatal shot which caused the death of the deceased was being fired.

"But in remembering the evidence of this witness as to the prisoner's violent

expressions of wrath at the injury he had received, we must also bear in mind his own independent testimony given in these words: 'I never thought Pentreath meant half what he said; and I made sure he would go home, or I shouldn't have left him.' And now, gentlemen, comes that part of my story in which we can only deal with assumptions. The learned counsel for the Crown has given you his assumptions; and has asked you to convict, on purely circumstantial evidence, this young man before you. He has constructed a plausible and elaborate story to account for a mysterious and deplorable event; but, gentlemen, there are two sides to every story, and if the prisoner's mouth were not closed, and he could go into that box, he would tell you a story, less sensational perhaps, less eloquently worded, but more natural, more in accordance with the character, however faulty, which I have just shown you, and in telling it you he would have at least as much right to claim your credence as any other honourable man in a similar position.

"Gentlemen," said Sir James, "in his name I claim that right now, and I ask you to listen to me;" and so, dropping his voice, went on to give the story of Ernest Pentreath's visit home, of his return journey, his arrival at Major Hollis's lodgings in time to hear the landlady's shriek at discovering the body, and of his natural consternation at finding the man with whom he had come to right himself lying dead at his feet, past either apology or explanation; his hasty threats of vengeance painted forth upon a bloody canvas by the hand of God!

The learned counsel then reverted to the doctor's evidence, both as to the possibility of death having been self-inflicted, and of the probable time of its occurrence, and comparing that time with the hour of its discovery, asked the jury whether it was likely that the prisoner would have remained there all that period alone with his victim without even going near, or touching the latter, so as, at least, to make sure that life was extinct, in which case his hands or clothing must inevitably have acquired some spots or stains of blood from the quantity which had flowed from the deceased.

Going back farther still, he recalled the words of Major Hollis in answer to the prisoner's challenge, "I shall be ready for you whenever you send to me," and stating that he should call another

witness to testify to other words to the same effect uttered by deceased before leaving the club, he went on to suggest that the gallant officer, carrying out this train of thought, might naturally, on his arrival at home, have got out his pistols to examine them; and, either in doing so, or in the act of loading, might have touched the trigger, and so in one second caused his own death instead of that of the prisoner before them.

"Gentlemen," said Sir James very gravely, while so still was the court that a pin might have been heard to fall, and an usher, who came in with a note for Mr. Lorton, almost let it drop under the volley of angry glances directed at him, "gentlemen, you may tell me that these are mere presumptions, and I grant it; but what is the entire case for the Crown but a presumption also? They have admitted that, if the prisoner was really at Kew at the time he specifies, he could not have committed the crime of which he stands accused; but in casting scorn by anticipation on his denial, and calling on us to bring direct evidence in proof of it, they forget that the burden of disproof lies with them; that the law, despite of what has been said in a greater assembly than this, 'does not demand a victim;' and that if with all their formidable array of witnesses—an array I shall not attempt to emulate—they can only bring forward such circumstantial——"

He was interrupted. Immediately on receiving the note above-mentioned, Mr. Lorton had manifested much excitement of manner, and had hurried out of court. His departure excited little attention, however; that of the whole audience, including the prisoner, whose now pale and haggard face showed only too plainly how the long strain of suspense was telling on him, being fixed on the speaker, who, as most there felt, was fighting what he knew to be a losing cause. The solicitor now returned, however, and reaching up to Sir James put a folded paper in his hand, accompanying the action by a few whispered words.

The effect of them was immediately apparent. The eminent counsel took the paper and glanced over it—an almost momentary glance, accompanied by no apparent change of countenance, or any other expression of emotion; but when, after barely a minute's pause, he resumed his speech, it was felt, not by one or two, but by every soul in that assembly that a subtle change had come over it, and one

for which no one, not even he himself, had been prepared.

"Gentlemen," he said abruptly, "I was reminding you that the prosecution have brought forward circumstantial evidence only, and have attempted to strengthen it by a cloud of witnesses. I shall not imitate them. I shall call one witness only, and on her evidence, which is neither presumptive nor circumstantial, I shall leave my case, and leave it with perfect confidence as to your decision, in your hands. Call Esther Mavors."

There was a little stir in court, something like a smothered exclamation from that corner where the vicar still held his watchful position, and the prisoner was seen to start violently and change colour, looking about him with an almost bewildered expression as though the name uttered was that least expected in the world by him; but already it had been repeated by the usher, and next moment there was a movement among the crowd which wedged every available passage, as though someone was trying to make her way through it, and a slender, childish figure being half lifted, half assisted into the witness-box stood there, turning a pale and terrified face upon the judge and jury.

Hetty's face, indeed! But so changed, so sharpened and wasted by pain and sickness, that those who loved it best would hardly have known it. With the bright liquid eyes grown unnaturally large, with hollows in the delicate temples, against which the soft curls clustered with such childish grace, with the lines of her black frock hanging loosely over the frail, shrunken figure, she looked the very ghost of herself, and a ghost so small, so shadowy and youthful, as to provoke a kind of pitying gasp from most of those who looked upon her.

Yet though there was no tinge of colour in the small sweet face, whose timid, wistful expression moved many a heart to compassion, and though she trembled so exceedingly that but for having hold of the rail she must have fallen, Hetty had not lost her self-possession. Her voice was quite audible as she took the oath, repeating the solemn words after the clerk slowly and clearly as a child giving a message it has tried conscientiously to learn; and her clear, truthful gaze never wandered once from the person addressing her, or seemed cognisant of any other presence.

Yet the first question Sir James asked her, "Where were you on the night of the

6th of December between ten and eleven o'clock?" would have been enough to make many girls hesitate before the answer Hetty had to give.

"In Captain Pentreath's room."

She had said it—said it audibly; but there was colour enough in her face now where the blood had rushed up in a fiery tide, and, to the surprise of everybody, the prisoner himself interrupted her.

"You were not! It is not true!" he cried out passionately. "My lord, I don't understand this. I——"

But a stern rebuke from the judge silenced him, and a very few more questions—questions put with a tact and discretion which showed Sir James's ability more than all his previous eloquence—led Hetty on to describe how she had woken up that night, and seeing that it was past ten, and that Mrs. Pentreath had not returned, had gone down to Captain Pentreath's room to look for a photograph; how, whilst doing so, she had heard his latch-key in the door, and fearing to be caught thus in her night-dress, had taken refuge in the box-closet; how, shut up there, she heard him pacing to and fro and talking to himself in his excitement; how at last he had gone away, and she had seized the opportunity to fly to her own room.

So kindly and simply, indeed, did Sir James put his questions, and with such an encouraging semblance of there being nothing surprising or compromising in them, that Hetty's trembling grew less violent as she answered, and her voice, which had sunk almost to a whisper after the first words, gained a little in strength, while two at least of her auditors felt a growing relief and comfort which forced a low "Thank God!" from one of them.

The worst, however, was to come. Sir James, who foresaw it all along, had done his best for her, making her tell the whole story clearly and simply, so that, whatever might be to follow, it should have had its full effect beforehand on the judge and jury, and had even forestalled one question which he knew the opposite side would ask, and probably wished to have satisfied himself.

"How is it that you have not mentioned any of this before? Did you not know the importance it would be to the prisoner?"

There was a moment's hesitation, and Hetty's face grew very pale again as she answered, more falteringly than she had yet done:

"I have been ill—very ill—ever since the inquest. This is the first day I have been let go out."

"So I should infer from your appearance," said the counsel kindly, though he knew she had not answered him. "Indeed, I see you are hardly well enough to be here now, so I will only ask you one more question. Can you swear positively, and without any doubt whatever, that the person who entered Guelder Lodge at half-past ten on the night in question, and whom you heard speaking and moving about in the room where you were hidden, was the prisoner now before you?"

"Quite positively. No one else in the house has a latch-key. Besides, I could not mistake his voice and step. It was he."

"Thank you. I think, then, I may say, and I appeal to the jury to agree with me, that you have saved the prisoner's reputation and delivered him from a very painful situation. My lord, I shall call no other witnesses. The case for the defence is an alibi, and I claim that we have proved it, unless, indeed, my learned brother wishes to cross-examine this—this little girl"—he said the last words intentionally, and as a final effort to spare her—"who has come forward in her present state of weakness, and under such trying circumstances, to testify to the truth."

But his learned brother did wish it—was, indeed, only waiting to pounce upon the witness the moment she was delivered over to him, and he was on his legs almost before Sir James had sat down, the very different tone of his voice making poor Hetty blanch and shiver all over in advance.

"You say you have lived five years with Mrs. Pentreath as her companion. During how much of that time have you known her son?"

"About six months only. He came home from India in August."

"Still, six months is long enough for two young people, a young man and woman especially, to get tolerably intimate."

Hetty made no answer.

"Were you intimate with each other?"

"We were very friendly—yea."

"So friendly that you were in the habit of getting out of bed in the middle of the night, and coming downstairs in your night-dress to search for any little things you wanted—photographs or the like?"

For a moment the girl merely looked at him, such a blaze of wounded dignity and

disgust in her eyes as even silenced a kind of titter which had begun in the gallery, and provoked someone—a woman, too—to cry “Shame!”

“I was not in the habit of doing so. I only did it that once because I wanted the photograph—it was my own—particularly, and I had had no other opportunity of getting it.”

“Was the room kept locked then during the day?”

“No, but he might have been there.”

“And you could not have asked him for it?”

“No, I had done so, and he would not give it me.”

“Then you were not quite on such friendly terms, after all, as you described just now?”

“Not then.”

“And when did these ‘friendly’ terms come to an end?”

“Some little time before. Mrs. Pentreath did not like it.”

“Mrs. Pentreath, the prisoner’s mother, had observed the intimacy between you, and disapproved of it?”

“Yes.”

“Before that had she been friendly to you herself?”

“Oh yes; she always treated me like a daughter.”

“In that case she could hardly have disapproved of your having a merely friendly intimacy with her son. Are you certain that it was nothing more; that you were not lovers, in fact; and that this affair of the photograph—one you had given him, I presume—was not a lovers’ quarrel?”

“No; I never gave it him, and we were never lovers. I have never cared for Captain Pentreath at all except as a friend, and I was very angry indeed when I found he had taken my photograph. I would not allow him to have it.”

“You did quarrel then?”

“Yes; he had spoken rudely to me, and I thought he had acted in an ungentlemanly and dishonourable manner. I said I would complain to his mother.”

“And did you?”

“No—”

“But instead you persuaded Mrs. Pentreath to leave you at home on a plea of illness, and when she was gone, got up and went down to the prisoner’s room in the middle of the night? Are you sure—excuse my asking you the question—are you sure that you were not expecting his return, that your visit was not for the

purpose of making up the quarrel which you already allow—”

The girl lifted her head. Her innocent face was dyed scarlet as though he had struck it a blow, and there were great tears of anguish in her eyes.

“You have no right—it is wicked to ask me that,” she said in a smothered tone. “You know I thought he was in town for the night; that it was only—only because of that—”

“Mr. Serjeant, is this necessary?” said the judge. He had daughters of his own at home, and one—a little thing she was, about Hetty’s age—lying under the turf in Norwood Cemetery with the grass growing over her. “Pray do not exceed your powers.”

“My lord, I am not doing so; but this evidence has come upon us by surprise, has been sprung on us as I may say. If it should be true, then, as my learned friend says, the prisoner has established an alibi; but to prove its truth it is needful to sift it to the bottom, and to make sure that this witness has not been tempted to invent her story—her very improbable story—from any tender feeling for the prisoner. Still, I have no wish to distress her more than I can help, and will, therefore, pass on to other matters.”

He then cross-examined Hetty keenly and closely, as to the position of the furniture in the room; the exact words used by Captain Pentreath; the possibility of her hearing distinctly in the cupboard, where she stated herself to be, and other matters; but these questions Hetty answered with such absolute clearness and simplicity as could hardly fail to impress itself on the audience as the plain, unvarnished truth. Even the learned serjeant felt it, and, leaving that part of the subject, asked her abruptly and almost angrily why, with this knowledge in her mind, she had not spoken out at once and so saved the prisoner all the disgrace and suspense of the detention he had already gone through. Poor Hetty hesitated and turned two wistful, piteous eyes upon the bench; but it was not a case in which the judge could again interfere; and step by step she was made to tell the whole story of her painful situation with regard to Mrs. Pentreath, her doubts and fears, her desire to do right, the utter absence of anyone to counsel her; and the natural shrinking from telling a thing which might put her in an invidious light before those who had already misjudged her. Her voice, which had faltered

more and more, broke down at the end into actual sobbing, and the tears were rolling over her white cheeks as she said :

"I know now it was very wrong to go away ; but I thought he would have other witnesses. I did not think it could all depend on me—and I was afraid. But I always meant to come forward if it was necessary. It was my being taken ill that prevented me. I did not even know what the magistrates had decided till a week ago, and then it was too late except for this. I—I am very sorry if I have hurt anybody. I can't say any more."

And indeed even the jury intimated that they had heard enough. The case which only an hour before had been going against Captain Pentreath with such deadly persistency was virtually at an end, and without even leaving their box, they pronounced a verdict of acquittal.

Five minutes later the court-house was cleared, the heated, tired crowd were pouring out, and Ernest Pentreath was kneeling at his mother's feet with her arms locked round him. The vicar had gone at once to break the news to her lest the shock should be too great ; but in doing this he missed something of more importance to himself. The moment Hetty's evidence was over she had disappeared, and, when he hurried back to find her, he could only learn that she had driven away in a cab with a tall woman in black who had been waiting for her.

"But I could not bear to see him or her again just yet. Oh, George, you won't ask me to do so!" Hetty said piteously that evening, in the little back parlour at the Thompsons', where, pillowed on the hardest of horsehair sofas, and attended by the energetic Jane, who had nursed her all through her illness, she had been lying for the past week till that morning.

The vicar looked down at her very tenderly.

"I don't yet know what I shall ask you," he answered. "Do you know what you deserve for leaving me as you did?"

Hetty, I almost feel as if I never could forgive you."

But as he said it with his arms round her, and her weary little head pillowed on his breast, it seemed probable that he might do so some day. Poor Hetty tried to plead for herself.

"But you said your promise must be broken, and I thought——"

"You thought all wrong. I meant my promise of keeping our engagement secret; and I did tell my aunt that very day. Hetty, she wants to see you and ask your pardon."

"Mine! But I ought to ask hers for all I made her suffer. George, will she want me to go back to her?"

"It is no matter if she does, as I want you more, and mean to have you. Don't look so frightened and unhappy, dear child. If you would really rather stay with these good relatives of yours while you are making up a white gown—I don't like you in black, Hetty, white is prettier, and really more bridal."

Hetty made no answer.

"You see, even as it is, Ernest must leave the army," the vicar said after a pause in which not much was said on either side. "Indeed, he has sent in his papers already, and it is almost settled that he and my aunt will travel on the Continent for a while till all this painful affair has blown over. What I have been thinking about at present, however, is something different, namely, whether—I have been offered a living in the lake country, far away in Westmoreland, where there are very high winds—whether those winds would blow my small wife away altogether, or only bring a little colour back into these dreadful white cheeks. What does she think? It is a serious question."

But Hetty answered it without a word at all.

Next Week will be commenced

A DRAWN GAME,

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT."

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.
AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER I. ORPHANAGE.

"I SHALL telegraph to her brother," said Dr. Grice with his usual brusque decision.

"No use," answered Mrs. Pybus, the curate's wife, with a despondent shake of the head.

"But she has no other near relation."

"None; none at least that I know of."

"Then I shall telegraph to him. He must come sooner or later, and unless he comes at once he'll not see her alive."

"Is it so near?"

"Yes, thank God," replied the doctor with startling fervour, turning his back as he said it upon Mrs. Pybus, to lean his elbow on the mantelpiece, his head on his hand, and to look through a mist into the fire. "What good can such agony do a woman who is already an angel?" he asked sharply after a pause, turning upon Mrs. Pybus as though, being the curate's wife, she was officially an "advocatus diaboli."

"It has shown you an angel, doctor."

"Me! I'm not worth a pain in her little finger. If it wasn't——"

Here he was interrupted by the sudden entry of the nurse, who cried breathlessly:

"Eh, doctor! thank God. I was afeared you had goan. Ye maun come up at once."

"Going?"

"Going daft, aw reckon. Eh! but shoo has flayed me, ye mind."

The doctor hurried back to his patient whom he had left a minute since too weak to speak. She had striven to thank him for all his goodness, but could only press with trembling fingers the hand she had tried in vain to raise to her lips. He had been very kind to her, but he would have been kind to anyone, and anyone would

have been kind to her. The shock of her husband's death in a collision had brought on premature confinement, and since the birth of her child, three weeks before, she had suffered always cruelly, and at times terribly. For the last few hours she had been easier, but it was still a pain to her to move, to speak, to breathe; pain dogged her even in sleep, her very dreams were a dim pain. But more pathetic than her suffering was her sweet patience, and the self-forgetfulness which made her think less of her own pain than of the trouble it gave others. For her suffering did not make her so long for death as the sense of the burden her broken life was to those on whom she had no claim, and whom she could never now repay—Mrs. Pybus, who sat up night after night with her, and Dr. Grice, who seemed always at her bedside.

The doctor, hurrying back to her room, was arrested at her door by the sight of her, who but now had barely strength to breathe, sitting up and crying in a strong voice of agony:

"My baby! Give it to me. It's alive. Give it to me!"

The doctor turned angrily upon the nurse:

"You told her?"

"No; God told me. Give it to me!" imperiously, and then beseechingly, "Give it to me!"

The doctor, after a pause of perplexity, nodded to the nurse, who left the room, followed by the mother's eyes, which fastened then on the doorway with a greedy impatience for her return. The doctor watched her with a troubled face. He had taken a great responsibility upon himself in vain. For some days after her child's birth, Mrs. Guard had been unconscious of it and of everything, and even

when consciousness began to dawn she at first clean forgot both the occasion and the cause of her illness. Slowly both came back to her in this order—first, her husband's death, and then her confinement. The baby? It was dead, she knew. It must have been dead. Yet for a time she could not bring herself to ask the question and face the certainty. When at last she asked it in a faltering voice, the doctor was ready with his equivocation.

He shook his head. The child was alive, and promised to live, but the doctor felt that the mother's bodily agony would be as nothing to her mental anguish, if she knew that she was leaving her baby without a friend, home, or hope in the wide world. She had a brother, it is true, but whenever a hope of help from him was suggested she had always shaken her head with decisive despair. Therefore the doctor held it best to let her think that her baby had gone before her. But now this dream, which she took for an inspiration, had come to surprise the doctor into an implicit admission that her baby lived. It was an intensely vivid dream, in which she saw her husband crushed under the wreck of a railway carriage, yet holding high in his arms, out of danger, and towards her, their baby; while the doctor tried to hush its screams and hide it from her.

Then the dream faded like a dissolving view into a new phase, in which it was the doctor who held the baby in his arms high out of her reach, protesting that it was dead and must be buried, though she could see plainly life beating in its little breast.

When the doctor entered she was still dreaming, awake—for the mind, like the eye, takes a time to get used to sudden light—and in a minute or two more she might have thought nothing of her nightmare, if the doctor had not been surprised into sending the nurse for the child.

The doctor was more than surprised—he was amazed—to see this gentle creature, who a minute since had only life enough left for pain to feed on, now keeping weakness, pain, and death at bay with the spirit of a lioness robbed of her whelps. What was he to say to her? He could say nothing to her, for to explain would be to suggest the trouble he would have spared her. But he was not put on his defence. In fact he was altogether forgotten. All was forgotten but the child for whom she gaited with parted lips and straining eyes, and a heart parched with thirst. The doctor piled up the pillows behind her as a

support, but she bent forward from them as she heard the returning footsteps of the nurse.

When the baby was brought she would have it in her wasted arms and at her breast, where she devoured it with kisses, as she bent over it, as unconscious of all else as the infant itself. Unconscious even of death, which crept upon her as insensibly as night on the bright sunset of a day of clouds.

When it came, and it soon came, she seemed but to bend a little farther forward over her baby, like a flower which the wind passes over, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

"She has fainted!" exclaimed Mrs. Pybus.

The doctor shook his head as he rearranged the pillows, and then lifted the body reverently back till the head rested on them. The baby, clutched tightly in her arms, lay placidly happy; its little clenched hand indenting her breast, its lips, rosy against its marble whiteness, trying still to draw life from that frozen fount. It was an ominous, no less than a piteous sight to the doctor, who saw in it a picture of how cold a mother the world would be to the orphan.

Having with some difficulty taken the crying child from the locked arms and handed it to the nurse, he beckoned Mrs. Pybus to a consultation downstairs. The result of the consultation was not only a telegram, but a moving letter addressed to "James Tuck, Esq., The Keep, Kingford."

The letter was acknowledged by a curt announcement of Mr. Tuck's intention to attend the funeral.

Mr. Tuck, Mrs. Guard's brother and only near relation, was an old bachelor, and an old bachelor is naturally, though not necessarily, selfish. Our affections, like our muscles, need exercise to strengthen them, and the milk of human kindness, like other milk, runs dry if it be not drawn upon. A man, therefore, who has no love to spare to begin with—as is the presumption with an old bachelor—is little likely to have much to give away after years of solitude.

Mr. Tuck, after years of solitude, reigned alone in his own heart. His self-love, like an Eastern despot, had extirpated all competitors—"Killed the flock of all affections else, till liver, brain, and heart were all supplied with one self-king." He contemplated the world as Narcissus the fountain, to see himself only wherever

he looked; he was interested in nothing and no one that did not hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to himself. And he expected everyone to hold the mirror up to himself. In this alone was he generous—in crediting others with a generosity of which he was himself devoid. He would expect you, if you were but just introduced to him, to think, talk, and hear of nothing but his concerns or his disorders. For, after the manner of old bachelors, he thought too much about his health to be healthy. Since what is said of happiness is true of health: "On droit être heureux sans trop penser à l'être." In this, as in most things, Mr. Tuck was an old woman, and might, indeed, have been his own grandmother, so affectionately fidgety was he in his care for himself.

On the morning of the funeral Mr. Tuck, who had stayed overnight at an hotel, set out for his sister's house. He was perturbed in spirit. His sister's death was a terrible shock to him. No doubt she had died of a complaint of which he was little likely to die himself, and she would write him henceforth no more begging letters. But there was this baby! Begging letters might be burked, but this baby—what was to be done with it? He knew too well that the child had no known near relative but himself. As to its father's family, no one knew who, or what, or where they were. It was monstrous that he should be saddled with it, and yet to whom else would it fall? Thus meditating, Mr. Tuck reached his sister's house, and there had his thoughts turned for the moment into another channel. He stood transfixed in the hall of the house. It was expensively—extravagantly—furnished.

The late Mr. Guard was sumptuous as a minor who is to come into untold wealth at his majority. Being the most sanguine of men, Mr. Guard was always on the brink of coming in for untold wealth as the result of his latest speculation, and discounted the certainty. Accordingly, Mr. Tuck was transfixed at the sight of such costly old oak and old china as he would never dream of buying himself. He thought with righteous rage of the few pounds he had once or twice sent his sister—flinging them to her as sportive youth fling red-hot coppers to beggars, blistering the hands they bless. The sight of such extravagance steeled him against the pity which might otherwise have cried out "like a naked new-born babe" in his heart, as he looked down on his sister's still face. where even

death could not smooth away the lines of trouble on the brow, and of sweet endurance about the lips. She was but twenty-six, and had been married for but a short time to a husband who worshipped her; yet the misery of the money anxieties, and other troubles of her married life, made her look more than the age of her brother, who was her senior by seventeen years.

Mr. Tuck himself was so struck by the aged look in her face, that he began to fear her confinement was not the sole cause of her death. She must have been ill for years of some family complaint, perhaps. He looked at himself in the glass; he was reassured. He was bald, and wore spectacles, but otherwise he was sure he didn't look as worn as his sister. As he stood alone by the corpse of his only near relation, he felt the want of a friend to tell him candidly if he thought him looking ill and old. At this moment Dr. Grice opportunely entered.

"Mr. Tuck?" Mr. Tuck bowed. "I'm Dr. Grice."

"I have to thank you for your letter about my poor sister, Dr. Grice."

"I got your acknowledgment," said the doctor dryly.

Mr. Tuck was too much engrossed with his own distressing thoughts to notice the doctor's repelling manner.

"My sister suffered a great deal, you said, Dr. Grice?"

The doctor was surprised and encouraged by the feeling expressed in the tone of the question. He began to hope better things for the baby.

"Terribly, my dear sir, terribly. I've never seen anyone suffer so terribly, or bear it so well."

"Was there any family weakness, or consumptive tendency, or anything of that kind, doctor?" in a faltering voice.

Phew! The doctor had been too often pumped for gratuitous advice not to see the bearing of Mr. Tuck's question. Besides, he took the measure of his man in a moment.

"Do you mean did she die of anything from which you are likely to suffer?" he asked sharply.

Mr. Tuck, though taken a little aback by the tone of the question, answered:

"Well, yes, I was thinking of that, too."

"My dear sir, women of your age are past the danger," turning his back contemptuously upon the confounded Mr. Tuck, and so accenting the insult. The doctor was as caustic of tongue as he was

kind of heart. He owed Mr. Tuck a rap for his acknowledgment, which was little short of insolent, of his kindly letter, and in the reaction of his disgust at finding that Mr. Tuck's fine feeling was all for himself, he hit out harder than he meant. Certainly Mr. Tuck was an old woman, and even an old woman of the heartless species; but the doctor felt that he ought not to have told him so over the dead body of his dear friend, and probably to the prejudice of the prospects of her child. This was the extent of the doctor's remorse, awakened on his turning from Mr. Tuck, at sight of the still face which looked anxious even in death.

However, there was no way now of recalling his caustic speech, and no opportunity either, for the few friends who had been asked to the funeral began to assemble. And even Mr. Tuck forgot for the moment the doctor's revolting rudeness at sight of one of the mourners—the baby.

It is a matter almost of religion amongst the poor, to show little children the ghastly and perhaps discoloured face of a parent at the last moment before the closing of the coffin, to give them such a happy impression of the dead and of death as will last them till their own turn comes. And though the baby was too young to benefit by the rite, the nurse was not going to forego the form. Besides, the presence of the unconscious orphan would heighten the pathos of the funeral, and attract all eyes to the nurse in her new mourning. Accordingly Mrs. Kellett stalked solemnly in, and held the child over the coffin close to the face of the dead. It would have struggled out of her arms, perhaps with some vague recollection or recognition of the face which had bent over it a few days before, if the nurse had not withdrawn it, not without difficulty; for it had grasped the shroud with the spasmodic clutch of a baby—no easy thing to unclasp. Of course the child cried, and its cries affected more or less the few mourners, and Mr. Tuck not least. To have this thing in the house with him—the very thought was horrible. He glared at it through his spectacles as at a young cobra, with mingled rage and terror. Dr. Grice, quick to see and construe his emotion, promptly ordered the nurse away, and Mr. Tuck had time to regain his composure before the funeral set forth.

Upon his return from it with the doctor, however, there at the door was the irre-

pressible Mrs. Kellett with her gruesome burden. She was proud of the baby, as she was proud of her mourning, as something that set herself off to advantage, and did her credit too.

"Feel t'weight on it, sir," trying to thrust the pulpy mass into Mr. Tuck's arms almost before he had carefully gained the ground from the mourning-coach.

Mr. Tuck recoiled in disgust.

"What is it?" he asked in a tone of despair, referring to its sex.

"If it's an aance it's a stane when it's stark," answered Mrs. Kellett, referring to its weight; "eh, bless its bonny face! And it's a bit like you, too, sir," looking with her head critically on one side from the baby to its uncle.

"Ay, he's a big baby," said the doctor innocently, and as though assenting rather to the first than the last of Mrs. Kellett's remarks. It was characteristic of Mr. Tuck—the vainest of men—that he looked now with some interest into the child's face to find the likeness Mrs. Kellett discerned. He was anxious to get even a hint of Mrs. Kellett's impression of his personal appearance. But only an expert could find a decided feature in so young a baby's face, so that Mr. Tuck could not read reflected there Mrs. Kellett's opinion of his own appearance.

"Is it a boy?" he asked.

"For sewer it's a boy," as if his sex also was to her credit, "and as false as false."

This striking encomium meant merely that the child was precocious. In the West Riding, an idiot is "an innocent," and a sharp child "false." It will be seen that Mrs. Kellett was not a professional nurse; but a poor woman who had been pressed into the service on an unexpected emergency; and no one outside the West Riding can have an idea of the immense favour she conferred by her charge of the child, at exorbitant wages. Meanwhile Mr. Tuck was glaring at the baby with a mixed expression of disgust and despair.

"It has not the least claim upon me," at last he broke out with; "I can't take charge of it."

The doctor's heart was hot within him, but he kept a discreet silence. He had a suggestion to make, but this was not the moment to make it. Mr. Tuck was, as the doctor suggested, a big baby, and must run with his cut finger to the first person at hand—even if he was as unpromising a refuge as this bearish doctor. After a

pause, therefore, he turned to Dr. Grice to ask with helpless querulousness :

"How can I bring it up?"

Mrs. Kellett, not without an eye to her own interest, was ready with a suggestion, and thought this the moment to make it.

"Aw'm nowt agen takin' the pair bairn mysen, as it's an orphan and has nobbody to look till it. Aw couldn't bide its being browt up wi' bottle—aw'm sewer aw couldn't."

The wrath died out of Mr. Tuck's eye. He beamed now upon Mrs. Kellett. The good woman had shown him a happy escape out of his trouble.

But here the doctor, who had been regarding the pair with a cynical grin, blew away Mr. Tuck's castle in the air with a breath.

"How much?" he asked, turning sharply upon the beneficent Mrs. Kellett.

"A paand a week," she answered promptly, thinking herself—as indeed she always and everywhere thought herself—indispensable.

Mr. Tuck turned from her impatiently towards the doctor, whom he invited to enter the house. The doctor, however, knew better than to accept the invitation.

Mr. Tuck, who could never contain himself, had spoken, on returning from the funeral, with exceeding bitterness of Mr. Guard's extravagance as shown in the furniture of the house; therefore the doctor thought the house the worst place in the world to broach his schemes in.

"Thank you, I haven't time, Mr. Tuck. Nurse, time that child was asleep. Take it in." Exit nurse. "You were saying you didn't know what to do with the child," turning to Mr. Tuck with an exaggeration of his usual brusque manner. He didn't wish Mr. Tuck to doubt the disinterestedness of his advice.

"I don't see why I should be saddled with it at all," petulantly.

"But you are saddled with it, my dear sir—you are saddled with it. Can't send it to the workhouse, you know, or a baby-farm, or a baby-farmer, like that woman. Stay! Let me see. There's Mrs. Pybus." Here the doctor paused, plunged apparently in thought. "Yes, she's childless, and she's poor, and would take it for little—the very thing! A clergyman's wife. No baby-farm scandal. And yet she wouldn't want more than that baby-farmer, I dare say—not at first. I can spare ten minutes. Mr. Tuck, if you'd like

to see her," taking out his watch to precipitate the decision.

Here was a breathless proposal! But if Mr. Tuck hesitated he was lost. The doctor would have left him—the most helpless of grown men—alone with that baby and that nurse. The baby's fate was decided.

LIFE IN THE FOREST.*

I AM revelling in all the delights of a summer in the Californian forests—rejoicing in a climate of unvarying perfection, where each succeeding day repeats the glory of the last, and where week follows week without one rainy day. Even an occasional shower is so great a rarity as to be a marked event, and by no means welcome to the farmer whose crops are ripening on the dusty plains, yet a refreshment and a boon to the drooping flowers and to the thirsty pastures.

But these glorious forests seem to crave no such Heaven-sent showers. At noon-tide, on the brightest summer day, their shadowy depths are cool, and still, and fragrant; and rays of golden sunlight gleam through the topmost boughs of dark pines, to fall in mellow radiance on the green undergrowth of hazels and rank grasses.

To me this free life in the forest is full of delight. I generally breakfast at day-break, then start for the day, carrying luncheon and a bottle of rich, creamy milk, which I hide in some lovely nook to which I can find my way back at my leisure, and, meanwhile, go off exploring. Not, however, without keeping my eyes open, for there are a good many rattlesnakes about, and I have found myself in unpleasantly close quarters with several, especially one which was curled up under a tree where I had hidden my sketching gear. They are an ever-present reality, and we need to tread carefully, lest what appears to be only a fallen stick should prove a deadly foe. Sometimes as I sit alone sketching, I hear a slight rustle, like that of a withered leaf. It may prove to be only an innocent mouse, but sometimes it is the rattle of the hateful snake, in whose favour I must say that he invariably tries to glide away as fast as he can the moment he sees a human being.

Sometimes I arrest his flight by throwing at him a small cone or bit of gravel, taking good care never to get too near—that is to say, within springing distance. The snakes

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 32, p. 341. "The Lords of the Forest."

I see are generally about a yard in length, so they could spring about six feet. Allow eight feet for safety, and then fling the gravel. The snake instantly stops, curls himself up tight, and prepares for action, offensive and defensive. Rearing his ugly flat head to about a foot from the ground, he slowly moves it to and fro, keenly watching the movements of the enemy; and thus he remains on guard, till the foe passes on her way—at least I can answer for one who does so, for I confess that a certain latent fear combines with my natural antipathy against killing any creature larger than a cockroach, which last is a work of necessity and self-defence. So no rattle-snake has suffered at my hands.

I do think the snakes get the worst of it, for I can't hear that anyone has ever been bitten by one in this neighbourhood, whereas few days pass without several being killed by exploring parties, who bring back their rattles as trophies. The rattle varies from one to two and a half inches in length, by half an inch wide. It consists of several semi-transparent plates like bits of gristle, one of which is added every year, so that a patriarchal snake may have ten or twelve links.

I cannot understand why there should be so many more in this western part of California than in the Rocky Mountains, where one observant sportsman tells me that he has never seen any. And another who lived in the mountains for eighteen months only saw one, which had wriggled itself up to a height of ten thousand feet.

I do not scruple to confess that a dread of these noxious reptiles is the one great drawback which would to me destroy much of the pleasure of camping out, which otherwise does seem to be a very delightful form of forest life here. The people who come from the burning dusty plains, are so accustomed to snakes innumerable, that they tell us that those they find here are too few to be worth considering. And certainly, though many bring small children, who play in the grass all day long, we never hear of anyone being bitten.

I am told that it is really a safeguard to lay a rough horse-hair rope on the grass right round your tent, as the rough ends of the hair are unpleasant to the snake, which turns aside to avoid gliding over it. The precaution is sufficiently simple to be worth trying.

Early this morning, I started across a beautiful tract of forest, to see the last of

a cheery camping-party, who have for some time made their home beneath a large group of trees, on a tiny natural meadow of greenest grass, beside a sparkling stream.

I found them breaking up camp preparatory to a start for higher levels. It was a most picturesque scene. The ladies and children were busily washing up the breakfast-things, and packing the pots and pans, the kettles, knives, and forks, in great paniers, as mule burdens; while the gentlemen were taking down the tents, and packing them into the smallest possible compass. Bales of blankets and pillows were all the bedding required, and sundry necessary changes of raiment stowed away in light valises, all of which were piled on the long-suffering mules and tied on with long cords, till it became matter for wonder how any animals could possibly climb steep trails, bearing such bulky burdens. But here, as elsewhere, mules are noted for their strength and endurance, and are far more serviceable for mountain work than horses.

The mules are strong, sinewy little beasts, wonderfully sagacious as a rule, though some are obstinately stupid, and the drivers of a mule-train find that their dumb friends have individual characteristics as strongly marked as those of any human being, and many a troublesome hour they have, in persuading and guiding them in the right way. The persuasion is all of the gentlest and kindest sort, for these men are very good to their beasts in deed, though I am told that they find a safety-valve for their irritation in the tallest swearing of which the Anglo-Saxon tongue is capable.

This morning, and indeed every morning, some of the mules, which had fared sumptuously on succulent meadow grasses, objected strongly (and not without good reason) to the severe course of compression they were compelled to undergo, while bulky packs were being securely roped on their unwilling backs by the united efforts of two strong men, one on each side, with one foot firmly planted against the poor brute's ribs, while they hauled at the ropes with might and main. First of all the *aparejos*—a stuffed cover which takes the place of the old-fashioned wooden pack-saddle—had to be girthed on—"sinched" is the correct expression here—during which process the mules fidgeted and fretted, and twisted in dire discomfort; but when it came to the roping, they kicked with such

right goodwill, that two of them contrived to kick themselves free of their burdens, and indulged in a comfortable and derisive roll on the grass, while the luckless packers collected their scattered goods, and with exemplary patience recommenced their somewhat dangerous task. Luckily, experience had taught them to keep at a safe distance from what is here known as "the business end" of a mule, namely, its heels, also to possess no crockery, only tin.

At last all was safely packed, and the procession started. The last smouldering embers of the camp-fire were stamped out—a most necessary precaution, considering the terrible destruction wrought in these glorious forests by the fires so carelessly kindled, and then left unextinguished. The riding-horses were standing beneath the trees all ready saddled and bridled, and in another minute the riders were up and away, cantering cheerily along the river-bank, till they vanished among the tall cedars. Later in the day, I watched them slowly ascending a zigzag trail on a distant hillside. They moved in single file, a long line of dark atoms, suggesting a procession of ants. And to-night I know that their tents are pitched in a far-away pine-forest, and that pleasant voices are singing in chorus, as they gather round the bright log-fire. More than once to-day I have half wished that I had joined these gipsies of the Sierras.

Very pleasant companions are the busy woodpeckers, blue jays, and squirrels; the former ceaselessly at work boring holes in the pine-trees, wherein to store acorns, which shall breed worms for their winter store. The merry little squirrels are equally busy, and, whatever mischief they may do in nibbling and breaking off the young shoots of growing timber, they are at least good foresters in one respect, constantly fulfilling Sir Walter Scott's great precept to be "Aye stickin' in a tree."

They establish subterranean granaries, in which they store innumerable nuts and acorns, far more than they can possibly consume in the hardest winter; so these buried seeds spring up, and become the nurslings of the forest. Many a group of noble ilex, dotting the green foot-hills, owes its birth to these provident little folk. Well would it be for California, if her human inhabitants would give some heed to the future of her timber, instead of so ruthlessly destroying it to meet the requirements of the moment.

Among the trees which suffer most severely at their hands are the stately chestnut-oaks, the bark of which is found to be admirably adapted for tanning leather. So the beautiful growth of centuries is sacrificed to the manufacture of boots and saddles, and whole districts are denuded of their fine old trees, which are cut down wholesale, solely for the sake of their bark. This is peeled off, and the stripped trunks are left lying on the ground to rot. Already the havoc done has been so great as to presage the total destruction of one of the handsomest indigenous trees.

This sort of wasteful destruction at man's hands seems cruel, and these poor dead trees inspire one with a feeling totally different from that reverence with which one views the work of "calm decay" in the forest, where majestic trees lie prostrate, telling of some terrific tempest of perhaps several centuries ago; and where younger patriarchs have grown up around the fallen giant. One such especially rises to my thoughts. It has been fitly named Goliath. In falling it sank into the earth by its own weight, so that it lies embedded to a depth of fully four feet, and yet, as I rode alongside of it, on a full sized horse, my head did not reach half-way up the side of the tree. At a distance of one hundred and fifty feet from the root its girth is forty-five feet, so—to adopt a lumberer's style of description—it would yield a sound block of well-nigh imperishable wood, fifteen feet square by one hundred and fifty feet long!

Among the trees which have been partly hollowed by careless fires, there is one called the Pioneer's Camp, in which fifty persons can find room to sit down; and another in which sixteen horses and their riders can take shelter. And one tree has been felled—an operation which cost five woodmen twenty-five days of hard toil—and the stump has been planed at six feet from the ground; and on this novel floor thirty-two dancers, several musicians, and a certain number of spectators, found room to cluster for a quadrille-party!

Perhaps the quaintest fancy in connection with an old burnt-out tree is where the coach-road has been led right through the heart of a grand old stump, known as the Dead Giant. He had so long been used by the Indians as a camping-place and kitchen, that his inside was quite burnt out, and at last the main shaft fell, so only the huge base remains, like a strong red

tower, ninety-three feet in circumference. The woodman's saw completed the tunnel right through the burnt heart, and now the tall coach, with its mixed company from many lands, drives daily through the great tree.

But the true patriarchs of this giant race are found some way to the south, in the grand mountain region at the head of the San Joaquin Valley, where the spurs of the coast-range blend with the foot-hills of the Sierras.

Here are the finest belts of Sequoia gigantea that have yet been discovered. They are scattered over the ridges which divide the Kaweah and King's Rivers and their tributaries, the largest trees being generally found in the valleys, where the soil is moist, and at a general elevation of from six thousand to seven thousand feet above the sea-level.

The largest known specimen of the Great Tree is on King's River, about forty miles from Visalia. It is forty-four feet in diameter—a hundred and thirty-two feet in circumference! What would an English forester say to such a giant as this?

Happily for all lovers of the beautiful, the owners of saw-mills find that they cannot well "handle" these monarchs; they are not "convenient" either to saw down, or to cut up, so although the young ones are ruthlessly destroyed—or perhaps I should say utilised for timber—the big trees are mercifully spared.

Some years ago the Californian Government enacted a law forbidding the cutting down of trees over sixteen feet in diameter, but as no penalty attaches to burning these, or to cutting all smaller ones, the law is practically useless, and ruthless lumberers still set up their saw-mills on the edge of the sequoia belt, and convert all they can into timber. Only a few months ago five saw-mills reckoned that in the previous season they had cut over two million feet of big tree "lumber."

If such devastation is allowed to go on unchecked, the extermination of the species will follow pretty close on its discovery, and soon the glory of the primeval forest will be little more than a memory.

Other big tree groves have been discovered on the Tule River in the same district, which seems to have been the favoured haunt of the Gigantea.

Not only are the biggest trees found thereabouts, but also the tallest mountains. The very high region where the great San Joaquin, King's, and Kern Rivers all rise,

includes some of the grandest scenery of the Sierras, the peaks and passes being considerably higher than those farther north, while the stupendous precipices at the head of King's River can scarcely be exceeded anywhere. Some of the passes are at an altitude of upwards of twelve thousand feet, while the peaks range up to about fifteen thousand. Mount Whitney, which is probably the highest summit in the Californian Alps, is fourteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven feet.

The rise from the plain to these great mountain passes is far more rapid than to those farther north. Here the average ascent is two hundred and forty feet in the mile to a pass of twelve thousand; while in Northern California, the average rise is one hundred feet in the mile to reach passes at seven thousand.

It is a glorious region for sportsmen, as the vast tract of foot-hills extending from Visalia, on the Tulare River, to the headwaters of the Kern River—that is to say, the country where the Sierra Nevada and the coast-range meet, in Southern California, enclosing the head of the great San Joaquin Valley—is all clothed with beautiful forest and haunted by all manner of beasts—deer and antelope, cinnamon and grizzly bear, wild cat and fox, and California lion or puma, the latter a cowardly, perhaps I should rather say a sagacious, beast, which, knowing discretion to be the better part of valour, tries to hide in trees, though it really is a powerful animal, well able to damage an assailant.

Altogether, there is ample material for a very pretty mixed bag, and a wide area in which to find it, as the forest-belt extends for about a hundred and fifty miles in length by about ten in width. The scenery, too, is magnificent, ranging from lake and river in the valley to the snowy crest of the highest Sierras.

Those who do not want large sport in the forest, will find an enchanting country for camp-life in the early spring, in the beautiful park-like country in the south of the San Joaquin Valley, a natural paradise, in which human beings are as yet comparatively few, and where many wild creatures still roam about undisturbed.

But it is only in the spring-time that this region is so fascinating. Then, as if by magic, the whole country suddenly assumes a robe of vivid green, delicate as the tint of young rice-fields; but it is a robe embroidered with myriads of exquisite blossoms of every gay hue. The golden

eschscholtzia lies outspread in wide patches of glowing orange, there is profusion of scarlet and purple columbines, sweet musk, blue and scarlet pentstemons, deep blue and pure scarlet larkspurs, yellow tulips, scarlet lychnis, pale-blue nemophila, white ranunculus, and masses of lupines, of every sort and size and colour: Hardy perennial shrubs, each bush bearing thousands of spikes, blue, white, pink, pale-yellow, or orange, large, succulent, blue lupines, small lemon-coloured varieties, and dwarf lupines of every hue.

These lupines are the most abstemious of plants, and overspread the driest and most uninviting tracts of country, preparing the lightest and most sandy soil for the more exacting vegetation of the future.

Here and there are broad tracts of tall sunflowers, the gayest of the gay, and occasional patches of a dwarf variety. Near the streams, the tender blue of the myosotis mingles with the delicate yellow of the mimulus or the golden ranunculus. Bright iris-blossoms bloom among the sedges, while the scrub is all glorified by the pale blue of the ceanothus, and the large white star of the dogwood, or the lesser blossoms of clematis festooning the wild-rose bushes. Beautiful, too, are the clusters of delicate wax-like pink blossoms of the manzanita, or the white fairy-like bells of the madrona, two shrubs akin to the arbutus, but peculiar to California.

The madrona might, however, fairly object to be described as a shrub, for it attains the rank of a forest-tree, occasionally rising to a height of fifty feet, with a diameter of from six to eight feet. The bark always retains a warm chocolate colour, very pleasant among the forest greens, and in the spring-time the tree is dear to the brown honey-bees, who find stores of treasure in its countless bunches of faintly-fragrant blossom.

The madrona, like the redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), is found only in the coast-range, whereas the manzanita flourishes throughout the state.

But it were a vain task to enumerate the names of these bright Californian blossoms. Suffice it to say that in the course of the spring and summer the diligent botanist can collect upwards of six hundred different flowers.

I met a sportsman who told me of his delight, when, ten days after leaving his home in New England in the bleakest February weather, he found himself riding

over wide plains already aglow with spring blossoms, and in the month of March he was camping out in the south of the magnificent San Joaquin Valley, gorgeous with all the hues of the rainbow.

On every side he beheld vast prairies ablaze with colour; the various flowers not scattered as in European fields, but massed, so that one colour predominates, producing broad belts of blue or crimson, scarlet or gold, each extending for perhaps a square mile, like a succession of vast flower-beds, scattered over an interminable lawn of the loveliest green, which is produced by the alfylleria, the native grass of California.

Far as the eye could reach, the gorgeous carpet lay outspread, fading in the dim distance as it crept up the foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada, or the coast range, which, encompassing the great valley on the right hand and on the left, meet at its southern extremity, where the foliage is richest, and the magnificent ilex and other oaks are grouped as in a stately English park.

After riding for days, always knee-deep, sometimes breast-high, through the fragrant flower-strewn pastures, he found himself on the shores of the great Tulare Lake, which was literally alive with wild-fowl of all sorts—canvas-back ducks, and snipe by the hundred, and wild geese innumerable. Of the latter he saw one flock so vast that, as they flew they seemed to cover the heavens; the rustling sound of their wings was like the rushing of a wild, stormy wind, and their cries were deafening. As they settled down, flapping their white and grey wings in the sunlight, it seemed as if the blue lake was breaking in white foam for a distance of a couple of miles.

The tules, or reeds, from which the lake takes its name, form a capital covert for herds of wild hogs, descendants of wanderers from tame herds, but now offering fair sport.

One great advantage of this region, both for sportsmen and camping-parties, is that as yet it is very thinly peopled. The climate is perfect, for though hot, it is a dry heat, from which people suffer far less than from an average summer in the eastern states. The thermometer does sometimes rise to one hundred degrees in the shade, but is found less oppressive than ninety degrees on the east coast; and the nights are always cool. It is a good proof of a healthy climate, that all the resident women and children seem robust and rosy.

The annual supply of rain falls between November and April, and during all the

rest of the year, a shower is a rare and rather startling event, so there is no fear of chill or cold, and little camping gear is required. With dry turf for a mattress, and a wide-spreading oak for a canopy, a pair of blankets and a quilt may suffice for bedding. A camping-party would, of course, ride, and take a waggon to carry their quilts and necessary supplies.

By the latter half of March, the country is in its spring beauty, and the air is balmy and exhilarating. Excellent fishing and shooting, free to all comers, without money and without price, are to be had on the Kern River.

Till very recently the Buena Vista and Kern Lakes also yielded abundant store of large trout; and quantities of snipe, ducks, cranes, wild swans, and all manner of wild-fowl were wont to breed along the reedy shores, where beaver and otter dwelt undisturbed. But the diligent settlers have worked their irrigation and drainage works so vigorously, that both these lakes, with the marshes surrounding them, have been dried up, and the shy, wild creatures have had to seek more remote hiding-places.

Even the great Tulare Lake itself is in danger of being gradually absorbed by the numerous canals and ditches with which the whole country is now being intersected, and as water is the chief boon to be desired by all the colonists, the very existence of the lake is threatened, and the peace of its denizens is well-nigh at an end.

The lakes have, indeed, been altogether starved; the rivers, whose surplus waters hitherto fed them, having now been bridled and led away in ditches and canals to feed the great wheat-field.

For green and beautiful as this country is in the spring-time, the rainfall is so infinitesimal—in some districts not exceeding an annual average of four inches—that through the parching months of summer and autumn it is transformed into a sea of brown dust, where, except in the immediate neighbourhood of water-springs or rivers, not a blade of grass, not a flower, nor a green leaf is to be seen, only the withered skeletons of the lovely blossoms which in April and May had made this land beautiful as Eden. Too quickly their short-lived glory fades, and the plain of dust-covered, sun-dried hay is only varied by patches of tall dead sunflowers or scorched reeds, which rustle as the hot breeze passes over them. So, for the greater part of the year, it is a thirsty land indeed, but a soil so grateful for the gift of a little water, that it

straightway repays the boon by the richest of crops. So a necessary consequence of colonising this country is that every spring and stream must be treated as a feeder for innumerable canals and ducts which shall carry the blessed life-giving water in every direction.

As a matter of course, the best lands, commanding good water-springs and streams, were the very first to be taken up, and the fortunate possessors jealously guard their water-rights; nevertheless, even these find that the wide, shallow Californian rivers cannot be relied on for a permanent water-supply, as many wholly dry up in summer, so that, in common with their less fortunate neighbours, they find the question of artificial irrigation a very serious one.

In the last few years canals have been dug in all directions, and though this systematic irrigation is as yet only in its infancy, it is calculated that already upwards of three thousand miles of canal have been made in various parts of California, of width varying from five to fifty feet. Any land thus supplied rises enormously in value, and some enterprising capitalists have purchased enormous tracts of unreclaimed country, have intersected it with great ditches, fenced it in as the surest, indeed the only safeguard against the inroads of vast herds of half-wild cattle, and now offer small blocks for sale at ten pounds per acre, the purchaser paying a small annual water-rate for the use of so much water as he chooses to lead over his land from the main ditch. The price sounds high, but the returns amply repay it. This is the system on which large tracts in the Fresno country are being worked.

In other districts, as in the neighbourhood of Baker's Field on the Kern River, the lands thus prepared are offered in larger lots, on three years leases. Farms from one to six hundred acres are rented on the understanding that one-third of the crop shall be paid to the landowner, who supplies his tenants with a dwelling of some sort, abundant milk, and the use of the artesian well. Such farms are generally taken by several men working in partnership.

To those who are content to take the thirsty land as it stands, and make their own arrangements for irrigation, millions of acres are offered by Government at a low price, but it is to be feared that in many instances, the new comer may find the water question a really serious difficulty;

possession being, in such cases, something more than nine points of the law, in truth a most stubborn fact, and one which has given rise to some serious fights.

Nevertheless, it is a region which offers many advantages to such as have the energy to face the difficulties inseparable from life in a new country.

NEIGHBOURS.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

SHE sat in the shadow of one of the quaintly-coloured fishing-boats drawn up on the beach. The brilliant August sun was at its height, and its scorching rays, combined with the attractions of déjeuner à la fourchette at the little Hôtel des Roches Blanches, had carried the bustle of the morning within doors.

System and regularity were the bulwarks of St. Sulpice la Val. Everyone got up, bathed, breakfasted, exercised, dined, and retired at the same hour. The half-dozen shops, which furnished the principal streets that trickled down from the cornfields to the sea, undressed their shutters at seven in the morning, and replaced them at nine in the evening. Their occupants would then turn into the street under the swinging oil-lamp, where the diligence stopped, and, discussing the news, would catch the sea-breeze and the faint sound of the scraping fiddles from the small wooden casino on the beach. An hour later, the fiddles would be packed up, the lights extinguished, and, until cock-crow, silence would lie on St. Sulpice, except for the old sound of the sea tumbling upon the pebbly shore.

Just now—the breakfast hour—the beach was deserted. The bathers had tripped down to the sea, and again struggled up the steep beach in their dripping bathing-clothes to their cabins; the French ladies had collected their tapestry wool-work, their dogs and camp-stools, and had clicked along on their high heels, under their green-lined umbrellas, to the hotel. The small, hot, over-dressed children, too, had been trailed home by their bonnes. A long lean chef du bureau, with a picturesque sun-faded béret on his head, banged-to and locked the door of the empty office, and sauntered home, whistling an air. All was quiet.

The long shining stretch of pebbles, deserted by loungers, was gradually growing in the ebbing tide. Away in the distance, some fisherwomen were spread-

ing white linen in the sun, carefully weighting the corners with large stones. The small piece of sea visible from a seated position on the shore was an almost uniform tint of greyish blue, except where the shadow of a cloud spread a patch of purple on its surface. On the beach the blue expanse broke into a waving line of foam, while sea and sky blended in the horizon in a misty tone under a mass of tumbled, pink-flushed clouds.

Left high up on the pebbles by the fast-ebbing tide sat a solitary woman under a slanting boat. She was in no wise a remarkable object to look at, but she had the advantage at present of being both slim and young. Admirers of a Rubens-like type of beauty would doubtless have found her pale, brown, and insignificant. Such beauty as she possessed was not of the kind which attracts the usual passer-by. She was small, sedate, and rather reticent, but there was a sweet wistful expression which would come into her eyes at odd minutes, and give her face what a Scotch writer has aptly called a "lonely" look—an expression of living much of her life alone. Her temperament was indicated by her small, thin, flexible hands, which she had the nervous habit of clasping and interlacing together whenever she was moved or excited.

Dorothy Macquorn, the small piece of feminine humanity on the pebbles of St. Sulpice la Val, was an English girl—the eldest daughter of a large family. Her father was a country solicitor. She was twenty-six or seven years of age, and from the fact of having a number of pretty younger sisters, had got to look at herself in the light of a resigned, staid, almost a middle-aged person, whom it became to take life seriously. Seriously she was indeed apt to take most things, but in her conception of being resigned she deceived herself, as we mostly do in our favourite theories about ourselves. Resignation, and even contentment, however, may just as well proceed from a lack of motive power as from any special elevation of mind. The Misses Macquorn—the three younger sisters, who had in due rotation appeared at the county ball—for instance, were well-enough satisfied, on the whole, with complicated crewel-work and mild tea-drinkings, ornamented with such light scandal as obtained in the neighbourhood, to occupy the interval from Monday to Saturday. On Sunday, a day apart, they filled and overflowed with their smart

attire their family pew under the pulpit, from which vantage-ground they decorously took cognisance of the general fallibility of human nature. They were pretty, healthy girls, who took what their neighbours called "a sensible view of things." The sky-line of their ambition was bounded by any such eligible offers as might comprise a semi-detached villa, and perhaps a one-horse fly for afternoon calls.

As to Dorothy, we have said that she had got to consider herself resigned, but she was precisely one of those nervous natures of quick sympathies who are never resigned this side of the grave. She was considered a "strange girl" by the respectable dull-witted folk of Westhampton, where she lived. It was a mystery to her neighbours why she refused to go, not only to the county ball, but to the little impromptu carpet-dances and tea-drinkings that her sisters punctually attended.

"What did a young woman want," they asked, "borrowing godless and sceptical reviews from the library; and what should make any girl who had been brought up as a lady go out walking over damp fields by herself, and stopping out till it got dark?"

There were those who saw a special wantonness in this last-named habit of Dorothy's, and at more than one tea-table it was decided that it argued little for a girl's future either in this world or the next. Besides, it was well known that she had refused at least two eligible offers without any assignable cause. She was very "strange." Miss Macquorn was not a talkative girl; it is probable that she omitted to explain her views to the outraged virtue of Westhampton. It is certain that she remained an enigma to her neighbours, and what ignorant people fail to understand they generally suspect.

Dorothy was not, however, without a friend. She had a staunch ally in the wife of the doctor, whose name was Finnis. Mrs. Finnis was a brisk, energetic little woman, with quick beady eyes and smoothly braided hair, who wished, in her precise orderly fashion, to improve, not only her neighbours, but herself. She learnt Latin with her boy, who went to the grammar-school; had grappled with the German declensions along with Dorothy Macquorn; and had some years ago instituted a drawing-class in which Dorothy had proved herself by far the most efficient pupil. In this way the girl had become

initiated in some of the first technicalities of art, and by-and-by she became absorbed in this new found means of expressing herself. She had a decided talent, her master told her; unfortunately the worthy man had so little himself, as to be unable in any way to bring forward that of his young pupil. Dorothy began sketching in the open air, and forms and colours that had little to say to her before, began to yield her an unlooked-for pleasure. Here at last was a means of escape from the unimaginative well-to-do prose of an unenlightened yet sophisticated country town! She felt dimly an outlet stretching before her, which promised to satisfy the still youthful and undefinable wants of her nature. Dorothy was not without her practical side too. This talent she hoped would be the means of making money, a want at times felt keenly by the Macquorn household. She devoted her whole time to painting, and had, the spring of the year in which she found herself in Normandy, been successful in exhibiting two small pictures in a London exhibition. Poor Dorothy's delight was unbounded. She would be a professional artist, she would sell her pictures, and help her father, and her pretty sisters should have more pretty dresses to wear. One of the pictures was actually sold, and Dorothy writing a receipt for her first cheque was a small comedy in herself.

On the proceeds of this picture she managed to join Mrs. Finnis at St. Sulpice la Val, where she proposed to find all sorts of subjects for forthcoming paintings. Dorothy was not sorry to find the hotel full. The circumstance enabled her to take two small, clean rooms in a picturesque cottage not more than a couple of hundred yards distant. This arrangement gave her absolute freedom of movement, and a small spice of adventure to her first essay abroad.

She had a passion for independence, this pale fragile girl; it was, as it were, a protest of will against her feminine weakness, a sort of assertion of her moral over her physical nature.

It was, therefore, with more than ordinary enthusiasm that she set up her easel, and proceeded to attack the salient points of St. Sulpice.

There was a picturesqueness about the whole thing that delighted the retrograde of Westhampton. Existence was no longer a perplexing and rather dreary fact. On the contrary, it was full of blue skies, of

orchard gardens, and sunny by-paths, where the grave and simple fisher-folk had strong, lithe limbs, and eyes the colour of the sea. To breakfast at an early hour off rolls and milk in the small, red-tiled kitchen; to watch the fishermen troop by to their boats; to see the golden nasturtiums in the garden nod in the faint sea-breeze; and to feel the slanting morning sun creep in at the open cottage door, all these things seemed to charm the something rebellious in Dorothy's nature. She had nice perceptions to adjust to that side of things which lifts at times even the dull-witted out of prose. She had, however, hardly been in this new paradise a fortnight when the light began to change. Happiness, we are often reminded, is a state of mind rather than the result of any particular set of circumstances or surroundings, and a lady's state of mind will not always remain the same for a fortnight—even in a Normandy fishing village.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW days after Dorothy's instalment in St. Sulpice, she noticed the advent of a small, rather battered portmanteau, a knapsack, and a large folding-chair. The effects were brought by the porter of the *Hôtel des Roches Blanches*, and deposited next door. There was evidently a new arrival. The hotel was full, and in such cases visitors were quartered on the village. Dorothy was sitting at her cottage window on a little wooden bench among the nasturtiums, and, with the curiosity bred of small places, began wondering who the new visitor might be.

She was destined to satisfy her curiosity on the same evening.

Nine o'clock was generally the liveliest hour of the twenty-four in St. Sulpice. The sunset tints had faded on this hot August evening, and although the moon had not yet risen, the brave show of gas-lamps in the little casino made a formidable glitter to the unaccustomed eye. There was dancing in the large salon that night, so that the music of the valse à trois temps smote the ear of those more fastidious visitors, who preferred to sit outside and listen to the music of the sea. Farther off, from the other end of the casino, came now and then the click of billiard-balls, and from the small marble tables outside, the occasional cry for drinks in broken French, which were always answered mysteriously from within in broken English. Nearer the ball-room there were the rustling

of silk dresses and the flutter of fans. Groups of stout French ladies, whose dancing days were over, sat with their acquaintances discussing the latest scandal in the *Figaro*, while promenaders, traceable in the darkest corners by their cigar-ends, paced the small terrace overlooking the sea.

Near here Dorothy Macquorn was sitting, with her friend Mrs. Finnis. Dorothy had just made an excursion with the Finnis children to the beach to see the phosphoric light, which was unusually bright on this warm, still evening.

"I forgot to tell you that an old friend of my husband's has just turned up," said Mrs. Finnis when she had sent her children home to bed. "His name is Neeld—Hawley Neeld; we have been having quite a long chat."

"Yes," said Dorothy, evincing about the usual amount of interest that people take in their friends' friends, while her eye travelled along the terrace in the direction of a slim lady's figure, seated under a gas-lamp. The lady was talking to a man who lounged against the wooden balustrade, and even at the distance from which she sat from Dorothy, gave evidence of having a charming profile, the latest fashion in Parisian hats, and remarkable self-possession of manner. It has been already said that Dorothy had a passion for independence, and there was a charming air of independence in the very way in which this young lady used her huge black fan.

"Why, I declare, there is Mr. Neeld," said Mrs. Finnis, as her small, quickly-moving eyes turned in the same direction; "he's talking, and making himself very agreeable, as I can see, to the American heiress. I remember he was always a ridiculous slave to a pretty face."

"Do you know him well?" asked Dorothy, suddenly evincing an interest in Mrs. Finnis's friend.

"Well, yes—and no," returned the elder lady; "the fact is, my husband and he went to school at Lausanne together, and although they have only seen each other at rare intervals, have kept up quite a warm feeling of friendship. My husband has the highest opinion of him, and still thinks he will astonish the world in some way or other; but the fact is, Mr. Neeld's small fortune has been his curse. If he had had to earn his own living he would have made a name; but he came into his elder brother's property some time ago, and the

result has been that he has all but been scalped by the Red Indians, has tried to break his neck on the Matterhorn, and been shipwrecked off the Cape of Good Hope."

"What adventures!" exclaimed Dorothy, who, as usual, was an excellent listener.

"Well, there are all sorts of ways of amusing oneself," returned the other, "and being scalped and shipwrecked seem to be rather favourite ones just now; but I think I could do something better with my money than that."

"Your friend only proposes to amuse himself!" the girl asked in a slightly disappointed tone, while she still watched the two figures in the distance.

"Oh, my dear, he's the queerest creature," laughed Mrs. Finnis. "Look at him now, you'd think he'd never been out of an armchair, and lived through the winter with his slippers on the fender. I believe there never was such a man for work, if the fit takes him. He's gone in for fossils the last few years, and he works, like a galley-slave, with a pickaxe for weeks together on the south-west coast of England. Then his knowledge of art is something wonderful, my dear. We met him when we were travelling in Italy three years ago, and, when I could manage to draw him out, I assure you he knew more than half the books on art that you can get at in twelve months."

"Quite a paragon!" laughed Dorothy, who began to wonder how like this man might be to his picture.

"A paragon! no," said Mrs. Finnis, and then she heaved a small sigh.

It will be observed that this excellent lady was an optimist of the most sanguine description. She had, moreover, reached that safe, middle-aged stage of optimism which does not ask an uncomfortable amount of poor humanity, but she nevertheless sighed.

"Why, what's the matter with him?" asked Miss Macquorn, amused at this new turn.

"That's what's the matter. It's always that," nodded Mrs. Finnis significantly in the direction of the two figures.

The young American girl had risen, and dropping her fan with an air of studied fatigue, submitted herself to be wrapped in a soft white shawl that had hitherto hung on Mr. Neeld's arm. He bent over her as he swathed her slight figure in the clinging material, and finally catching up one end, threw it gracefully over her left

shoulder. He then stepped back a pace or two to survey the effect of his handiwork, while the girl, throwing back her well-poised head, laughed a little, short, matter-of-fact laugh. The performance was evidently new to neither of them.

"After all, it appears that Mr. Neeld has a number of ways of amusing himself," said Dorothy, turning to her friend.

"Apparently," returned the other rather severely, as she rose and hooked her own mantle round her neck. Then she added with one of those turns that proved her to be rather too keen an observer for an enthusiast: "My dear, it's a thousand pities when a man knows how to put shawls on as well as that."

As they made their way out of the casino through the groups of people who were by this time saying good-night to each other, Dorothy heard a man's pleasant voice behind her say:

"But, my dear young lady, I don't see your mother."

And then a feminine rejoinder:

"Oh, won't she be real mad——"

The rest of the conversation was lost in the din of voices, but Dorothy saw the gleam of a white shawl.

About a hundred yards from the casino they were overtaken by Mr. Neeld. This time he was alone, and professed to have been looking for Mrs. Finnis. He had evidently hurried after them.

"I met some American friends of mine who are staying here," he explained to Mrs. Finnis, "and we had all sorts of yarns to tell each other. But I caught sight of you just now at the gate, and I thought you might want me to show you the way home."

"Although you only arrived three hours ago?" asked Mrs. Finnis, laughing. She seemed quite to have forgotten her severity now.

"Oh, I've got round the geography of this place, I assure you," he returned gravely. "I've quite a remarkable talent that way; but then, to be sure," he added dryly, "one is helped here by the circumstance of there being only one street——"

"Now don't take away the character of St. Sulpice," interrupted the lady; "there are at least six streets, and we are going up this one, for my friend Miss Macquorn is lodging in the cottage just beyond the baker's. By-the-bye, Dorothy, I didn't introduce Mr. Neeld to you," she went on,

and then she said formally: "Mr. Neeld—Miss Macquorn."

And then the two strangers bowed across the energetic little lady in the moonlight.

In the meantime they reached Dorothy's cottage-door, and the two ladies began bidding each other good-night. Mr. Neeld, with more than a man's ordinary tact, stepped back and looked up at the moon which had now risen over the high downs. Presently his eye dropped to the cottages, and then he whistled softly to himself.

"By Jove! Mrs. Finnis, do you know I believe I live here? There's my chair in the garden, so I expect that's where I belong."

"If that's the case, we've seen you home," laughed Mrs. Finnis; "and just fancy, you and Miss Macquorn are neighbours!"

"I hope you don't mind, Miss Macquorn?" said Mr. Neeld humbly, as the girl held out her hand.

"Being neighbours? I don't think I mind," she stammered with an unaccountably shy feeling.

There was something decidedly new to her in this tall stranger's direct glance and large hand-clasp. His humility she felt was of the kind that is no humility at all.

A few minutes after, as she climbed the steep wooden staircase to her bedroom, she fell to wondering if Mr. Neeld shook hands with every lady in just that way. Then she set her candle down on the chest of drawers, and sat looking at the palm of her right hand. Just now it had felt so strange. Perhaps to investigate farther into this matter she went to the window, and cautiously lifted the blind so as to see out into the garden. When her eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, she saw in the roadway a dark object in connection with a small red light, which might have been the end of a cigar. Apparently satisfied with this investigation she as cautiously dropped the blind, and again sat down on the chair from which she had risen.

It was impossible to say how long her thoughts would have run in the same channel had not the recollection of a charming profile and a French hat crossed her mind. She jumped up and began taking off her things.

"I wonder what 'won't she be real mad' means?" thought Dorothy as she blew out the light.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

DURHAM.

AMONG the counties of England, Durham stands alone in origin and history. Other counties preserve in rough outline the ancient boundaries of race or civil government; but in Durham we have the bishop's shire, a diocese made into a county, with the bishop paramount in all things. The whole district, carved out of ancient Northumbria, may be called the patrimony of St. Cuthbert, of the grand old Saxon saint, who far from aspiring to such dominion, deemed that even barren Lindisfarn was too populous and luxurious an abode.

When the heathen Danes destroyed the religious settlements on the sacred isle of Lindisfarn, the mortal relics of St. Cuthbert were carried here and there for safety.

*And after many wanderings past
He chose his lordly seat at last
Where his cathedral huge and vast
Looks down upon the Wear.*

And with the relics of St. Cuthbert the veneration of the Northumbrians for Lindisfarn was transferred to Durham. By degrees the new settlement was acknowledged as supreme over all the country round. Grants from kings and thanes confirmed the authority of the bishop: the authority of a popular chief as well as of a spiritual ruler. At once temple and fortress, Durham became the city of refuge, as well as the great centre of pilgrimage for the country round. To attract and reward the pilgrims for their devotion, relics were gathered up and appropriated from every side—all appealing to the national pride, and stimulating the faith of the Anglo-Saxon race. There was the rich shrine of St. Cuthbert, whose body, according to popular faith, rested within, whole and uncorrupt, awaiting the final trump of doom; there also was the head of the chaste King Oswald, the lion of the Angles; there were the bones of Baeda, the venerable, brought from Jarrow; with many other relics of saints and martyrs. Enthusiasts compared this hill city to Mount Zion, and, indeed, national and religious feeling invested the place with such veneration and affection as the Jews of old may have felt for their sacred city.

A noble site truly is that of Durham, upon its bold rocky promontory, enfolded by the winding river, the towers of the

cathedral dominating the landscape; a scene of beauty and grandeur, enriched by luxuriant foliage and hanging gardens that clothe the mount down to the water's edge. It is a site well worthy of a modern pilgrimage, charming in itself and full of interest from its associations, from its history of battle and siege, of magnificent prince-bishops, and of priors only second to these in dignity. All that is peculiar and characteristic about the county seems to centre in the city and its surroundings. In the busy hives of industry upon the Tyne, the seaports on the coast, the industrial towns that line the banks of Tees—in all these the rush and crush of modern life seem to have overborne and overwhelmed all the relics of the past. But Durham remains intact, a scene of quiet dignified clerical and provincial life; and its noble cathedral, with its gradations of style and successive additions and accretions, is a history in itself of the old times before us, and in its cloistered tranquility recalls the centuries that have passed over its head as a tale that is told.

Long before the present ancient minster rose from its foundations there existed on the site a church dedicated to St. Cuthbert—originally, no doubt, something in wattle and mud—and the immediate predecessor of the present cathedral, built and consecrated shortly before the Conquest, was a narrow, gloomy pile more like a tomb than a temple. Then, as now, the castle—in those days a mere earthwork, fenced with a wooden stockade—stood close by the church, and the whole was enclosed with a rude wall, and formed what was known as the Haliwerk or Holy Castle, whence the people of Durham were long called the Haliwerk folk.

Such was the aspect of the place when Robert Comyn took possession of the castle with seven hundred Norman knights and men-at-arms, in token of the subjection of the land to King William. Upon this the smothered resentment of the people burst into flame. The Haliwerk had been taken from them, the sanctuary profaned by the hated foreigners; and soon the fighting men of the district were in angry swarm, and on some provocation given, Comyn and his men were slaughtered every one. Then William himself came northwards on his mission of destruction. But although the whole country round was laid waste, it seems that William spared the city itself and those belonging to it. Cuthbert himself, it was said, appeared to the Conqueror

in a warning vision, and William, who had a fine vein of superstition in his iron soul, may well have been overawed by the reputation of the saint. Cuthbert's relics were brought back from Lindisfarn, where they had been concealed by the frightened monks, and things went on as before. But the bishop, who had been implicated in the rising, fled to the camp of refuge in the Isle of Ely, where Hereward and a handful of the noblest of Saxons were holding out against the Conqueror. The bishop was soon betrayed into the Conqueror's hands, and died in prison not long after. And then William sent one Walcher, from Lorraine, to take possession of the diocese. But before long, in a popular tumult caused by the murder of Lyulph, a noble Saxon, the new bishop was slain, to the cry: "Short rede, good rede, alea ye the Bishoppa." To avenge this crime a brother bishop, fierce Odo of Bayeux, came to Durham and pillaged the city. And henceforth the Norman bishops ruled the diocese in peace.

The bishops of the new race were great church builders, and soon the narrow, gloomy basilica of St. Cuthbert gave place to a building on which all the skill and art of the day were lavished. William de Carelepho laid the foundations of the present building A.D. 1093, and his successor, Ralph Flambard, to whom Christchurch in Hampshire owes its fine minster church, continued the great work. In the twelfth century Bishop Pudsey built the fine Galilee porch, a work almost unique in character, projecting from the west front of the cathedral—an ante-chapel rather than a porch. According to monkish tradition, the Galilee owes its origin and position to the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the patron saint of the minster. The saint is reputed to have felt, or, at all events, to have professed, a great antipathy to the female sex, and to have carried this animosity beyond the tomb. Later on he is said to have chased King Edward's queen, Philippa, from the priory where she was sleeping, the queen making her escape in attire as light and simple as that assumed by the citizens of Calais when they surrendered their city to King Edward. Other stories are in existence which illustrate the peculiar churlishness attributed to the saint—a churlishness which after all, perhaps, was invented, post mortem, to account for some ancient superstition clinging to the site of the cathedral. But, anyhow, no woman was allowed to visit St. Cuthbert's shrine or to pass beyond a certain point in the

nave of the cathedral. And it is related that certain women, having determined, with quite natural curiosity, to have a look at the shrine, "exalted with the most curious workmanship of fine and costly green marble all limned and gilt with gold," dressed themselves up in men's attire, but were detected by the vigilant saint and turned back in disgrace.

With these peculiar feelings it was quite natural that the saint should strongly object to a lady-chapel, projected by Bishop Pudsey in the first instance—a chapel to be built beyond the existing choir, according to the then prevalent architectural fashion, and to be dedicated to the Virgin, from which chapel it would be out of all character to exclude the sex. Thus, when the builders attempted to excavate the foundations of the proposed building, the solid rock began to crack and split in all directions, no doubt owing to the machinations of the unruly saint. The work was abandoned in haste, and the present Galilee chapel or porch commenced instead, where women could perform their devotions without actually penetrating into the interior of the minster. But why this porch or chapel should be called Galilee has long exercised the minds of archæologists—the most generally received explanation being that the women who worshipped there were considered in some way inferior, as were the Galileans among the Jews. But more probably the real explanation is to be sought in an ancient rite, completely lost sight of in England since the Reformation, but preserved to memory in the records of the diocese of Rouen, which, in Bishop Pudsey's time, was intimately connected with the English Church. In the fabric rolls of Rouen Cathedral, a certain ancient balustrade over the porch is called "*Galerie du viri Galilæi*." And looking a little farther into the matter we find that it was the custom on Ascension Day to illustrate the event commemorated on that day in a vivid, realistic manner. A procession was formed through the streets which eventually massed itself about the western porch, where the market-place in front and all the windows round would be filled with spectators. Then two canons or choristers, representing the two men in white garments of the sacred story, ascended to the gallery and addressed the gazing crowd in the canticle: "*Viri Galilæi quid statis aspicientes in cælum?*"—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Now in all probability

a similar custom at Durham gave a name to the porch, from the roof of which this ancient mystery was enacted.

Another ancient custom—an open-air celebration, consisting of the singing of *Te Deum* from the central tower of the cathedral—was continued, with a short interruption during the Commonwealth, almost to the present day, and its origin maybe thus briefly told. It was in A.D. 1346, when that noble prince, Edward the Third, was making war in France, and making war to some purpose; for the battle of Crécy had just been fought and won. The news of the battle had not reached the north country, however, where all was confusion and dismay. For David of Scotland, urged to make a diversion in favour of France, had come over the borders with a large army, of sixty thousand men, say the chroniclers, and was laying waste the country. Presently the hardy Scotch horsemen were swarming about Durham, and the Scotch king sat down before the place to besiege it. The Haliwerk was now in imminent danger; with no relief to be looked for from the south, the king being away and all the best of his fighting-men. To the flower of Scotland, and to an army flushed with triumph, could only be opposed the hastily raised country levies commanded by the knights and squires of the district. But the English were united by a strong, stern purpose, to save their pleasant land and the fair shrine of St. Cuthbert, with their wives and children, and all who had fled to the hill city for safety from the cruel mercies of the Scots. And so with the Haliwerk folk mustered all the stout men of the country round; the men from Teesdale and Weardale, from Raby and Lumley, and Brancepeth, with the barons and knights who led the musters; and at the head of them all was holy St. Cuthbert's banner, the blessed Corporax cloth with which the saint himself had served mass.

The Scotch, always ready for fighting, struck tents and came out to the battlefield, then called Redhills, but known now as Neville's Cross, from a cross erected by Lord Ralph Neville, one of the heroes of the fight, a broken shaft of which still remains to mark the site of the battle. The ground is hilly and broken, rising gradually from the river, and well in sight of the minster towers. Close by the battlefield, upon a small mound or hillock called Maidens' Bower, the monks took their stand in full view of the fight, while

St. Cuthbert's banner, floating in the air, now rose, now fell, with the varying fortunes of the day. From the highest tower of the minster a group of priests and monks held their comrades in view, and gave news of the progress of the battle to the anxious crowd below: women, children, old men past fighting, whose fate hung upon the issue of the day. For long that issue was doubtful, but at last the banner of St. Cuthbert was seen to be waved in triumph. The Scots were flying in all directions, their king himself was a captive. And then from the lofty minster tower rose the song of triumph and praise, the Te Deum chanted with all the fervour of proud and thankful hearts, the whole city joining in the hymn of victory. And for nigh five hundred years, on the anniversary of this deliverance, the song of triumph was repeated; long after Cuthbert's shrine had been despoiled, and a race of Scotch kings had come and gone, and victories by land and sea had obscured the memory of this ancient triumph.

Perhaps it was natural that the dignitaries of Durham should cling tenaciously to old customs, seeing that they brought such wealth and privilege in their train. The Prince-Bishop of Durham long held a position that was without equal in the realm. In his own county he was supreme. The king's writs did not run there, nor could the king's judges sit in judgment. All the royal prerogatives of justice and mercy lay with the bishop. The barons of the county were the bishop's men, and he had his own courts of exchequer and of chancery. Except for the earldoms of Chester and Lancaster—titles that were practically appanages of the royal line—the power of the bishop had no counterpart in the kingdom. But England was not big enough to hold petty princes, and the Crown had become overwhelmingly powerful when Henry the Eighth, soon after the Pilgrimage of Grace, abolished the chief powers of the bishop's jurisdiction with a stroke of the pen. Such privileges as the bishop retained were chiefly of the ceremonial and judicial order. He was perpetual justice of the peace and perpetual chancellor. He might take his seat on the bench with the king's judges, and even remain there in his purple robes while sentence of death was passed, although the canons of the Church forbade the presence of one in holy orders on such occasions. At the present time, however, when all

the vast estates of the bishopric are vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Bishop of Durham has little to show for his ancient rights and privileges, except his precedence over other bishops and a larger income than the usual episcopal stipend.

But among the advantages which make the present lot of the Bishop of Durham endurable must be counted his fine old palace at Bishop Auckland—a palace built by Bishop Cosins, in the seventeenth century, on the site of the ancient palace of Anthony Bec. The noble park about it, with its fine timber—the name of Auckland signifies Oakland—with the river Gaunless winding through, shows many charming vistas of wood and water, and a sweet landscape beyond. Originally, doubtless, vigorous Bishop Bec chose the seat from its position upon the Roman road, old Watling Street, which afforded easy access to the chief strongholds in the county, while the Roman station close by offered a convenient choice of building materials.

Right through the county runs Roman Watling Street, crossing the Tyne at Piercebridge, where an ancient three-arched bridge possibly stands on Roman foundations. Thence the road ran on a bee-line past Bishop Auckland, and crossed the river near Binchester—another ancient bridge of the fourteenth century at Newton Cap again suggesting an earlier Roman bridge on the site. Near Binchester a cross-road, presently to be noticed, forms a junction. Of the Roman station at Binchester—thanks, no doubt, to Bishop Bec and the palace-builders—there are few traces left, but stray altars and sculptured stones found upon the site are to be met with in museums and private collections. One of the votive altars, dedicated by the tribune of a cohort to several deities, is frankly owned to be put up for "good luck," and we feel a kind of sympathy for this shadowy tribune, who, perhaps, had seen many luckier fellows promoted over his head. A story, too, is told by a recent wanderer of a farmer's wife, not long ago, who had appropriated one of these sculptured stones for a cheese-press, without noticing the figure upon it, which, when pointed out to her, "Get out, you nasty thing!" she cried, throwing it out of doors; "ye have brought me naught but ill-luck with my cheese." A story which shows that the belief in good and ill luck is as powerful now as fourteen centuries ago.

But while the station at Binchester is hardly recognisable, the next station on the Roman itinerary at Lanchester shows extensive remains of walls and earthworks, and this, although the village church and many neighbouring houses seem to have been built from the materials there found. From Lanchester, Watling Street ran directly north to Ebchester, where it crossed the river Derwent, which forms the boundary of the county.

Another line of Roman communication is worth notice, not so much in itself, for it is well-nigh obliterated, as for the numerous feudal castles and stately seats to be found upon it. The natural impulse of our Teutonic forefathers when they came across a good road was to build a dwelling upon it and to prevent anybody else from passing. Hence the numerous parks and seats which in all parts of the country cluster upon Roman roads, Watling Street being perhaps an exception, as one of the three great roads of the kingdom always kept up as public highways.

To return to our line of march, which enters the county at Barnard Castle—the castle built by Barnard Baliol on a fine romantic site upon the river Tees. Barnard was the grandfather of John Baliol, the sometime King of Scotland, of a family originally from Bailleul, in High Normandy—an unfortunate family which risked its broad English lands to grasp at the prickly crown of Scotland, and finally lost both lands and crown together. When Edward the First confiscated John Baliol's possessions he gave Barnard Castle to Guy, Earl of Warwick, and with the earldom of Warwick it remained for many generations, and came at last to Richard Crookback, in right of his wife, the daughter of the King-maker. From the Crown, the castle passed by sale to the ancestor of its present possessor, the Duke of Cleveland. The ruins of the castle stand on a noble rock eighty feet above the bed of the river Tees, which foams below over a rocky bed of limestone and grey marble, Baliol's mighty tower dominating the whole.

High crowned he sits in dawning pale,
The sovereign of the lovely dale.

From Barnard Castle a walk of a few miles brings us to Streatlam Castle, dating from the fourteenth century, but a good deal modernised. This was the chief seat of the Bowes family, who rose to great fortune in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when Sir George Bowes became the champion of the Crown against the rebel lords.

Many interesting documents relating to this rebellion of 1509 are stored in the muniment-room of the castle. From that time the Bowes family added estate to estate and castle to castle; but much of their property passed, in the eighteenth century, by marriage, to the Earls of Strathmore.

Next on the line of march is Raby, one of the finest of the old feudal mansions that are still going concerns, with their ancient walls and towers standing, and surrounded by lands that still own their sway. Raby was once the great seat of the Nevilles—those Nevilles who bore a galley as their cognizance—a family whose honours culminated in the Earl of Westmoreland and Richmond, of the days of Agincourt, the Cousin Westmoreland of Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth, who wanted more men from England—a family that came to ruin in Queen Elizabeth's time, when Percys and Nevilles took up arms for the ancient Church in that rising in the North which is described in Wordsworth's *White Doe of Rylstone*. The last of the Nevilles died in exile and penury, and the vast possessions of the family fell to the Crown, and Raby was left to desolation, where once

Seven hundred knights, retainers all
Of Neville, at their master's call
Had sat together in Raby Hall.

The huge kitchen still remains, with its enormous hearth, in evidence of the truth of this account. But its hospitable days ended with the Nevilles. The Vanes got Raby in the reign of James the First, for an old song, representing it as a mere stone-heap. And here lived the Sir Harry Vane so obnoxious to Cromwell—"the Lord deliver us from Sir Harry Vane"—but still more obnoxious to the Royalists, and who was one of the few victims of the Restoration. Sir Harry's son, however, inherited the castle, and was raised to the peerage by William the Third as Baron Barnard. Lord Barnard stripped and dismantled Raby out of spite to his son, instigated, it is said, by his wife, a woman, according to popular tradition, of a very fiendish temper. The unnatural mother is said still to haunt the castle, and may be met with on the battlements at night, busily engrossed with her knitting, which she manipulates with a pair of brass knitting-needles. The Vanes are now represented by the Duke of Cleveland.

Keeping to this same line of road, and passing Bishop Auckland, already noticed,

we come to Brancepeth, another ancient seat of the Nevilles.

Now joy for you and sudden cheer,
Ye watchmen upon Brancepeth Towers.

But the towers are now levelled, and only a few fragments remain of the home of the Nevilles, set in the modern buildings.

Beyond Durham, at some little distance to the right of our line of road, lies Cocken Hall, beautifully situated in a romantic glen, almost encircled by the river Wear, but now well smoked by the great Cocken Colliery; and then we come to Chester-le-Street, with the great houses of Lumley and Lambton close at hand. Lumley is especially interesting as the seat of a family which has been of mark in the district from days before the Conquest; the Lumleys claiming descent from Lyulph, for whose sake Bishop Walcher was slain, and from the Saxon earl, Uchtred.

Then there is Lambton close by, whose very name suggests coal. In 1854 the stately mansion was well-nigh swallowed up, not by an earthquake, but by subsidence into a worked-out and forgotten coal-mine. The house has been since almost rebuilt, and the coal-mine bricked up with the expenditure of ten million bricks, a sort of subterranean pyramid that may puzzle the archeologists of the Antipodes when our day is gone by.

Lambton is the scene of one of those worm or dragon stories, of which we had example at Bamborough. Only this time the dragon was no enchanted princess to be restored with a kiss, but a real, noxious, fighting "varmint" with which no truce could be held. As fast as the valiant knight of Lambton cut it to pieces, the worm reunited, and the knight only prevailed by taking the advice of a wise woman, and clothing himself in armour edged with razor-blades. Then the knight took his stand on a rock in the River Wear, the dragon's favourite haunt, and awaited events. The worm attacked and entwined the knight furiously, but was cut to pieces by the razor-blades, and the fragments falling into the river were carried away beyond any possibility of reunion. To this story is joined another ancient piece of folk-lore. The wise woman claimed as her reward the first object the knight might meet on his return, which proved to be his own son. And this son could only be redeemed by all the subsequent and unborn generations having their lives shortened a piece, while it was decreed that no chief of the house should die in his bed for seven, or

some say nine, generations. The curious part of the story is, that the family has ever since been a short-lived one, and that so recently as the last century a certain General Lambton, who had made up his mind to die quietly in his bed, was obliged to hide a stout cudgel under his mattress, lest, when his last moments approached, his servants should drag him out of bed in their zeal for the fulfilment of the family prophecy.

To the left of our line of route, not far from Gateshead, lies Ravensworth Castle, the seat of the baron of that ilk, a fine modern building that retains two towers of the ancient castle. And in the neighbourhood is Gibside, connected with the strange history of the heiress of the Bowes family, widow of the Earl of Strathmore, who bestowed her hand in second nuptials upon one Stoney Robinson, a reckless adventurer, who plundered and maltreated the poor lady most wickedly. Many of the incidents in Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon* are drawn from the veritable history of this unhappy couple.

A good deal to the right of our line, not far from Monk Wearmouth, lies Hylton Castle, once the seat of the ancient family of that name, a knightly, warlike race that fought in all the battles of mediæval times, but which died out in a stagnant manner at last. The ruin of the family was achieved by one of its members in the seventeenth century, who, taking offence with his relations in general, retired to live in obscurity at Billingham in Sussex, and finally bequeathed all his property, for a term of ninety-nine years, to the Corporation of London. Endless litigation followed, and what the lawyers spared was wasted in the Civil Wars; and it is said that the last of the Hyltons died, a small shopkeeper, at Gateshead. The castle is rich in antiquities, and is haunted by its own familiar spirit—the cauld lad of Hylton, a being of the brownie species. The story goes that, scandalised at the lightness of attire in which the brownie was accustomed to make his appearance, the servants of the house combined to make him a suit of clothes, upon seeing which, he exclaimed:

Here's a cloak and there's a hood,
The cauld lad o' Hilton will do no mair good,
and forthwith disappeared. But, according to the belief in the neighbourhood, the clothes have long since been worn out, and the brownie has returned to look for a new suit. On the decay of the Hyltons the estate was bought by the Bowes family, to whom the brownie has transferred his homage.

There are certain places which should be arranged in a category to themselves; highly interesting from history and associations, they have become so much altered and transformed, that people should carefully avoid visiting them, the disenchantment is so great. Among these is Jarrow, the once tranquil retreat of the father of English history, a spot endeared to every student of the national literature, but now lying in a caldron of smoke and turmoil in the grimeiest part of the coal district, among the ballast-hills and ship-building yards of the Tynes. Still, there is an interesting Norman church, and some remains of conventional buildings—though nothing so early as Baeda's time, probably; since when, indeed, the monastery was burnt and plundered by the Danes—and in the vestry of the church is an ancient relic known as Baeda's chair, which seems to have survived these conflagrations.

In the same category, too, is Monk Wearmouth, the site of one of the earliest religious settlements on the coast. In 674 Bishop Benedict built the abbey church, and dedicated it to St. Peter, bringing over artificers from the Continent to build it after the Roman fashion, and filling the windows with glass—then an almost unheard-of refinement of luxury. The present ancient church of St. Peter's probably contains some fragments of the early Saxon minster. But it is best to read of the glories of the place in some old folio, and to leave the rest to the imagination.

The Bishop's county, indeed, has been invaded and annexed on every side; the miners and pitmen have turned many fair scenes into dreary wastes, while the wealth and luxury they have created with their roots in all this grime and toil, expand their flowers and fragrance in London, Paris, or Rome. And all this gives to the chronicles of the county a somewhat melancholy and retrospective flavour:

The days of mirth and peace are fled,
Youth's golden locks to silver turn;
Each northern floweret droops its head,
By Marwood Chase and Langley Burn.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXL A PLEASANT EVENING.

"I HATE recitations, don't you?" Effie said, shrugging her shoulders disapprovingly, as she saw the crowd swaying in the direction of the large drawing-room, from

the end of which the talented American actor was going to declaim to a delighted audience. "Come with me, Jenifer, into the ante-room or somewhere away from this herd. I've hundreds of things to say to you."

"I do like recitations, and the hundreds of things could have been said before, and can wait now," Jenifer replied.

"No, that's just what they can't do; and don't be huffy about my not having been over to see you yet. I literally haven't lived a moment's time to myself since I left Moor Royal, and I have been more worried in these weeks than in all my life put together before I married."

"What has worried you? Is Mr. Jervoise worse?" Jenifer asked, allowing herself to be drawn aside by the absorbing Effie in spite of her desire to hear the recitation.

"Oh no, old Jervoise keeps about the same; it wouldn't worry me very much if he were worse, to tell the truth; he's no pleasure to himself, and he's the reverse of one to Flora and everybody else. Flora's as good and kind as she can be; if it weren't for her I should never have a penny in my pocket. It's dreadful for poor Hugh to be so short of money. Of course if we hadn't been driven out from Moor Royal we could have gone on living quietly there, making very little ready money do, till things arranged themselves; but, as it is, we have been driven out by Jack's marriage and other things, and the end of it is that we can hardly pay our way from day to day, and are getting fearfully in debt besides. I never heard of a girl being so badly treated altogether as I've been. And Hugh's family don't help him at all. All the help we get comes from my side of the house."

Jenifer winced under these words. Keenly as she felt the injustice of them, there was in them just enough surface truth to hurt her sharply. On the face of it, there was a certain amount of hardship in Effie's being so soon deprived of the home for which she had married. That she had been so deprived was partly her husband's fault, and partly her own. Nevertheless it was hard.

"I'm afraid Hubert's side of the house is in rather a pitiful plight, Effie; my poor mother has so little for herself that she can't help her sons."

"And your singing-lessons cost a good deal, don't they?" asked Effie reproachfully.

"They do." Jenifer spoke curtly, for

she had no desire to enter into the subject, and to reveal to Mrs. Hubert Ray that she paid for her singing-lessons out of the money she had saved during her father's life.

"When are you going to begin to make money by your singing?" Effie went on in her graceful, ruthless, unconcerned way. "Lessons are all very well, but if you don't utilise the lessons they're no real good, are they? If Mrs. Campbell would only ask you to sing to-night, the right people would hear you, and it would be all ever so much easier for you when you do come out. If you had come with me instead of with that person who blundered the minute she came in, I could have arranged with Bell Campbell that you should be asked to sing. It's such an opportunity lost. But, as I was saying to Hugh to-day, the Rays have the knack of doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. Isn't it dreadful—awful—for me, a married woman, to have to go to my sister for every penny I spend?"

"I didn't know things were so bad with Hubert," Jenifer said.

"You didn't know! How should you know, when you've gone off and never taken the trouble to enquire? Bad with Hubert! I should rather think they were bad! It makes me quite ill every time a bill comes in, and I buy nothing for myself out of the money he gives me. Surely your mother might let him have a little money, till he can screw some more out of that horrible Mr. Boldero."

"Would you take anything from my poor mother's pittance? Would Hubert do that?"

"Of course he must if he can't get it anywhere else," Effie retorted angrily. "I hate the lodgings I'm in now. Lodgings are horrid, the best of them, and ours are not the best by any means. It's much nicer, and I believe quite as cheap, staying at hotels; but Hugh is getting so grumpy that I have to put up with being poked into any hole he happens to think suitable. Jack's behindhand with his rent for the home-farm, too. Isn't that shameful?"

"What can I do?" poor Jenifer asked in sudden, despairing rage. "Everything was left to Hubert. The rest of us are penniless and powerless."

"Jack has no right to be short of money," Effie said with crushing scorn. "He can have no expenses. At least, his wife can have, or can want, none of the

expenses of a lady. He married a common woman. She might save him the expense of servants, at least. I have to go without a riding-horse and a brougham, and if I have to give up these things, surely Mrs. John Ray might be contented to live as she has been accustomed to live in her father's house. I shall go and see your mother to-morrow, Jenifer, and tell her how wretchedly off we are. Living as you do, you oughtn't to spend half her income, so she can help us if she likes."

"The lace and jewellery you have on to-night represents more than half our income—my mother's income," Jenifer remarked.

"How mean to taunt me with wearing what I owe to my sister's generosity! Flora gave me nearly everything I'm wearing. I suppose you would have me sell the rings off my fingers, or pawn them! Jenifer, you are selfish; everything is going easily and comfortably with you, and you don't care a bit about the bothers that beset your brother and me; it's to be hoped that your mother will have a little more feeling for her own son, whatever she may think about me. You won't interfere to stop her doing anything for us, I suppose, Jenifer? You'll hardly carry your selfishness to that extent!"

"I shall carry it to the extent of trying to prevent my mother robbing herself of any one of the few paltry comforts she has for the sake of her children, who don't deserve it," Jenifer said hotly.

"Oh, that's the line you take, is it?" Mrs. Hubert asked with a fine sneer on her expressive lips. "Hugh, the eldest son, the only one of you on whom your father showed any reliance in his will, is 'unworthy' of the most meagre help his mother might give him, while you are worthy of all she has or can get, of course! We all know that your mother must be robbing herself of nearly every comfort she has, in order to keep you in town for your pleasure. Lodgings in Upper Hamilton Place are a cruel luxury for you to indulge in, if your mother pays for them." And with this parting shot Mrs. Hubert Ray rose up, and walked off, leaving Jenifer alone with many uncomfortable thoughts.

Was she, indeed, by insisting on carrying out this venture of hers, acting selfishly, and impoverishing her mother? Was she risking too much on the little chance she was now beginning to feel she had with the public vocally. That by means of her voice—her "one gift" as she thought it—she

might make money enough to shape things prettily and pleasantly for her mother, had been her one aim. Was that aim futile? Were the ways in which she was striving to carry it out ignoble and selfish?

"What can I do now? and what shall I do if I fail in the end?" the girl asked herself in bitterness of spirit as she sat alone in a deserted ante-room, with the laughter called forth by the great American actor's first comic recitation ringing in her ears.

Why had she come here? Why had she come out of her quiet peacefulness to be hectorated into a state of repining fury by Effie, to be overlooked by Captain Edgcomb, and to have Mrs. Hatton mistaken for her by Mrs. Campbell? Why had she come only to learn that her brothers were in direful difficulties, and that she was powerless to help them?

"You alone here! I've been hunting all over the place for you."

It was Captain Edgcomb who broke into the midst of her miserable reflections, with a look of such genuine delight at having found her, that insensibly she brightened back into her better self.

"I saw Mrs. Hubert collar you and carry you off, and bitter experience told me I'd better not interfere with any little affair she might have on hand, so I bided my time."

"Bided it with Mrs. Hatton, didn't you?"

"No, I got beyond her borders ten minutes ago. She wanted to have the American actor made known to her, he being the newest star shining here to-night; so I caught Arch Campbell, delivered him and his will up to her, and freed myself."

"Enjoy your freedom. Do go about and enjoy yourself, because, to tell the truth, I can't enjoy you or anything else just now. Do go, and let me get over the recollection of the last quarter of an hour with Effie."

"I thought she'd been bothering you," he said indignantly.

"That's not the word; she has distressed me, and made me feel almost hopeless. Do you know—have you heard?"

"That Hubert is in difficulties? Yes; but don't you distress yourself about it; neither he nor she will go without a single thing they want, and the Moor Royal property (which they can't sell) will always keep them afloat. The shoe doesn't pinch them very hard, depend on that."

Then she told him that Effie con-

templated applying to her mother for aid, and added:

"Her sons are making themselves thorns in her flesh, and I have no healing power. Poor mother! poor dear mother!"

Then all in a minute it was done.

How it came to him to be so eloquent he never understood himself. The words seemed to form themselves, and pour themselves out with a fervour and fittingness that astonished him. In a few sentences, spoken with inconceivable rapidity, he made Jenifer understand and feel that here, by her side, was a man ready and eager to brave all life's evils with and for her, if only she would let him. And not only for her, but for her mother also. If Jenifer would only take him for her husband, Mrs. Ray should never again lack filial attention and consideration from a son.

No, he wouldn't allow her to say that he was speaking rashly and without due consideration. He had waited, waited sorely against his will, but very patiently, and now he was in a position to speak as a man should speak to a woman when he asked her to marry him. His search after remunerative employment had been successful sooner than he had ventured to expect. The secretaryship of a club to which a number of his most influential military friends belonged had fallen vacant, and had been offered to him with flattering unanimity on the part of all those concerned in his candidature. On the stipend he would receive—seven hundred a year—and the little private property he had, he felt he could offer Jenifer such a home and position as she was entitled to expect. Then he dwelt at some length, but not tediously, on the length, and strength, and disinterestedness of his attachment to her, and Jenifer listened passively, interrupting him neither by word nor movement.

When he ceased speaking she roused herself, and the effort she made to do so was apparent to him. There was no surprise, no agitation, no trembling happiness in the manner in which she answered:

"You have said a good deal about the devotion and consideration, the respect and tenderness, with which you would treat my mother if I marry you. Do you quite mean it all? My mother is so much to me, she has had such suffering and disappointment through my brothers lately, that I am bound to make any bargain I can that may add to her happiness."

"Bound to make any 'bargain'!" he

repeated deprecatingly; "don't speak of it as quite such a business transaction."

"But it is, that's what I ought to make you understand—that's what I must make clear to you before I can agree to what you ask. I like you very much, but I like my mother very much more. And if I thought she would be happier, if I thought you'd even partly fill the gap my brothers have made in her life, I'd marry you to-morrow. Isn't it better that I've told you this?"

"Much better, if on the top of it you tell me that you love me well enough to try me."

"I don't think I know very much about love, Captain Edgcomb. I believe I was beginning to think a little about it when my father died, but his death knocked all that kind of nonsense out of me."

"In connection with whom were you beginning to think about it?" he asked, half hopeful and half piqued.

"Why with you," she said honestly. "I thought that day when I met you in Exeter, and you went into the game-shop for me, that you were much more to be liked than any other man I'd ever known, and all the way home I thought about you every now and again, when I wasn't thinking of Hubert and his then unknown wife."

"And those were the kindest thoughts you had ever given to any man, do you mean me to infer?"

"You needn't infer, for I tell you straight out that I thought you were more to be liked than any man I'd ever known; but that was not being in love, or anything like it, and I'm not in anything like it now."

"But I am," he said emphatically—so emphatically that Jenifer instinctively shrank away from him, for she belonged entirely to herself still, and was not prepared to listen stoically to the emphatic utterances of any man. "I am, and I'll be satisfied with being 'more to be liked than any other man you know' for the present. As for your mother, I can't impress upon you too strongly how thoroughly I shall go with you in helping her—I mean

in cheering her declining years, and all that sort of thing."

"Don't speak in that way," she said, feeling nervous, and so seeming to be angry. "I can't bear to think—I can't let anyone speak of my mother's declining years. She was such a happy bonnie woman till the trouble of my father's death, and the boys' mistakes, hurt her into seeming older than she is. But happiness would make her nearly young again—if I could only make her quite happy!"

"I'll help you to do it, Jenifer," he said heartily.

"Thank you. When you say that, looking all the time as if you meant it, I go back to the old feeling, and think you again more to be liked than any other man I ever knew."

"Had the old feeling grown weak before I spoke to you to-night?"

"It had almost died, I think; I have had so much to think about and to do, you know. You didn't belong to the present order of things, and you seemed to have forgotten all about me till quite lately. I thought you didn't care to have a girl, who wanted to be a public singer, for a friend."

"You were right. I want her for my wife," he said; and Jenifer smiled at him, and marvelled at herself for not feeling more emotion than she did.

If he had only known it, Captain Edgcomb would have awarded warm thanks to Mrs. Hubert Ray for all that she had unintentionally done for him this night.

As for Jenifer, she felt very grateful to Captain Edgcomb, her consciousness of having promised to be his wife slipping away into quite a secondary position by the side of her consciousness of his having promised to dutifully consider and protect her mother. In fact, the one feeling of anything approaching to pleasure which the girl had in her oddly-arranged engagement, was this one—that it would open out a brighter and more hopeful vista for the woman whose sons had made her life a dull, arid plain of monotony and disappointment.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.
AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER II. INFANCY.

AN hour and a half later Mrs. Pybus met her husband at the door, as he was coming in for his mid-day dinner. "I've got a pupil, John," for she had been trying to get pupils.

"Yes?" not eagerly, or curiously, but dreamily. He lived much in the clouds, and needed such a flapper as fortune had given him in his alert little wife.

"Guess who?" as she helped him off with his coat.

"Who," answered for itself by a howl.

"Listen!" exclaimed Mrs. Pybus with her finger to her lips, as if it needed perfect silence to hear a scream which would have been audible in Bedlam.

"A baby!" guessed Mr. Pybus with, for him, extraordinary penetration and readiness.

Mrs. Pybus nodded. "But whose?" she asked again.

He shook his head.

She answered after a pause:

"Poor Mrs. Guard's! Dr. Grice got her brother to give me the care of it."

"Has it been baptised?" asked Mr. Pybus eagerly.

We must explain that Mr. Pybus—the most single and simple minded, and the sincerest of men—had got fast hold of an idea, which would have driven him out of the Church of England if he could have found or founded a more orthodox sect. His idea was that all the wickedness of the world could be prevented by baptism, properly administered. But baptism was duly administered only by total immersion, and only at the moment of birth. Every moment between birth and baptism evil

passions and influences, which floated thick as motes in the sunbeam about us, settled as seeds in the unsecured soil of the soul, and brought forth afterwards the fruit of all the vice and crime in the world. He had got together a vast mass of statistics, proving demonstratively that all the greatest criminals had been either (a) unbaptised, or (b) baptised late, or (c) baptised by mere aspersion. There was no single instance on record—not one—of a great criminal who at the very moment of his birth had been baptised by total immersion. As for the objection that the Quakers (who were unbaptised, and in whom, therefore, these evil passions and influences should have swarmed like mites in a cheese) were above the average in morality, he disposed of it by ascribing all the undetected murders—the great majority—to Quakers. The members of this sect stood by each other more staunchly than the members of any other, and, both from esprit de corps and dread of scandal, they screened the Sicarii who swarmed amongst them. If, then, all the convicted criminals were imperfectly baptised, and all the undetected criminals were unbaptised, was there not at least a strong presumption in favour of his fixed idea that baptism, properly performed, was as absolute a preventive of vice and crime as vaccination, properly performed, was of small-pox?

Hence Mr. Pybus's eager question: "Has it been baptised?"

"No, dear; but everything is ready. The baby is stripped in its cot and the water is warmed;" for Mrs. Pybus knew well what her husband's only thought in connection with the new pupil would be.

Mr. Pybus hurried breathless upstairs, and duly administered the rite without the loss of another second. Not till it was

securely over did he take time to ask the momentous question: "How old is it?"

"A month, dear."

Mr. Pybus's face fell.

"Ah, Mary, I wish we had had a child," not querulously, but plaintively:

Mrs. Pybus's face fell, and her eyes filled with wistful tears.

"Never mind, dear," he said consolingly, patting her on the cheek; "there's Tom Chown."

Tom Chown was a baby left by its dying mother to the Reverend John's care. It had been immersed at the moment of birth, and was at present the sole hope of the world, for in no other case had Mr. Pybus been in time. Poor Mary! Tom Chown could not quite fill the void in her heart.

"But perhaps it's better as it is," continued Mr. Pybus reflectively; "I might have been nervous in baptising one of my own."

"I think this has been sent to us, John," looking up with a reverent meaning in her eyes.

"It's a month late," said Mr. Pybus, not irreverently, but despondently.

"Mother has come back," said Mrs. Pybus, to divert his gloomy thoughts. "Mother" was Mr. Pybus's mother, an old lady who was rather a trial, bravely borne, by her daughter-in-law. She was very deaf, and therefore very sensitive and suspicious, and given to taking huff at the shadows of her own dark thoughts. Nor was it an easy thing to disabuse her of a suspicion once lodged in her head, not because she was deaf, but because she wouldn't be deaf. She affected to hear everything that was said in a little louder key than usual, and resented being shouted to as a personal insult. Yet, as she could never be persuaded to use an ear-trumpet, she could hear little without being shouted to. From the little she could hear she drew her own conclusions and was aggrieved by their being upset, in part because she had to be shouted at to be set right, and in part because the supposition that she needed to be set right was itself insulting. Many imaginary grievances therefore festered unhealed in her heart, and drove her away periodically in a huff to stay with her married daughter. As, however, her own daughter was not nearly so forbearing as her daughter-in-law, she always came back soon in much deeper dudgeon than she had left in.

At the mention of his mother Mr. Pybus

hurried off, moved at once by fear and affection. If the old lady knew of his having been a minute in the house without paying his respects to her she would have sulked for a week.

"Well, John, I've come back, you see. I was afraid Mrs. John"—she always called her daughter-in-law "Mrs. John" in speaking of her or to her, "I was afraid Mrs. John might be hurt if I stayed longer. Where is she, John?"

"She's with the baby, mother," shouted her son.

"You needn't shout so, John. The baby? What baby?"

"She's got a baby to take care of. Dr. Grice got her charge of Mrs. Guard's baby; who was so ill, you know. She's dead."

As her son daren't shout this piece of news, Mrs. Pybus heard only "She's got a baby"—"Dr. Grice"—"So ill," that is, the first words of each sentence, which, of course, were the loudest, and gathered that Mrs. John had been confined. She was stunned for the moment by this amazing news, but recovering herself affected to have been quite prepared for it. She must have been told, she thought, many times over of the approach of this great event, and it wouldn't do to confess that she had never heard a word of it. But how was she to account for her absence at a moment when the presence of a mother-in-law is almost as natural as any of the other pains of childbirth? She must affect to think it a premature confinement.

"Poor thing, poor thing! Before her time; and I away. Dear, dear!"

Her son thought she was referring to Mrs. Guard's early death.

"Suffered terribly," he shouted.

"My poor child! Why did she let me go away? Where is she? She wasn't in her own room, for I've been in."

"Mary! She's with the baby in the spare room."

Away hurried the old lady followed by her son, who was rather astonished by this sudden impulse of affection. Still more astonished was Mrs. John when her mother-in-law burst in upon her and kissed her effusively, and took from her arms the baby she had been crooning over.

As Mrs. John's childlessness had been a grievance with her mother-in-law, her goodness in having a baby was the more appreciated.

"It's the picture of John," cried the old lady ecstatically, between the kisses she

showered on the baby. "My dear, you should be lying down. You should, indeed. But there's been no one to look after you. Why did you let me go away? Didn't expect it so soon? And I didn't, but one never knows. It's a boy, isn't it? I knew it would be a boy, and the born image of John."

"She thinks it's mine, John; if we don't set her right at once she'll be very angry."

But it wasn't easy to set her right. When Mary tried to shout the explanation to her, the old lady was shocked by her recklessness.

"Not another word, Mrs. John, in your state. You might bring on a fit, screaming like that. You must lie down this moment and let me nurse you. I wonder, John, you let her get up so soon. You are all babies together. Not to write for me even. Take the baby, John, I must look after your wife. It's time some one looked after her, poor thing. Come, my dear, you must lie down this moment; I insist upon it."

"Do come and explain, John," cried Mary, laughing, as she was hurried away in spite of herself. "I shall be kept in bed and fed on caudle for a week."

But John was too much embarrassed by the baby, who loudly expressed its objections to being held by the heels, which, as occurring in the middle of the long clothes, were taken for the centre of gravity by John.

Meanwhile, Mary was carried off, and only escaped being summarily undressed and put to bed by submitting to the compromise of lying down in her clothes. Any attempt at explanation would have been useless, if she could have made any; but she was inarticulate with laughter, which the old lady took for hysterics. She hurried down to the kitchen to compose a posset, the receipt for which had been a secret for generations in the Caffin family—her family—and to which it owed its generations, at least Mrs. Pybus would not have given much for the life of a mother who had not been weaned from caudle on this posset. In the kitchen, however, Mrs. Pybus heard the true state of the case from Jemima, the cook. It took Jemima some time to find out that the neglect, for which she was being so vigorously scolded, was that of her mistress in her confinement, and that this confinement was inferred from the presence of a baby in the house.

"Lor' bless you, mum, it's Mrs. Guard's

bairn," she bellowed into the old lady's ear.

"What?"

"Her that the missus nursed, mum—Mrs. Guard. Her that's dead. It's her baby, mum."

Mrs. Pybus stood stupefied for a moment with a saucepan in her hand; next moment she hurried back upstairs, still in her agitation carrying the saucepan. She either thought, or affected to think, or both—for the mind of man, still more of woman, still more of an old woman, is often inconsequent as a dream—that Mrs. John meant to pass off the baby as her own: to palm off this cheat on her—yes, and on John, too. But any one might impose on John, who had his eyes on the top of his head, and could see nothing on this side of the stars. It was well he had his old mother to look after his interests and keep him from being imposed upon. By his own wife, too! By the time she reached the spare room Mrs. Pybus, by giving the rein to this course of thought, had pretty well persuaded herself of Mrs. John's craft, of John's simplicity, and of her own sagacity.

"John, that child," pointing to it with the saucepan, and pronouncing each word and each syllable of each word staccato, "John, that child is not yours, nor Mrs. John's. It is a su-per-sti-tious child." It was an unfortunate Malapropism for "supposititious," for she lost a syllable by the exchange, and a syllable, as she delivered it, spoke volumes.

"I hope not, mother," shouted John, smiling pleasantly. This answer made the old lady sure of her ground. It was plain that John had been taken in.

"John," drawing a step nearer, to emphasise each word by a stroke of the saucepan on his arm, "it's a cheat, it's not a Pybus; it's Mrs. Guard's baby!" drawing back her head to see the full effect of this thunderstroke.

"So I told you, mother," shouted John.

"Who told me? Jemima told me," triumphantly.

"I told you so myself, mother," louder but with perfect placidity.

"You—you told me," gasped the old lady, and then pulled herself up. It had at last occurred to her that she must have misunderstood her son; but to confess to such a misunderstanding would have been to confess to extreme deafness, which would have been to give up the battle of her life. On this point, then, she was discreetly

silent, and turned, after her manner, from her son, who, as the king, could do no wrong, upon Mrs. John, his prime minister, who could do nothing else.

"To make a mockery of it! To make a mockery of it!" holding up shocked hands, or at least a shocked hand and saucepan; "to lie down on the bed before my very eyes and ask for the posset!" It was no use for Mrs. John to attempt an explanation, the old lady judiciously waved it away. "Don't ask my pardon, Mrs. John. You've not offended me." In proof of which she maintained a sullen silence till bed-time, and then broke it only by still more vindictive speech. Just before her usual hour for retiring she rose solemnly, stalked from the room, and, after a few minutes absence, returned with a yellow paper in her hand, which Mrs. John took for her will. But it was something much more awful. Holding it in the candle till it was well in flames, and then dropping it into the grate, she said simply but fatefully: "It is the Caffin receipt!" It was the receipt for the posset!

Neither Mr. Pybus's panacea for the world's wickedness, nor his mother's posset, will seem to the reader of importance enough to find a place in this history; but they owe their place in it not so much to their intrinsic importance as to their bearing upon the happiness of Master Archibald Guard.

When, in after years, that young gentleman transgressed, and was brought up by the inexorable old lady for sentence to Mr. Pybus, his kindly guardian would rouse himself from his dreams to shake his head and say only, "A month late—a month late," and not merely condone the offence, but condole with the child for his misfortune in having committed it.

On the other hand, and as a set-off against this indulgence, there were the rigours of old Mrs. Pybus's discipline. For the old lady neither forgot nor forgave the mistake she had made about the baby, and she revenged herself for it on Mrs. John; at first by importuning her son to be rid of the child, then by ignoring its existence, and then, finding that was just what Mrs. John wanted, by interfering at every turn in everything that concerned it. Mrs. John never had a child, what therefore could she know about washing, dressing, or feeding it? Poor Mrs. John had a trying time of it, and the baby also. The wretched creature was sometimes washed and dressed twice over in a morning, first by Mrs.

John, and then a revised and corrected edition (with illustrations) by Mrs. Pybus. And the child had no chance against the old lady. Every creature, according to Horace, has been supplied by nature with weapons of offence and defence—the ox with his horn, the horse with its hoof, etc. And a baby is in all other ways so helpless that Nature has to indemnify it with one weapon of extraordinary power of offence and defence—its howl. But there was no piercing Mrs. Pybus with this weapon. It was blunted before it got through the triple brass of her deafness, and only tickled her dreamily, or at most was mistaken for a crow of ecstasy. Things came to a crisis at last, however.

One day Mrs. John was hurried up by howls to the nursery, to find the old lady holding the naked baby face down over a tub with one hand, and with the other pouring upon it a stream of scalding water. As the child kicked and yelled in agony, Mrs. Pybus lavished upon it a world of endearments, taking its screams for crows and its kicks for frantic applause.

"Did it like its bath then? Yes, it did—it did. Um bless it. It was a dood little duckums, it was—a dood little, 'ittle, kicksey, wicksey duckums."

Meanwhile "duckums" was being flayed alive to this soft music, like Marsyas under the hands of the tuneful Apollo.

Mrs. John, without the waste of a word, snatched the child from its unconscious tormentor, and altogether forgetting for the moment her mother-in-law, set about soothing the infant and its wounds.

The old lady sat speechless, motionless, appalled. This was revolution. It was. The long-suffering Mrs. John appealed to her husband, as to a modern Solomon, to decide whose the baby was to be. She found him in the study, as usual, striking the stars with his lofty head. John tried to gather his scattered thoughts to a focus to listen to Mary's plaintive appeal. It appeared, as well as he could make out, that between his wife and his mother the wretched baby was being washed away, like a sea cliff. What was to be done? After deep meditation he thought he saw his way out from between Scylla and Charybdis.

"Couldn't Betty wash it?"

Betty was the laundress. He seemed to have a confused idea that the baby might be put into the basket with the other soiled things on a Monday, go through the machine, perhaps, and be brought back on

Wednesday morning white and glistening.

"Nonsense, dear; a baby isn't washed like a handkerchief."

"No?" dreamily, for he had relapsed into his dreams.

"John, do ask your mother to leave the child to someone who can hear it cry."

"But what do you want to hear it cry for?" asked John, in utter perplexity.

In truth, he had suffered horribly from the howls of the tormented infant, and was aghast at the notion of any sane creature enjoying them. Did the wife of his bosom, like a girl with a squeaking doll, delight to hear it bellow?

"Besides," he added feelingly, "you can hear it cry all over the house."

It seemed greedy to want more of it than could be heard in the study.

"I don't like to hear it cry, you goose," cried Mary, laughing in spite of herself; "but I don't like it to cry without being heard. You'll have it boiled some day."

"Boiled!" exclaimed the bewildered John.

What Thyestian feast was this that was being prepared for him? In fact, he hadn't heard half her story.

"You haven't been listening to a single word I said. Now, do wake up and listen," taking hold of the lapels of his coat, and giving him thereby a playful shake. Mary then proceeded to put to him as pathetically as possible his mother's parboiling of the baby to a playful accompaniment of endearments, with the utterly unexpected result of a roar of laughter.

John was an eccentric man in most things, but most of all in his sense of humour. Something in which others could see no joke at all would delight him hugely, and at intervals for weeks together; while for his life he couldn't see the fun of other flashes of merriment that set the table on a roar. Now, at his wife's pathetic tale, he roared, and shook, and cried with laughter, walking, or rather stamping, up and down the room to give fuller vent to his hysterical delight.

Mary, however, whose motherly heart was more impressed by the pathetic than the ludicrous aspect of the scene, looked so vexed at his unsympathetic reception of her story, that he was forced to make his peace by a promise to ask his mother not to interfere henceforth in the management of the infant. It was a rash promise and

a perilous undertaking, but it was undertaken, and must be fulfilled.

He came upon the old lady when she was in her best cap and temper, and opened the business most diplomatically, as he thought, by shouting:

"Mary thinks you've at last taught her how to nurse the baby, mother."

Of course the old lady, always on the look-out for offence, understood him to make an ironical reference to her misadventure of the morning. And, indeed, the misadventure of the morning coming into his mind at the moment, set him laughing in spite of himself. Her own son! She burst into tears, to the extreme perplexity and distress of her son, who thought that she must have mistaken his words as usual.

"My dear mother, I only said that Mary thought you've done quite enough for the child now."

This revised version of his diplomatic beginning didn't mend matters, as may be supposed.

"Thank you, John, thank you; you needn't say anything more. There is the cab; perhaps Mrs. John wouldn't think it too much to allow Hannah to order it—not just this moment. I shall take the liberty to go upstairs to put my bonnet on, and there are one or two things that are mine in this house which I should like to pack up with your kind permission. I shall not be many minutes," making with a majestic step for the door, when she turned to add: "Not a kicking horse this time, if you please." On her last Hegira, it seems, a brute of this kind had been engaged and credited to the thoughtful malice of Mrs. John, who must have instructed Hannah to make special enquiry for a kicking horse at the cab-stand.

John was in great trouble, but Mary reassured him.

"She has only just left Margaret's, dear," which, being interpreted, meant that "the wounds received from Goneril are too raw for her to leave Regan at present." For Margaret was the old lady's own daughter and only other refuge, from whose house she had just been shot by an explosion.

Mary was right. On following the old lady to her room to soothe and soften her, she found her more placable than usual. She yielded, in fact, so far as to compound the matter by a week's sulk. A sulk with her was something of the nature of those

retreats now in vogue among the clergy. She not only never spoke and rejected all table delicacies during this Ramadan, but she would be humbly helped last to everything, and be ranked last everywhere and always—while each evening she would read rather ostentatiously, "The Order for the Visitation of the Sick."

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR MAIDEN LADY.

THERE were many other ladies in Shillingbury, besides Miss Dalgairns, who might have laid claim to be limned as the type of the middle-aged spinster. Many of them had tongues just as long, and tempers just as short, as hers. Some of them looked the part as perfectly as, or even more perfectly than she did; and two or three perhaps might have been found who were censors of manners as severe as she was. I admit that I might easily have put my finger upon other ladies who united in their own persons, more completely than Miss Dalgairns did, all the various attributes which, according to contemporary verdict, serve to differentiate the species "old maid" from the residue of the human race, but certainly none of these would have exhibited a personality so strong. If the reader should find out that my maiden lady differs over much from the accepted type, he must put it down to a preference on my part for a strong personality to work upon, and not to a dearth of the accepted type in Shillingbury.

When I first saw Miss Dalgairns she was drawing on towards "forty year," and I then was, and still am, quite unable to picture to myself what her youth could have been like. Indeed, I have more than once doubted whether she ever could have been a girl at all—that is, according to the common acceptation of the term—in spite of a portrait of her, taken apparently when she was about fourteen, which used to hang in the back parlour. In this she was represented with a hoop in her right hand, and a lap-dog under her left arm, and I remember I used always to find it easier to think of her as chastising the lap-dog than as trundling the hoop.

The Miss Dalgairns of my youth was tall and robust in person, and not uncomely in feature, but there was something in her voice and manner especially uninviting of confidence. She was one of those people who are born to command

rather than to win. Before one had been ten minutes in her presence one would understand that she liked to have her own way, and that, however warmly she might advocate the right of private judgment in a general or theological sense, she was by no means disposed to admit your own particular right to think for yourself. She could barely be civil to anyone who might venture to set up any show of opposition to her own opinions. I have a humiliating remembrance of having lost my temper many a time in wordy war with her. I am not by nature a litigious person. I do not blaze up in hot wrath the moment I hear any pet position of my own assailed; but there was a dogmatic aggressiveness in Miss Dalgairns's utterances which was to me like the red rag to the bull. She had a way of showing her dissent, which told you plainly she was quite satisfied that nobody but a born fool would ever hold the opinion you had just expressed, and, even when you might find yourself agreeing with her that a certain evil ought to be remedied, you would most likely be told that the method by which you proposed to work was something as bad as or worse than the evil which you were attacking. She had a sharp tongue and a ready wit, and I have known superior persons come out of an argument with her not exactly triumphant, though they may have had on their side the balance of reason.

I suppose my sketch of a maiden lady will be set down as untrue to nature in the highest degree unless I speak of Miss Dalgairns as a busybody. Perhaps she was a little over busy at times, but I am bound to say that her business invariably took a practical and sometimes a very useful turn. She had nearly always a protégé of some kind in hand, in the shape of some astonishing genius in the workhouse school—some girl with an abnormal aptitude for plain sewing, or some boy who was bound to make his way in the world if only he could be apprenticed to a carpenter. For any such as these she would work with a will, vexing the souls of the guardians of the poor with requests which they were utterly powerless to grant; but somehow or other her percentage of failures was large. Perhaps the little boys objected to be seized by the scruff of the neck and cast headlong into the tide which led on to fortune; and the little girls may have resented being dragged by the hair of their heads along the pathway of virtue. Anyhow a goodly number of her swans did turn out to be merely

geese, and some of her pet lambs, on coming to maturity, clothed themselves in very black fleeces.

Miss Dalgairns lived in a large red-brick house in High Street. Her father, a man who had made his money in India, had ended his days there; and there our Miss Dalgairns, the sole survivor of a large family, now managed to keep house with what remained of the family fortunes. The old people were dead before I was born; and in my boyhood the family consisted of Miss Dalgairns, who ruled the household with a rod of iron, four other sisters, all of mild unaggressive temperament, and little Cuthbert, the child of his parents' old age, a pretty boy some five-and-twenty years younger than his eldest sister.

The house must have been rather a dreary one for the bright, lively child. The sisters did not entertain, and all the visiting that went on was the ordinary calling and tea-drinking of English country life. Cuthbert was about two years younger than myself, and during my holidays I used to carry him off as a playfellow as often as I could persuade Miss Dalgairns to give her consent, but, even then, I noticed that she never liked the boy to go out of her sight. Every time Cuthbert spent the day with me I was bound afresh by the most solemn promises not to go within sight of the river, nor to allow Cuthbert to be out after sunset, nor to go wandering about Pudsey Heath, as people said I was wont to do. I always walked home with him in the evening, and when his sister would take him in her arms to welcome him, there would come over her face an expression which was almost one of happiness. Very few people, I fancy, ever saw Miss Dalgairns look thoroughly happy, but at these moments she would come the nearest to it.

The house which the Dalgairns family inhabited was furnished just as in the father's lifetime; and the sisters, all of them, wore the mourning-black, very little modified, which they had put on at his death. It is quite certain that some of the younger ones longed to lay aside their sombre weeds, and dress once more in the fashion of the day. It must have been a sore trial to them to walk down the High Street when Mr. Lomas, our leading linen-draper, was displaying his spring novelties, knowing that for them the pink muslins and blue ribbons were displayed in vain. They, poor girls, loved clothes as well as the majority of their sex—clothes, that is, which were not black: but not one of them

would have dared to put on so much as a coloured bow unless their eldest sister should have signified her approval. They were a weakly, ailing lot, these younger sisters, and they all of them passed to their rest beneath the elms in our churchyard in Miss Dalgairns's lifetime. She tended and nursed them well with a hard uncompromising regimen. They all died in decline, and the best of nursing and doctoring would hardly have done more than prolong their lives a month or so. This she gave them according to her lights, and so far she did her duty; but perhaps in every case the last few weeks would have been less wearisome had the discipline been relaxed a little, and the medicine and the beef-tea been administered with a less distressing punctuality.

Mr. Dalgairns had left his estate divided into seven shares, one for each of the girls, and two for Cuthbert. The girls were all of full age when he died, but Cuthbert was a child, and was left under the guardianship of his eldest sister, until he should attain his majority. Cuthbert Dalgairns, both as a boy and as a young man, was certainly one of the most beautiful and fascinating of the human race. His hair was like rippling gold, too lovely for a boy's hair, and his eyes of that rare violet shade which makes the softest brown look commonplace by comparison. His features were perfect in modelling, beautiful in repose; but much more beautiful when the smile, which came so readily over them, lighted and transfigured them. His voice was low and melodious, and, even as a boy, he had a tact and a delicacy about him which taught him always to say and do the right thing at the right time. Often when I have seen him walking in the midst of the sombre group of young old women, with his laughing face and bright golden hair, he has seemed to me more like a fairy changeling than a child of the house.

Except for the boundless, all-absorbing love she bore this child, Miss Dalgairns had no tie of sympathy to this miserable world—the world she abused so constantly. Though she had never said so, it was an accepted fact that she rose up and lay down, spoke, worked, and thought for this boy's sake alone; and she did her best to make her sisters do likewise. Everything which might by the widest use of the term have been called a luxury, was suppressed in the household. The dresses were worn threadbare; the fires were begun late in

the autumn, and left off early in the spring; and the table was regulated by Spartan maxims of simplicity, in order that a fund might be made to keep Cuthbert at school and at college in a manner worthy of his deserts.

I well remember that, for more than a year before Cuthbert left the family-roof, Miss Dalgairns could think or talk of nothing else except the merits of this and the demerits of that educational establishment. I believe she had the past history, and the present circumstances, of every school in the United Kingdom at her finger-ends, and could have answered, offhand, any question about any one of them. Of course she found a perfect school at last—these diligent seekers always do—and, when once her choice had been made, woe betide the unlucky one who might have ventured to hint in her presence that the college here, and the grammar-school there, were well-spoken of. Well-spoken of, forsooth! She knew all about them. People were so criminally careless where they sent their children; but it would not be her fault if the whole country round did not know that the man who taught German at the college was a Jew by faith as well as by race; and that the head-master of the grammar-school had once signed a petition in favour of the abolition of religious tests. How could one expect that the moral and religious welfare of the boys should be looked after in such places as these? Moral and religious training was, in her opinion, the mainstay of education, and this, she was glad to say, was the line Dr. Parling took in dealing with the youths committed to his charge.

Dr. Parling's school was an excellent specimen of the genteel private school conducted, according to the prospectus, "upon the lines of our great public schools." Dr. Parling most likely would have called his connection aristocratic; but I doubt whether it could have been rated with justice higher than "genteel." Dr. Parling expected that his pupils should always be well-dressed; the correctest Eton costume was insisted on, and he fed them well if he taught them little. Cuthbert howled a good deal when he first left home, in anticipation of the legendary terrors of school; but afterwards he always went back cheerfully enough. Miss Dalgairns, indeed, was a little hurt that there was no repetition of the weeping and wailing of the first separation. The food was very good; there were long play-hours and plenty of com-

panions to play with; he was not bothered with work, nor were the devotional exercises nearly as severe as at home, in spite of Dr. Parling's expressed opinions as to the "mainstay of education." Cuthbert, however, said nothing on this last-named point to his eldest sister.

He remained under Dr. Parling's care all through his school-days. The last year Miss Dalgairns paid a large extra fee for special preparation for his matriculation at Oxford, and after this momentous event there was a house-to-house visitation in Shillingbury by Miss Dalgairns to carry round the news that Cuthbert, after passing his examination with distinction, had been admitted as a commoner at Carfax College—one of the most select of the colleges in Oxford.

Cuthbert seemingly entered with great zest into the pleasures of Oxford life, but he did not display a corresponding alacrity in getting through "smalls." Everybody knows how bad the climate of Oxford is, and, after a little, Miss Dalgairns, with an air more apologetic than was usual with her, informed us that for one term the poor boy had been quite incapacitated from work by the fogs and damp.

One Easter he did not come down at all. He wrote that he could work so much better in Oxford than he could at home, and that he had made up his mind to get through "smalls" at once, and begin to read for honours; but it was whispered abroad in Shillingbury that he had been seen late at night about the Haymarket with a lot of lively youths during this vacation, which had been destined for studious seclusion, and it was certain that his next attempt to get through his examination was just as futile as the former ones had been.

Soon after this, the gloom began to gather deeper and deeper upon Miss Dalgairns's brow, and she hardly ever alluded to Cuthbert in any terms, much less to speak of the distinguished future we had heard so much about when he first went up to Carfax. The housekeeping became more meagre than ever, and the little pony-car which the sisters had kept was got rid of. Then it was rumoured that the authorities of Carfax had requested Cuthbert to take his name off the books, as that distinguished society did not approve of young gentlemen who were so easy-going in the matter of examinations; and finally, at the end of one long vacation, Cuthbert lingered on at Shillingbury, and made no movement at all towards his

alma mater. Then it was known for the first time that he had left Oxford without taking a degree.

For six months or so he hung about the place, making some pretence of reading for his final school; but his reading was more in the way of French fiction than the classics of Greece and Rome. In spite of his shortcomings, he had grown up into as pleasant a young fellow as one could wish to see—quite as handsome as a man as he had been as a boy, modest and restrained, and with no visible taint of the bad atmosphere in which, it was to be feared, he had lived while at Oxford. The old home and everything about it was distasteful to him, and he had tact enough to see that his presence made his sisters uncomfortable; so he spent his time anywhere rather than in their society. Where he spent the whole of it no one knew, but it was certain that he went a good deal to The Black Bull.

All this was naturally a bitter humiliation for Miss Dalgairns, but worse remained behind. There was a pretty little farm lying just outside Shillingbury, which Mr. Dalgairns had bought out of his savings, and it had been the amusement of his latter days to make it as perfect as a little farm could be. The homestead was compact and neat, and all the fields well drained and fenced, and it had been the old man's custom, every Sunday afternoon, to walk out to the farm, nominally to have a word with Peter Dack, the tenant, but really, I believe, to gladden his eyes by the sight of his nice little bit of property, his gratification being in no way diminished by knowing that the place was a veritable Naboth's vineyard to Squire Winsor, whose lands closed round it on every side.

One market-day in Shillingbury there was a whisper that Dack's farm would be for sale before long, but nobody exactly believed the report till an auctioneer's bill, placarded on the walls and hoardings, proclaimed the fact without dispute. It was knocked down to Squire Winsor's agent, as everyone knew it would be; and everyone, just as confidently, affirmed that the proceeds of the sale would all be swallowed up in paying Master Cuthbert's Oxford debts. Through some provision in the father's will, the real property had been left to the children collectively, and could only be alienated under their joint signatures. Cuthbert was now of age, so there was no difficulty on that score. The whole family attended one day at Lawyer Merridew's office: the deeds were signed,

and Miss Dalgairns carried away in her hand-bag the purchase-money, all in Bank of England notes.

This transaction took place on Tuesday, and as the branch office of Lumley's Bank was only open on market-day, Friday, Miss Dalgairns was forced to keep the money in as safe a place as she could find over the intervening time. The next Friday morning came, and of all the market-days that ever shone upon Shillingbury, that is the one I remember best. The town was convulsed with the rumour that during the night Miss Dalgairns's house had been broken into, the iron chest in her bedroom opened, and every farthing of the purchase-money of Dack's farm stolen. Of course there was a great commotion. A burglary had not been known in Shillingbury within the memory of man, and, besides this, an undeniable glamour of mystery was spread over the whole affair. The notes had been stolen from Miss Dalgairns's bedroom, and she had heard no sound; she had indeed slept more heavily than usual that night; the chest had been opened by a key, which showed that the thief must have had prior access to the house; none of the other sisters had heard the least noise. Cuthbert alone, of all the household, had been disturbed about two o'clock by something which sounded like the creaking of a door; but he thought nothing of it, as the old house was full of noises, and turned over and went to sleep again.

We had visits from inspectors of police more or less intelligent, and detectives from London were fabled to have visited the town under strange disguises, but they all of them came in vain. No glimmer of light was thrown upon this mystery by anything they did. About a fortnight after the robbery Cuthbert left the town to spend six months in France. He had resolved to enter upon a mercantile career, and it was most important that he should master at least one modern language. A friend of his was gone to live in a quiet French family at Havre with this object, and Cuthbert thought that he himself could not do better than follow this example. He was ashamed when he looked back upon his school and college days, and saw how much time he had wasted. He had done with trifling now, and meant to see what a spell of steady work would do.

A month passed, and the sisters received but one letter from the reformed prodigal,

and this letter he had entrusted to a friend who was going to England to post in London, so as to save the extra stamps. He was getting on famously with his studies, and was becoming economical, if not miserly. According to the most approved maxima, he was beginning to look after the pence even in the matter of postage. He also sent Miss Dalgairns the recipe for the carrot-soup, very palatable and very satisfying, with which Madame Dupuis frequently regaled her boarders. The letter all through was bright and hopeful, and the day of its coming was the least sombre that had dawned upon the home of the sisters for some time.

One Sunday morning, some weeks after this, Lawyer Merridew accosted me as I was walking home from church, and asked me if I could give him a few minutes of my time. We went into his office, and then he handed me the Times of the day before, and bade me read a paragraph which he pointed out to me. It was the report of a case before a bench of magistrates somewhere in Berkshire, in which Cuthbert Dalgairns was charged with having caused the death of one Henry Dawson. The paper almost fell from my hands as I read the names, and my dismay did not diminish as I read on. The report went on to state that Dalgairns had been giving a dinner to a party from London at The Carp, a noted riverside hostelry, and that, after the wine had gone round pretty freely, a quarrel had arisen between him and Dawson, on account of certain attentions paid by the latter to a Mdle. Stephanie, a lady formerly attached to the ballet at the Italian opera, in whose honour the banquet had apparently been given. Dalgairns, as the host of the day, resented this. High words arose, and a hasty blow led to a struggle in which Dawson, who was half drunk, fell into the river, and before any succour could be given, was carried over the adjoining lasher and never seen alive again. When I had finished reading the report, I looked up in Mr. Merridew's face, and as our eyes met, I felt sure that we were both of us debating the same question. Alas! it was one which did not require very long debate. By the light of what I had just read, the mystery of the stolen money became clear enough, and before many days had passed, it had ceased to be a mystery at all as far as Shillingbury was concerned. This was Cuthbert's preparation for a mercantile career. This was the quiet French family with whom he was supposed to be domi-

ciled. The shock I felt at learning the full extent of the wretched fellow's folly and crime was a very terrible one; but it was not half so terrible as the thought of the utter ruin and destruction of his sister's life, when she should learn the whole of the dreadful truth.

No one saw Miss Dalgairns for many weeks after this. At this time one of the younger sisters sickened and died, and when the poor girl had taken her leave of a world which must have been for her a terribly gloomy one, Miss Dalgairns showed herself again with the impress of awful sorrow—of sorrow ten times more blasting than any which could have come from her sister's death—upon her face, which seemed to have grown twenty years older in the last ten weeks. She, poor woman, had staked the whole wealth of her affection on one throw, and turned the full stream of her human sympathy upon one object. Now she had to feel the torments which are the portion of those who do this and lose. With such as these there is no second chance, and the torn heart-strings will not heal again as they do in people who can roar out over their griefs as loudly as Polyphemus did for his stricken eye. The grief that fell upon Miss Dalgairns was indeed like a refiner's fire, but it was a test such as every nature is not able to sustain. The chastening discipline of grief is by no means the universal panacea, as certain armchair novelists and retailers of cheap consolation are prone to declare. There is no rule to predict how it will affect any particular nature; but I think all who knew Miss Dalgairns expected to find her strong under her sorrow and resolute to hide her scars. And so she was. No one ever heard her speak of Cuthbert after that fatal day, but no one could ever be in her presence for ten minutes without finding out that with her the fruit of life had proved to be Dead Sea apples, and that the ashes were very bitter indeed. Any one meeting her casually, and never getting a glimpse behind the mask of uncompromising severity which she held up before her true self, would be prone to believe that she had adopted in its entirety the creed of Timon. The burthen of her discourse was ever that men were as bad as they could be by nature, and that in spite of the boasted triumphs of civilisation, they were growing worse year by year. Everything was wrong; the times were hideously out of joint; and I once heard her say that if she had not been

possessed of a firm belief that, in another world, all wrongs would be redressed and all crooked things made straight, she would have gone mad.

In my childhood I always had a certain dread of her, and this did not entirely vanish when I, a man, and she an old woman, became very good friends; for we were good friends, in spite of our constant wordy battles. Our discussions very often took a theological turn, and on this field Miss Dalgairns did not mince words in dealing with those who might differ from her. If she found you straying an inch on either side of the straight path, she would put you down either as a crypto-Roman or a would-be atheist. Her creed, I must say, was a puzzle to me, and I am confident that all the religious doubt I ever felt sprang from my meditations on some of the propositions which I had heard her lay down, as the only safe foundations of religious belief. Hers was a name of terror to the successive curates who came amongst us. I once was present when one of them was put through his facings on the occasion of a first call—he did not call a second time. How I laughed in my sleeve to watch the unhappy youth fall into trap after trap, and finally stand convicted of heresies so terrible that I must forbear to describe them for want of adequate terms!

But, in spite of her gloomy creed and tart speech, there was in Miss Dalgairns's nature a fountain of tenderness and benevolence which the sorrow of her life had unsealed. Though a great black cloud, never to lift again, had fallen across her heaven, "her hand was swifter unto good" in those latter days than ever before, and the good—done for the most part by stealth—came as the gift of a heart which had known all the pangs it now yearned to relieve. When Mr. Yates, the manager of a local bank, was dismissed, on account of certain irregularities in his accounts, she gave the wife and children a home until Yates, who had gone to America, had found employment and could send for them. When John Greenwood's girl, Peggy, left her situation in disgrace, and was turned out into the street by her father, who swore he would rather let her die in the gutter than shelter her and her shame beneath his roof, Miss Dalgairns took the girl off to London, procured her admission to a benevolent institution, and never lost sight of her till she had placed her, grateful and

penitent, in a fair way of earning an honest living.

These instances are only two out of many. Miss Dalgairns had schooled herself to believe that the bright pleasant things of life were not for her, but she did not on this account sit down and waste her days in selfish nursing of her own griefs. Poor as she was in purse, no deserving case of suffering ever pleaded in vain. She gave of her poverty, and she was, besides, always ready to give her service and sympathy—a form of charity calling for much more self-denial than the drawing of "a little cheque" on a healthy banking account. At the great final audit, when all the balances are struck, hers, perchance, will show a better figure than that of many a philanthropist whose name now stands on charity-lists with lordly sums written opposite.

LIFE LILIES.

AN ALLEGORY.

I WANDERED down Life's garden,
In the flush of a golden day,
The flowers and thorns grew thickly
In the spot where I chanced to stray.
I went to choose me a flower
For life, for weal or for woe;
On, on I went, till I stayed me
By the spot where the lilies grow.
"Yes, I will carry a lily,"
I said in my manhood's pride,
"A bloodless, thornless lily
Shall be my flower!" I cried.
I stretched my hands out quickly
To where the pale blossoms grew.
Was it the air that shivered?
Was it a wind that blew?
Was it my hands that scorched them?
As I touched the blossoms fair,
They broke and scattered their petals
On the sunny noontide air.
Then I saw a great, bright angel
With opal-coloured wings,
Where the light flashed in the feathers
In golden glimmerings.
He said, "Thou hast sinned and suffered;
Lilies are not for thee,
They are all for the little children,
Emblems of purity."
"Shall I never carry a lily?
Never?" I bitterly cried.
With his great eyes full of pity,
The heavenly one replied:
"When the heat of the day is over;
When the goal is won," he said,
"Ah, then I lay God's lilies
In the hands of the stainless dead!"

NEIGHBOURS.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE following morning Dorothy met her neighbour on the beach. Mr. Neeld had evidently been bathing, but even this circumstance, coupled with the fact that

he had not yet breakfasted, was powerless to rob him of a certain splendid air of being at home in a multifarious and perplexing world. He looked even more indolent this morning than under the casino gas-lights. It is, however, the mysterious privilege of powerful men to be indolent, and Mr. Neeld seemed to derive a fair amount of enjoyment from the exercise of this particular privilege. His strong frame was clothed in a light suit of the loosest possible clothes, and his manner, although sufficiently deferential and courteous to women, made the least possible concessions to formality.

After a few civil enquiries after their mutual friend, Mrs. Finnis, Mr. Neeld asked if he might be allowed to sit down near Miss Macquorn. Having obtained permission, he sank down easily on the beach at her feet, and began lazily throwing stones into the sea. Neither of them spoke, and by-and-by Dorothy began to experience an inward resentment at the luxurious ease of this gentleman beside her, who did not feel it incumbent on himself to "make conversation" in the ordinary way; and her resentment was not lessened by the recollection that Mr. Neeld had not been backward in this particular when lounging on the terrace on the previous evening.

The stone-throwing in the meantime went on. Mr. Neeld seemed to enjoy this innocent pastime with the calm and undisturbed delight of an inveterate idler.

"But you don't throw stones," he said at last, slowly. He belonged to the race of gentlemen who never hurry themselves in anything. "What is there to do at St. Sulpice if you don't throw stones?"

"Well, it had never occurred to me in that light," answered Dorothy, amused in spite of herself. "I have found plenty of things to do here."

"Have you, really?" asked Neeld with a faint show of interest. "There are some friends of mine who have been here about a week, and they tell me that they have positively found nothing to do yet. Now, what I like about the place is that, as far as I can see, there is nothing to do, and one isn't expected to do anything—which is in itself a great point."

"I don't know that I care very much about what people expect," said Dorothy thoughtfully, who was apt to be carried away in conversation by what words suggested; "but one at least expects something of oneself."

"My dear young lady, you have there an elaborate plan for disappointing yourself," returned Neeld. "The fact is, there isn't a person in the universe who is not disappointing in some way, and vivisection oneself isn't a cheerful business at any time. One had best leave it alone."

"You think we could get over being disappointed in our friends, but that we should take ourselves more to heart!" asked the girl.

"Ye—es, we should take ourselves more to heart," repeated Mr. Neeld, smiling at the quaint earnestness of his companion, "so we take the wise precaution to expect nothing."

"I think to arrive at that state of mind is sadder than any disappointment," cried Dorothy, springing up. "The very fact of being disappointed implies that we hope."

"Just as nearly every hope implies disappointment," returned Hawley Neeld with something like a yawn, as he rose and stretched his well-developed arms. "By Jove!" he added with quickened interest, on observing the empty beach and the small hand of the clock on the casino. "Do you see the time, Miss Macquorn! One hopes they won't have eaten up all the déjeuner."

On the following day, as Dorothy was starting with her paint-box and folding easel for a farmhouse some few miles distant, she again saw her neighbour. He was lounging, in his usual imperturbable manner, in the strong sunlight, against the wall of his small cottage-garden. His hat was tilted over his eyes, while clouds of pale-blue smoke from a well-coloured meerschaum rose gently in the warm, still air.

Hawley Neeld removed his hat and laid down his pipe on recognising Dorothy, and then advanced placidly down the narrow gravel path.

"You paint?" he asked tersely, by way of greeting, in his low-toned voice.

"Yes, I try to. I hope to make something of this," answered Dorothy in her energetic way. "I wonder if you know the farmhouse I am doing. Of course I have only just begun," she went on, as she turned up her canvas to be inspected.

"I don't think I have been there," he said, without further comment on the painting; "but, if you will allow me to accompany you, I should like to see the place."

"It's more than two miles off," said Dorothy in a hesitating way.

"I think I might manage it with an effort," he returned with one of his curious half-smiles, as he gently took the easel and paint-box from Dorothy's hands.

Neeld proved himself an amusing companion on the road, and Dorothy was by no means inclined to quarrel with her neighbour's silence when she set up her easel and began to work.

Dorothy's general demands for the picturesque were amply answered by her surroundings that day. No ugly scientific appliances marred the beauties of this tumble-down, sleepy-looking farmyard; Nature, so to speak, in mufti, wore all the charm of a naive explicitness. Moss and grey-green lichen covered the trees and walls, the gates drooped on rickety hinges, while in front of the farmhouse door a wheel-less cart leant against a stalwart apple-tree.

The day passes quietly in such a place. The ducks, near the small muddy pond hard-by, took their mid-day siesta ranged in battle line with their heads tucked under their wings; a small yellow cow looked curiously over a gate at Dorothy, and the pigeons kept up the livelong day their drowsy song. By-and-by Mr. Neeld made an expedition within doors, whence he returned with a bowl of fresh milk. A little breeze was creeping up the downs, and long blue shadows were spreading themselves across the parched ground. The hot afternoon was giving way to a splendid mellow evening, as Dorothy shut up her paint-box with something like a sigh.

Their talk had been fitful and inconsequent, as talk is apt to be on sultry August days, but to Dorothy, at least, it had not been without a vague kind of charm. She had always felt, even in her inexperience of better things, the want of repose in the gilded youth of Westhampton. They were amateurish in the accomplishment of passing summer days, and were apt, in ladies' society, to be embarrassed by the possession of their own arms and hands. Dorothy had often called them "elbowy," and the presence of a gentleman whose mission in life seemed to be to lie at her feet, was a novelty that appealed to something that was not altogether new in her thoughts.

Such days when satisfactory lead inevitably in one direction. They lead to repetition, and repetition to unforeseen consequences. No two days in our lives are absolutely alike. whatever we may sav

about monotony; we ourselves are not the same, we either move, be it never so little, a step forwards or backwards.

Thus the next ten days were eloquent of many things to Dorothy. Painting at the farm, strolling over the downs, or sitting by the sea, she almost invariably found one companion by her side on whom these things did not appear to pall. It was only now and again she felt a strange aloofness from Mr. Neeld; it was generally in the evening, when he had drifted into the company of a young lady who had already attracted her attention by her charming profile and remarkable independence of manners.

It was at this precise juncture—that is, if we would be accurate, about a fortnight after Dorothy's arrival in St. Sulpice—that she received a shock which considerably dimmed her Paradise.

Coming down the garden one morning, she caught sight of a piece of notepaper lying across the path. Imagining it to be one of her own letters, she picked it up, but as she inspected it more nearly on her way down to the beach, she discovered it to be written in an unknown hand. It was, indeed, of the sprawling kind of caligraphy, with most of the words curtailed in a way to suit rather the convenience of the writer than the reader, and for a few moments Dorothy was unable to guess in what language the communication might be. But with that curious feeling which prompts us to do what is difficult, and leave undone that which is easy, she began puzzling out the words. It was in English, and was dated two or three days back. It ran as follows:

"Instead of going to Caen and Bayeux, I find myself tumbled down in the quaintest little hole that I have chanced upon in a country that prides itself upon being quaint. Not that we are architectural or archæological here in St. Sulpice, not a bit of it; it's our manners and customs which are enjoyably original. What do you say to tripping down a beach with a sylph in becoming costume, with whom you have danced overnight, and then and there plunging into a sufficiently deep sea? It has its attractive side, I can assure you. Breakfast follows, and then we lounge, and smoke, and drive, and paint bad pictures—everybody paints at St. Sulpice—then dinner and a waltz with the sylph of the morning, a cigar and a tumble-down in an attic, a barn, or a rigged up hayloft, or any other locality that may have been turned into a bedroom

by the ingenious proprietors of the hotel. We get along without the architecture, you see. There is, however, a charming little provincial girl here who seems to miss it, and who, I believe, would like Gothic cathedrals, dungeons, and what not, to grow along the coast for the convenience of visitors. She has the most ingenuous hazel eyes and independent ideas that she manufactures in her own small head; if only she wouldn't paint! A hundred years hence it will be asked why every young lady in our age painted bad pictures or wrote an ungrammatical work of fiction. Here is a strictly modern instance of a woman with brains, who misapplies them in a form which gives you the toothache. She'll never paint—but after all, I suppose, the things we shall never do would fill a big book."

That was all Dorothy read, for the identity of the little provincial girl who painted bad pictures and made herself ridiculous about Gothic cathedrals began to be plain to her. It was no less a person than herself, and the writer she further surmised to be an Englishman staying next door.

It was a splendid August day, but this scrap of paper seemed to stand between her and the sun. She went down to the water's edge to tell this new trouble to her old friend the sea, but somehow there seemed neither pity nor respite for her in the vast, dancing, blue expanse.

Her face, always expressive of her thoughts, would have been a curious study at that moment. Laid bare in its rough undress, her mind seemed to struggle with some readjustment of her self-respect and wounded pride, while her soul, dimly reaching out over the horizon, seemed to writhe in sorry straits. A little quiver trembled along the line of her mouth, but her hands were clasped firmly together, and no tears fell. She felt that she had no real right to expect anything of the writer of that letter, yet she knew that it had pleased her to expect a great deal. It was not so much the sudden revelation of her incapacity to paint that wounded her, but the fact that Mr. Neeld should regard her in a light that would make it possible for him to write flippantly about her. It will be seen that Dorothy had already travelled a long way from the independent spirit that had characterised her at West-hampton, but then it must be remembered that we are never independent of those we love. It is to be feared that Dorothy had

become, during the last two weeks, hopelessly dependent on the good-will of her laconic neighbour.

In this distressing case, poor Dorothy forgot that she had not breakfasted, but the emptiness of the whole beach reminded her that it must be past noonday. In a few minutes there would be loungers and coffee-drinkers on the casino terrace, from which vantage-ground she could be seen. Dorothy jumped up with a longing for solitude and fresh air. The sun was oppressively hot—she naturally turned her face to the higher ground. She had to pass by the hotel, where the noise and heat of the déjeuner was at its height. The smell of cooking proceeded from every door and window, while the noisy clatter of dishes and the shrill cry of the waiters met her ear. Dorothy felt no inclination to go inside, so passed up the principal street, now silent and glaring in the burning mid-day sun, to the steep winding road that led to the downs. Standing still, she heard the faint buzz of mosquitoes, while, as she moved, the parched ground seemed to scorch her feet, and the gutter, which ran in primitive fashion down the middle of the street, gave out a sickly, oppressive odour.

Dorothy did not return until evening, but even the cooler air brought by the setting sun did nothing to assuage her headache. On reaching the cottage, she sent the *bonne* for a bottle of seltzer-water, and scribbled a line in pencil, which she sent to her friend Mrs. Finnis, accounting for her non-appearance.

By-and-by, in the soothing darkness, she rose from the bed on which she had thrown herself, and leant on the window-sill. The night was very still; up above in the great vault thousands of stars shone in the sky. She had had many pretty fancies about them in her childhood; each star then had shone on the forehead of an angel; now they seemed a long way off, and made her feel dizzy.

By-and-by, when her ear had become accustomed to the faint noises of the village, she heard the distant sound of music. It was a dance night at the casino. She jumped up, and in an instant had wrapped a dark shawl round her, and had passed down the staircase into the street. Walking quickly past the cottages and the principal entrance to the casino, which was brightly lighted, she found her way over the rough shingle, past the boats, down on to the beach. There she could see the casino

terrace, and the flight of steps which led to the sea. All was dark and desolate, except in the direction of the casino. There, as usual, the crowd of visitors thronged, and Dorothy soon recognised many of the figures silhouetted against the twinkling lamps. There is always a certain dreariness in watching a familiar scene in which we do not take part. There is a sense of being alienated and shut out. Dorothy was suffering too much to be aware that her isolation added to her greater wretchedness. She was conscious only of one feeling, one desire, that seemed to parch up her existence, just as the fever was burning in her throat. It was for the sight of a well-known face that she had not seen for a whole day. Would he never come?

The dance music struck up again as she stood and waited; lightly-clad women, with careless laughter, rustled above her amid the lights of the casino. Then two figures that she had longed for, yet dreaded to see, came lightly along from the dancing-room, and leant on the terrace rail.

Dorothy shut her eyes for a moment, as something seemed to rise in her throat. She pressed her small nervous hands together to prevent herself crying aloud. She seemed to suddenly feel cold. The gentleman had an attentive, even an amused air, as he leant over his companion, who in reply to something he whispered, turned her clear-cut profile coquettishly for inspection, as she laughed a small, thin, matter-of-fact laugh. That was all she saw.

In front of them lay the great sea lost in blackness. A faint mist had stolen up from the horizon and shrouded the stars; only a thin line of surf shone in the darkness on the upward creeping tide.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME three weeks had passed since Dorothy had stood on the beach of St. Sulpice and watched the lights and figures on the casino terrace. Everything since that time had been blotted out, a dull, aching, tossing time had intervened, in which her dimmed perceptions had recognised neither day nor night. She had had typhoid fever.

The aspect of St. Sulpice had visibly changed during those three weeks. Half the visitors in the village had been frightened away by the rumour of fever, and the remaining bolder half had been scattered by the equinoctial gales, which had come

somewhat earlier than usual that autumn. The hotel stood bare and empty, and the casino lamps had been extinguished for the winter, although the autumn was hardly come.

The first hot stifling nights of Dorothy's illness had given way to rain and storm, and the crisis of her illness passed as the wind roared round the cliffs, and shook the thin walls of the cottage as if they had been paper. Mrs. Finnis, on discovering Dorothy's condition, had immediately telegraphed to her husband to come over and remove the children, although she herself, with her characteristic energy, had determined to stay and nurse her friend. She wrote punctually to the Macquorn family, but insisted that it would be unnecessary for any of them to make the journey to Normandy, as she had charge of Dorothy, and would see to everything possible being done for her. Mrs. Finnis, it must be admitted, was very proud of her nursing capacities, and was by no means inclined to relinquish her charge to the inexperience of one of Dorothy's younger sisters.

In the meantime the heavily freighted diligence denuded St. Sulpice day by day of visitors; the casino announced its closing day, and the more ornamental shops put up their shutters. The excitement of the summer season unexpectedly subsided, and prices assumed their ordinary level. "It was a truly lamentable state of things," said M. George, the hotel-keeper.

One stranger, however, remained in St. Sulpice apparently unscared. Hawley Neeld showed no sign of quitting the deserted bathing resort. Mrs. Finnis had more than once expressed unfeigned surprise at his continued presence, but to tell the truth no one was more surprised than himself.

On hearing first of Miss Macquorn's illness he had immediately called next door to make enquiries. There he had encountered Mrs. Finnis in the passage while he was putting some questions in rather lame French to the complacent *bonne*. Mrs. Finnis looked grave, almost excited.

"Come in," she said quickly, and walking on tip-toe she drew him into the little room with its red-tiled floor and huge eight-day clock. A rough deal table and two or three chairs were the only embellishments to this apartment, but the bright sun flooded in at the door, and the orange nasturtiums almost clambered in at the window.

"Her head is very bad," said Mrs. Finnis. "I am afraid it is fever. But what I want you for is this," she went on. "Dorothy has begged me to give you this letter. It seems it is something of yours. How the poor child got it I can't make out. Ah, I remember! she said she picked it up in the garden. She was very anxious it should be returned to you, at any rate."

"A letter?" said Neeld, who began to remember that he had mislaid a half-finished letter to a friend of his some two or three days before. "What is it?"

"Of course I know nothing about it, except what Dorothy tells me. She read it, it seems, at first without knowing in the least in whose writing it was; but I can't help telling you, Mr. Neeld, that whatever is in the letter seems to have upset her very much. She keeps talking about it!"

It is to be feared that the air of St. Sulpice la Val did not do Mr. Neeld very much good after this interview. It is even said that he got to dislike the place. Yet he did not leave it. On the other hand he talked a good deal, when he saw Mrs. Finnis, of St. Sulpice being a capital place to read in now that it was empty. He even went out of his way to make a mild joke or two about being able to stretch his legs now without fear of treading on the other visitors. While he was making these characteristic excuses to Mrs. Finnis to account for his presence in St. Sulpice, he was giving himself almost unconsciously another set of reasons. A man is in a bad way who makes a number of excuses for doing an ordinary thing, and this was precisely what Hawley Neeld was doing. Sitting in his little garden he could see Mrs. Finnis now and again moving past the window of the next cottage, and at intervals catch the incoherent voice of poor Dorothy as she tossed about in her fever. He would be little short of a brute, he told himself, to desert Mrs. Finnis at such a moment. There might be some errand to run, some doctor to fetch—who could tell? Yet as the days went by and stretched themselves into weeks, he had not even the small satisfaction of knowing that he had been of use. He had never felt so useless and helpless before.

The evening on which Mrs. Finnis had returned him his unlucky letter, proved to be the hottest of all that suffocating time. Old fishermen, with all the love of astounding statements usual with simple folk, said they never remembered such a

sun for twenty years, or so many mosquitoes on that coast. But then they were apt to say the same thing every second summer for the pacification of foreigners.

Neeld had lighted a cigar instead of turning in, and sat leaning against the wall of the garden. It was past midnight, and not a sound broke the silence of the village except now and again the dismal howl of a watch-dog in the distance. Sullen and lowering clouds obscured the stars, only seawards flashes of vivid lightning lit up the dark night. An unnatural stillness reigned, Nature seemed to be holding her breath before the coming tumult.

Hawley Neeld was by no means a fanciful man. He had never, except in the exigences of polite conversation, pretended to understand what nerves meant, yet he experienced that night a novel sensation of dread as he watched the neighbouring cottage window and waited for the coming storm.

He was easy-going, as was natural with a man who had a splendid physique, an appreciative humour, and sufficient income. Such portions of stirring dramas or sentimental novels as were reckoned "touching," simply made him stare. With the best will in the world there was no fibre in Hawley Neeld's nature that could up to that time have been touched, and in this particular he had not the best will in the world. He took life as became a man accustomed to many climates and races, from its active, healthy, open-air side, and to such a man every obstacle was to be overcome by energy.

The pathos of life was what he had never understood. He had rather looked upon it as a woman's department. Now for the first time he stood under the shadow of those forces before which the strongest man is powerless.

Sickness had crept in on this easy-going, sunny, lounging life; and now that it was no longer an object to sun himself, he murmured unreasonably that he was a useless dog. The hardest task that the irony of fate can ask of such a man is to wait.

For the first time in his life he felt unable to sit still; an unaccountable restlessness seized him, which he tried to walk off by pacing up and down in front of the cottages.

"Nothing better than a watch-dog," he muttered; then, as he threw away his cigar, he tried to console himself with the idea that sometimes a dog can be of use. It was not much of a consolation, but it was

the only one he could find to take indoors with him for the night. One or two heavy drops of rain were already falling, but something, as he passed the next cottage, made him halt, and almost hold his breath.

It was the sound of poor Dorothy's voice from the open window. It sounded like a cry. Then came words caught in snatches.

"So many lights—take me back—it is too far off—I shall never paint—see! look at them standing up there—how dark the sun is—water, water!"

She was wandering.

"Poor child, poor child!" Neeld murmured as the storm at last broke.

Some three weeks after, in the changed autumn weather, Hawley Neeld was surprised to hear that Dorothy Macquorn had gone out. He had come, as was his wont, to enquire after the invalid, having made, as he himself humorously reckoned, the same mistake in French for the forty-second time. The grammatical error had again been politely ignored by the *bonne*, when he learnt that Mrs. Finnis had gone to the nearest railway-station, some twenty miles off, to meet Mr. Macquorn, who had come over to fetch home his daughter. The invalid had just gone out, he further learnt. She had gone down the road in the direction of the sea, and had refused any escort.

It did not take Hawley Neeld long to follow her. She was going back, then, this small, pale acquaintance of his, to the hard, narrow, sophisticated county town that she had so often half-laughingly described to him, and all his waiting had availed nothing. He wondered in a curious hopeless way what he should do next, and supposed that it must have been something in the cheerless day that made him feel so lonely. It was indeed one of those bleak days at the end of September that scatter almost the recollection of summer.

There had been a little pale watery sunshine earlier in the afternoon, but now towards five o'clock the clouds were dark and angry. Neeld saw nothing but the torn and ragged sky leaning on the dismal sea. The chill breeze blowing over the downs seemed to lift the clouds at one point in the horizon, making a blurred silver streak; elsewhere the grim evening embraced sky and sea in a dim watery greyness. Inshore stretched the deserted pebbly beach, lined by the tumult of anrrv. foam-tossed waves. The one

human touch to this dreary picture was a small figure huddled up on the empty casino steps. It was Dorothy in a large cloak, come down to say good-bye to the seashore.

When Neeld caught sight of her, he crossed over the pebbles with a few quick strides. He experienced a novel feeling of excitement and anxiety, but no longer the hopeless feeling of a few minutes back.

"This is no day for you to be out," he said, with the nearest approach to a tremor his voice had ever known; "Great Heavens! the wind is enough to kill you."

"I—I wanted to see the place once again," she murmured timidly; "we may be going to-morrow."

"You will come back—you will let me take you home?" he asked entreatingly; then he stooped, and taking her two hands, raised her gently as a mother would her child. He placed her hand under his arm, and, without speaking, turned and looked earnestly into her small pale face.

"I feel rather weak; I cannot walk alone," she answered helplessly as she clung to the strong support.

Neeld seemed satisfied with this arrangement, for he did not again speak. They made their way in this wise up the steep beach, each busy with one thought. Then he said as if she had only just spoken:

"I should be satisfied if only I could help you. I should want nothing better of life."

Dorothy trembled, but whether in weakness or in answer he could not tell. Neither of them spoke again until they had passed up the village street and entered the cottage-garden, now all tumbled and strewn with withered leaves. Neeld opened the cottage door, and then stood aside diffidently for her to pass in. He thought the day grew greyer as he did so. It seemed as if she would just as easily slip out of his life. How many minutes passed he hardly knew; he began to say something, and then drew back, searching for some kind of answer in her eyes.

In the meantime Dorothy was leaning with one hand on the door-handle, gazing blindly into the small cottage interior. The servant had lighted a few sticks in the fireplace to cheer the invalid, and the flickering light lit up the red-tiled floor, a bunch of field-flowers on the deal table, and the other homely details of the little room. But Dorothy saw none of these things. She felt only that all doubt and

uncertainty were ended—scattered like the autumn leaves. Her face was radiant with some inner light as she turned at last to Hawley Neeld.

"Come in," she said simply.

It was not an effusive invitation, but with this woman's voice vibrating in his ear, it seemed as if he were asked to enter into the gates of heaven.

INVITATIONS.

INVITING General Churchill to visit him in his retirement at Houghton Hall, Walpole wrote: "This place affords no news, no subject of amusement and entertainment to you fine gentlemen. Persons of wit and pleasure about town understand not the language, nor taste the charms of the inanimate world. The oaks, the beeches, and chestnuts, seem to contend which should best please the lord of the manor. They cannot deceive, they will not lie. I, in return, with sincerity admire them, and have about me as many beauties as take up all my hours of dangling. Within doors, we come a little to real life, and admire in the almost speaking canvas all the airs and graces which the proudest of the ladies can boast. With these I am satisfied, as they gratify me with all I wish and all I want, and expect nothing in return which I cannot give. If these, dear Charles, are any temptations, I heartily invite you to come and partake of them. Shifting the scene has sometimes its recommendations; and from country fare you may possibly return with a better appetite to the more delicate entertainment of a court life."

The "most honest of corruptionists" effectually guarded against his desired guest suffering from unrealised expectation. Dr. Sheridan seems to have gone the other way about, when, asking Swift to dine at his house, he promised him, in the Latino-Anglicus they both affected: "Ago use, a paro dux. Sum fis hes, as a paro so les, a paro places. A pud in. A fri casei. Arabit astu in. Neu pea. Neu beans. Alam pi fit fora minis ter o state. A cus tardis it abit as at tartis? Mi liquor is toc qui, it costus api Stola quart. A quartos ac. Margo use claret as fine as a rubi. Graves. Lac rima Christi. Hoc. Co te rotæ. Sum Cyprus. As fine Sidere se ver Id runcat everne."

Britton, the first concert-giver, had a stereotyped form of invitation to the

gratuitous musical performances in the room over his coal-shed, running:

"Upon Thursdays repair to my palace, and there Hobble up stair by stair; but I pray you take care,

That you break not your neck by a stumble:
And without e'er a souse, paid to me or my spouse,
Sit still as a mouse, at the top of the house,
And there you shall hear how we fumble."

Parodying one of Macheath's songs, Colman wrote to Planché:

"The dinner's prepared, the party is met,
The dishes are ranged—not one is for show.
Then come undismay'd, your visit's a debt—
A debt on demand—we won't take a 'No.'
You'll fare well, good sir, you can't fear a dew,
Contented you'll sleep, 'twill be better for you;
And sleeping, you know, is the rest of our lives,
And this way we'll try to please both our wives.

Come to Richmond to-morrow to dinner, or you will have lost your Kew for pleasing everybody here." When, in his capacity of Examiner of Plays, Colman received the manuscript of Bunn's *The Minister and the Mercer*, from Lord Belfast, marked by that captious Lord Chamberlain, he notified the fact to the adapter thus: "DEAR BUNN, —Pray dine with me to-day at half-past five. But come at four; we shall then have time to cut the play before we cut the mutton." And it were hard to say which suffered most, the dish or the drama.

Anxious to repay a clever young clergyman for a flattering dedication, Archbishop Herring told him to drop in at Lambeth Palace whenever he was so inclined, incautiously adding, that the oftener he saw him the more he should be obliged to him. Taking lodgings in the neighbourhood, shrewd Mr. Faukes contrived to "drop in" at the palace every day at dinner-time, until the archbishop was driven to something more than hinting that he had had enough of his company; but his unwelcome guest would not understand, and to rid himself of the infliction, he gave him a couple of good livings, and Mr. Faukes found himself well rewarded for ignoring the common saying, that a general invitation is no invitation at all.

True enough, as a rule, the saying does not always hold good. If the Laureate's friend was not to be drawn to the Isle of Wight by the assurance,

"You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip,
Garrulous under a roof of pine,"

he was scarcely the man to resist the poet's hearty,

"Come, Maurice, come; the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;
But when the wreath of March has
blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet;
Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold so dear;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year."

Lord Beaconsfield pronounces the throwing over of a host to be the most heinous of social crimes, and one that ought never to be pardoned. This is in accordance with the ancient rule that nothing but illness, imprisonment, or death could exonerate a man from fulfilling an engagement to dine at another man's table. Modern hosts are not quite so inexorable, or Thackeray would have been compelled to forego the temptation of indulging in tripe and onions at his club, instead of escaping from an engagement on the plea of having unexpectedly met with an old friend, whom he found it impossible to leave. Lord Fife would have been obliged to risk shocking Lady Cork's guests by appearing among them in extreme undress; unless, indeed, confinement in bed, by reason of a blackguard creditor carrying off all his belongings barring a cast of Vestris's leg, came under the head of imprisonment. But even a Roman dinner-giver might have forgiven the gentleman who, failing to keep promise, wrote: "Mr. O——'s affairs turn out so sadly that he cannot have the pleasure of waiting on his lordship at his agreeable house on Monday next. N.B.—His wife is dead."

Learning that Charles Mathews was playing at Bristol, the Duke of Beaufort invited him to Badminton, telling him that among the company already there were two of Her Majesty's judges. The actor, in reply, regretted his engagements precluded him from visiting Badminton, because nothing would have given him greater pleasure to have taken the lives of two judges at pool. "Charley" owed the bench something on his father's account. Mathews the elder, being in Shrewsbury one assize time, turned into court for an hour's amusement. He had not been there many minutes, when an usher put a note in his hand, running: "Judge Park hopes Mr. Mathews will come and sit by him." Threading his way through the crowd, the gratified comedian mounted the judgment-seat, and humbly yet proudly took the place awarded him. The judge shook him cordially by the hand, put the trial list before him, and a packet of sandwiches at his elbow, and made him altogether com-

fortable. Two or three years afterwards Mathews was staying with his friend Rolls, and over the wine and walnuts, the latter asked the actor if he had met Justice Park somewhere; a question setting Mathews in such praise of the judge, that Rolls could not keep from laughing, and so raising suspicion. "Did he say anything about me?" queried Mathews. "Well," was the reply, "he was here not long ago, and said to me: 'I think, Rolls, you are a friend of Mathews, the actor, who has such a dreadful propensity for taking people off. Imagine my consternation, at Shrewsbury, two years ago, on seeing him directly in front of me, evidently studying me with the intention of showing me up. What do you think I did? I sent a courteous message to him, and invited him to come and sit by me; and so, I trust, propitiated him, that he will have too much good feeling ever to introduce me into his gallery of legal portraits.'"

Swift was at no pains to be polite when declining an invitation from his friend Sheridan to bring his lady friends to taste his wine, writing: "Mrs. Dingley and Mrs. Johnson say truly they don't care for your wife's company, though they like your wine; but they had rather have it at their own house to drink in quiet. However, they own it very civil in Mr. Sheridan to make the offer." Byron sent Lady Dover word he "would not come" to her soirée; and might as well have kept his word, for any pleasure he or the lady derived from his changing his mind, since he recorded on the fly-leaf of his Virgil: "Went, after all, for half an hour—home again—hate society. Man has been designated a selfish animal. Now, what in the name of comfort should bring any selfish man here? Unless self prompt us to do nothing but what is agreeable, I do not know why it should have an 'ish' tied to its tail. People going to a swarre are not selfish, they sacrifice comfort and virtue, if they possess that article. At Lady D.'s squeeze I was condemned to listen to an old dowager and Lord C——, the old noodle!"

When a certain English author was asked to the house of an American lady of advanced opinions "to meet some minds at tea," he declined the proffered hospitality on the ground that he was engaged to meet some stomachs at dinner. Probably he thought, like Citoyenne Désiré, that ladies of advanced opinions are best kept at a distance. That wife of a French artisan had the courage to take the redoubtable

Louise Michel to task for turning her husband's head with her foolish writings; making him fancy himself a statesman, under which delusion he neglected his work and starved his family, for the good of his country. An animated correspondence ensued, of which—perhaps because she got the worst of the argument—the famous feminine Communist first grew tired; whereupon she brought it to an end with: "I cannot waste any more time upon the Citoyenne Désiré, who has been annoying me. If she has anything more to say, she had better come to my office, where I have a broom ready for her reception." The next issue of the *Revolutions Sociale* contained the triumphant announcement: "The Citoyenne Désiré has not accepted my invitation!"

Many an invitation, like that of Louise Michel, has been given in the expectation of its non-acceptance. An ex-attaché records an instance of one being given on the express condition that it should not be acted upon. He adored a lady "on the outskirts of society;" she worried him to get her an invitation to an embassy ball, and he worried the ambassadress to grant the favour, but all he could obtain was an invitation to dinner, sent with the understanding that it was not to be used. The lady put the invitation card where every caller could see it, and when a friend observed, "I did not see you, dear, at the embassy ball," she was able to reply: "No, dear, I was so sorry not to be able to go, nor to dinner before, for I was not very well." And the card on the table was accepted as proof that she was not lying.

ABOUT ROSEMARY.

THE plant rosemary was much used and esteemed by our ancestors. Its fragrant smell must have been fraught with many memories to them, some of joy and some of deepest sorrow.

Garlands of rosemary hung in their churches at Christmas. In an account for the parish of St. Margaret, Westminster, A.D. 1647, we read: "Item, paid for rosemarie and bays, that was stuck about the Church at Christmas, one shilling and sixpence;" and the poet Gay, in his *Trivia*, sings:

When rosemary and bays, the poet's crown,
Are hawl'd in frequent cries through all the town,
Then judge the festival of Christmas near,
Christmas, the joyous period of the year!

Rosemary was borne before the bride as

she went to be married, and it was strewn on the path of the bridal party on their return from the church. This plant was used at the wedding-feast—it was dipped in the wine-cups before they were raised to the lips to drink the health of the bride. Both rosemary and bays appear to have been gilded on these occasions. In a curious wedding sermon, by Roger Hacket, D.D., 1607, he thus expatiates on the use of rosemary:

"The last of the flowers is the Rosemary (Rosmarinus, the Rosemary is for married men), the which by name, nature, and continued use, man challengeth as properly belonging to himselfe. It overtoppeth all the Flowers in the Garden, boasting man's rule. It helpeth the Braine, strengtheneth the Memorie, and is very medicinable for the Head. Another property of the Rosemary is, it affects the Hart. Let this Rose Marinus, this flower of men, Ensigne of your Wisdome, Love, and Loyaltie, be carried not only in your Hands, but in your Heads and Harts."

While rosemary wafted memories of joy, its sweet breath was also laden with sorrowful recollections, for it was carried at funerals as well as worn at weddings. In Decker's *Wonderfull Yeare*, 1603, speaking of a bride who died of the plague on her wedding-day, he says:

"Here is a strange alteration, for the Rosemary that was washt in sweet water to set out the bridall is now wet in teares to furnish her buriall."

Rosemary was carried at funerals probably for its odour, and as a token of remembrance of the deceased. This custom is noticed as late as the time of Gay, who died in 1732. In his *Pastoral Dirge* we find these descriptive lines:

To show their love, the neighbours far and near
Follow'd with wistful look the damsel's bier.
Sprigg'd rosemary the lads and lasses bore,
While dismally the parson walk'd before,
Upon her grave the rosemary they threw,
The daisie, butter-flow'r, and endive blue.

In South Lancashire, I believe, the use of rosemary in funeral rites is still observed. Sprigs of rosemary are placed on the corpse as it lies receiving the last visits of old friends, and it is usual to scatter them in the grave. The corpse lying thus adorned brings to mind Friar Laurence's words in the fourth act of *Romeo and Juliet*: "Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary on this fair corse;" and we see from the answer of Capulet that this same rosemary had been "ordained for festival" and as bridal flowers.

Besides figuring in these private and domestic scenes, we find it mentioned on a very grand and public occasion, namely, in a curious printed account of Queen Elizabeth's entry into the City of London, January 14, 1558.

"How many nosegays did Her Grace receive at poore women's hands! . . . A branch of Rosemary given to Her Grace, with a supplication by a poore woman about Fleet Bridge, was seene in her chariot till Her Grace came to Westminster."

Rosemary was anciently thought to strengthen memory. This property of the plant is embalmed by Shakespeare in Ophelia's plaintive words: "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember." This pathetic utterance will surely connect rosemary with memory to the end of time. Perdita, too, in the Winter's Tale, alludes to the same idea:

Reverend sirs,
For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and savour all the winter long:
Grace and remembrance be to you both,
And welcome to our shearing!

Rosemary became scarce after the Plague, for Decker says: "Rosemary, which had wont to be sold for tweldepence an armful, went now"—on account of the Plague—"at six shillings a handful." It did not go entirely out of fashion in London till the close of the last century, and then owing to a dearth of the plant. From a stanza in Shenstone's Schoolmistress, 1742, it seems to have found a shelter and growing place in country gardens when it became scarce in towns and lordly grounds:

And here trim rosemarine, that whilom crown'd
The daintiest garden of the proudest peer,
Ere driven from its envy'd site it found
A sacred shelter for its branches here,
Where edg'd with gold its glitt'ring skirts appear.
Oh, wassel days! Oh, customs meet and well!
Ere this was banish'd from its lofty sphere;
Simplicity then sought this humble cell,
Nor ever would she more with thane and lordling
dwell.

It is quite certain that in our time it is so little known or cultivated that many people would be puzzled to describe it; many, perhaps, do not remember to have seen it; and to most of us its only familiar use is as one of the ingredients of hair-wash. As one of Shakespeare's flowers, it ought to be dear to English hearts, and to gain admittance into modern gardens. Many old-fashioned cottage flowers have lately become the cherished ornaments of the "trim gardens of retired leisure." Add

another in the rosemary. Its pretty poetical name is from the Latin *Rosmarinus*, sea-dew, thus called because the underpart of the leaves is white, as if splashed with the spray of the ocean. The flower is of a pale-bluish or greyish white, and of an extremely fragrant smell and aromatic taste. It is not a native of England, but grows wild in the South of Europe, flourishing in France, Spain, Italy, the basin of the Mediterranean, and Asia Minor. In the district of Narbonne it forms hedges for gardens, and its aroma is said to give the honey of Narbonne its fine flavour. Its essential oil is combined with camphor, and it deposits crystals of camphor when long kept. Hungary Water is made of it; it is reviving, and relieves headache. In old Herbals we find it described as useful in strains and bruises, and given internally is said to have cured a Queen of Hungary of a paralytic affliction. The plant sometimes buds in January, but its common time for flowering is April. It was one of Kirke White's favourite flowers; but he describes an exceptional season when he writes of it as "Loving to bloom on January's front severe."

We find no certain record of its cultivation in England before the year 1548; but it is probable that it was introduced here long before that date, perhaps brought home by some Crusader, for it was sung by troubadours as an emblem of constancy and devotion to the fair sex.

In conclusion, here is a Spanish proverb on the rosemary, which contains either a warning of a fate to be shunned, or a happy promise of a danger escaped for ever:

Quien pasa por romero, y no lo quiere coger,
Ni tiene amores ni los quiere tener!

thus freely translated by the late Lord Nugent:

Who passeth by the rosemarie,
And careth not to take a spray,
For woman's love no care hath he,
Nor shall he though he live for aye!

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXII. COMMITTED.

MRS. HATTON was getting through the hours of the night very satisfactorily. In the bygone days about which she was wont to be pathetically retrospective at times, she had been possessed of a wonderful capacity for enjoyment, especially for the enjoyment of society. There was in her a

good deal more holiday blood than runs in the veins of the majority of Englishwomen, who are apt to take their pleasure with languor, and a feeling of boredom that resembles sorrow as the mist resembles the rain. But Mrs. Hatton loved to celebrate every little anniversary in the calendar by a fête, on however small a scale, and never grew fatigued or weary in making preparations for it.

Since these halcyon days there had intervened a period of humiliation, anxiety, neglect, poverty, and loneliness. But these experiences, bitterly as she had felt them, had not robbed her of the power of enjoyment. True, she had come to Mrs. Archibald Campbell's At Home to-night, feeling that for her society would wear a widely different aspect, and lack a vast portion of the charm it had possessed for her, when she had been endowed with the power of bidding it to her own house. But now, after the experience of an hour or two, she felt that a good deal of her old self was being resuscitated under the influence of the sights and sounds that were around her.

The light laughter, the never-ceasing hum of conversation, the music, the lights and flowers, the pretty dresses, and above all, the indefinable interest that attaches to the personnel of a number of men and women who have made names more or less creditable and widely-known in contemporaneous art, literature, and the drama, all these exercised their subtle influence over her. It had been through no fault of hers—only through a brief bit of confiding folly—that her life had been laid waste for a time. Now it seemed as if the flowers were about to spring up in her path again, and she gave herself up to the fullest sense of enjoyment that seeming promised her.

She had not joined the crowd which had undulated and swayed round Mr. Josiah H. Whittler during his first recitation. But some of the cadences and inflections of the American actor's well-managed voice fell upon her ear, and she knew from the irrepressible way in which his audience burst now and again into simultaneous peals of laughter, that he made his points well.

He had not appeared on the boards of an English theatre yet, but he came with a fine reputation from Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, and a big house was expected for his initial performance. He was cast for the leading character in a piece that had been written expressly for him by

a dramatist whose reputation was still unsoiled by the breath of a suspicion of failure, and a leading English tragedian had consented to take the secondary part. Altogether his first appearance was to make an epoch in current stage history, and a brilliant house was confidently announced.

It was an opportunity not to be lost. Here was a distinguished man, whom to know would be fame in her now limited circle, and by making a little effort she might know him.

"I take such a deep interest in every form of American culture; I am never tired of considering the points whereon they diverge, and the points whereon they agree and march with our more time-worn systems. They live at such a pace! It must be thrilling to win the sympathies of the American public on the boards; if they admire and approve, the admiration and approbation must come home to one with such force and speed," she said in her brightest and most fervent manner.

"On the other hand, it must be said that their sarcasm and disapprobation manifest themselves with equal force and speed," Mr. Archibald Campbell said; then as he felt himself to be due in another quarter, and as this was a vivacious, amusing little woman, he added: "But Mr. Whittler can tell you all about it. It seems he was unknown to fame till within the last few months, and now he always travels by special trains, and keeps one secretary employed solely with opening and answering managerial entreaties to name his own day and price, and make them the happiest of men. Shall I introduce him to you?"

It was a proud moment for the woman to whom neglect and obscurity were as a blighting east wind, and who had shivered under neglect in obscurity so long. She had come here a stranger to-night, having no hold or claim of comradeship or similarity of pursuits, and struggles, and hopes, with any one of the people about her, and now, by the sheer force of her will and fascination, she was presently to be prominently honoured by her host introducing his most distinguished guest to her.

She felt suddenly that she was the centre of attraction and observation as Mr. Campbell made way for her to pass into the circle, and tried to gain Mr. Josiah H. Whittler's attention. For one instant she glanced round triumphantly, feeling that a becoming dress, excitement, and the sense of being of temporary importance, were combining to make her look almost

as pretty as of old. Then she turned her eyes on the American actor, who was lingering to hear a few more honeyed words, and all the pride and glory, all the harmless—almost piteous—self-satisfaction went out abruptly, leaving a frightened, helpless, miserable woman in the place of the bright, beaming, self-complacent one who had come up to be crowned with the special honour of an introduction to Mr. Josiah H. Whittler.

"I'm ill—in pain; let me go back!" she stammered out, withdrawing her hand quickly from her host's arm. "No, no; don't come with me," she added hurriedly, as he followed her. "I must go home. These attacks——"

She sank down half-fainting on the nearest chair, but roused herself again directly, under the influence of the agonised dread she had that Mr. Campbell would call someone to her, and make her the subject of a general remark.

"Let me go without a word," she pleaded with a ghastly smile. "Don't come down with me. Tell Miss Ray I am ill and gone home, but don't—don't speak of me to anyone else."

Mr. Archibald Campbell promised readily, but hardly knew to what he was pledging himself; and then the poor stricken woman hurried away as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her. In another minute she was cowering away in the corner of a cab, not sobbing or moaning, but shivering as one who had received a death-blow.

Which indeed was the case. The death-blow of a belief she had fondly nurtured, without knowing how dear it was to her till now—that death-blow had been dealt to it to-night.

Ann met her at the door, and after one glance at the pallid wretched face, led her mistress in silence to her own bedroom.

There was not a word spoken by either of them until Mrs. Hatton, still shivering as if in an ague-fit, was got into bed. Then she looked up into Ann's sorrowful face, and the scalding, unrelieving tears rushed from her own eyes suddenly.

"You've met your 'trouble' again, I see," the servant murmured sympathetically.

"Yes, it's a living one still; but, oh, Ann, he didn't see me to know me! Perhaps he'll never find me out. Oh, I never knew what peace there has been even in all this poverty that I've passed through, I never knew how I hated him till to-night."

Then she told Ann how in the celebrated American actor, Mr. Josiah H. Whittler, she had recognised her own worthless, cruel, vicious husband, who had deserted her years ago.

"He didn't recognise me! He may never find me out!"

There was a fervent thanksgiving breathed in the first sentence. There was a passionate prayer prayed in the second. No fiercely-worded denunciation of him could have betrayed such profound aversion, loathing, contempt, hatred, and fear for and of him as did these tremblingly-spoken sentences.

The woman was absolutely writhing in her soul at the possibility of the anguish of being reunited to him.

"What peace it has been! Oh, and I'd endure double the worry the poverty has caused me sometimes to go on having the peace. All the friends—the few kind friends—I have made will forsake me if he finds me out and comes back to me. The selfish littleness of his nature will make him claim me, perhaps, as I have made the friends. Do you think he did see me to-night? It seemed to me all in a moment that he was all eyes, and that they were on me. But that was my fright made me fancy things, perhaps."

"You'll know, poor dear, when Miss Ray comes home. Till then we'll hope for the best," Ann said soothingly.

And presently, her hand closely clasping the hard, but true and tender hand of the old servant, the poor frightened, suffering woman fell asleep.

Her hope was fallacious; her prayer was in vain!

Mr. Archibald Campbell had hardly regained the drawing-room after seeing his suddenly-indisposed guest downstairs, when he was assailed by enquiries as to the reason of her abrupt departure.

"She looked as if she had seen a ghost," Mrs. Campbell said, addressing an audience; "and I had been taking her for Miss Ray all the evening, and when I saw her looking so ill I asked for my brother, and found she was not Miss Ray after all."

"Who was your unknown guest?" Mr. Josiah H. Whittler asked affably. "Mr. Archibald Campbell with his customary courtesy, of which I have been the unfailing object ever since I have had the pleasure of making his esteemed acquaintance, tells me that the lady was, up to the moment of her departure, extremely desirous of being introduced to me. I shall

do myself the honour of calling to enquire for her, if you will kindly favour me with her name and address."

Captain Edgecumb, who had just joined the group with Jenifer, gave the lady's name and address in perfect good faith, and Mr. Josiah H. Whittler entered it in his note-book with American care and nonchalance.

But in spite of his being such a consummate actor, more than one of his fellow-guests, whose experiences of Americans at home and abroad had been many and varied, said of him :

"Whittler's the only American out who forgets his Americanisms in moments of excitement; his accent and English are irreproachable, when he doesn't remember that they ought not to be either."

Jenifer was not very long in following Mrs. Hatton home. The girl was neither agitated nor excited by the step she and Captain Edgecumb had taken this evening, but she was preoccupied by considerations as to whether she had done wisely and well in taking it at all. A longing to go home and tell her mother about it, and hear expressions of satisfaction, and contentment, and hope for the future, came over Jenifer, and made her singularly impatient of wasting more time at the At Home.

But before she got away she had to go through the ordeal of a formal and explanatory introduction to his sister Bella. And somehow it seemed to Jenifer, that Mrs. Campbell's manner, though it was kind and hearty, lacked the "something" which Jenifer would have best liked to feel in it.

"You will find matrimony interfere very much with your profession, or your profession with matrimony," Mrs. Campbell said outspokenly, and Captain Edgecumb, who was counting more than he knew, or would have been ready to acknowledge on Jenifer's probable success, answered sharply :

"Nonsense, Belle; you idle women, who do nothing but potter about your home preserves and amuse yourselves, have no idea of the way in which really clever, capable women can combine two sets of duties, performing each perfectly."

"How learned Harry has become on the subject of woman's two spheres under your auspices, Miss Ray!" his sister said gaily, but, though she spoke lightly, the astute woman of the world was thinking all the time: "That girl is doing a stupid thing in

letting my brother suppose she's going to make the struggle to combine the two sets of duties. Harry's a dear old boy. She'll never be fonder of him than I am; but she's starting by letting him expect too much of her. If she goes on at this confiding rate she'll be in a state of slavery before she's been married many years; neither her time nor her purse will be under her own control; her children and her art will fight for undivided possession of the former, and her husband will make her think she's defrauding him if he hasn't unlimited control over the latter. I know what the independency of a self-supporting woman means directly she becomes a wife; but that poor girl is going into it blindfold, for Harry's no more magnanimous than the majority. Thank my lucky stars I never made a penny in my life, and so Archie never expected one of me, or grudged one to me; but a woman who makes money for herself pawns herself by marrying, and never seems able to pay up the interest, far less to redeem herself."

Mrs. Archibald Campbell did not thus think out the subject of a money-making woman's responsibilities and difficulties without many interruptions. But these reflections on her brother's announced engagement, and on the hardihood of the extremely attractive and good-looking girl who had engaged herself to him, ran through all her other thoughts and reflections this night like a tune—like a tune of the sound of which she would most willingly have rid herself. But it haunted her, repeating itself over and over again with irritating persistency, as frivolous rhythms and airs do in feverish dreams. At last she made a final effort to get rid of the burden of anxious forethought, and believed that she had cast it from her with the words :

"Well, it's her look-out, not mine, after all, and I suppose it will be all the more comfortable for Harry if she never looks out at all. My duties are very childish according to his estimate of them; still I shall do them all the better to-night if I don't gratuitously worry myself about my brother's affairs."

It may be recorded here that Bella Campbell knew her brother rather better than Jenifer Ray did. The sister's forebodings as to the ultimate fate of one over whom Harry had complete sway were not groundless.

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BY BASIL.
AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER III. CHILDHOOD.

CERTAINLY Master Guard was baptised a month late. According to the theory of evolution, we believe we ought to find in the life of man, from its very first beginnings to its maturity, suggestions of the successive stages of his promotion from an ascidian—an abstract and brief chronicle of his rise from the ranks—a kind of table of contents to the volume in which his history is written at large in Nature. This would account for the engaging characteristics of boyhood—the monkey stage, noisy, quarrelsome, imitative, and mischievous. But there are monkeys and monkeys. There is a low class of monkey with characteristics corresponding to those of early childhood—an American monkey, called "the howler," of which Mr. Wallace says: "The most remarkable of the American monkeys are the howlers, whose tremendous roaring exceeds that of the lion or the bull, and is to be heard frequently every morning and evening." Master Guard, as we have seen, passed through this stage, and has now reached that of a more advanced species, with more intelligent powers of annoyance. For, though but eight years of age, he has so fulfilled the precocious promise of his infancy as to be more troublesome than most boys of twelve.

It is only fair to him, however, to say that his powers in this respect were brightened and sharpened by continuous friction, for Mrs. Pybus still lives, and lives with her son. The old lady takes still the keenest interest in the boy, not for his own sake so much as for that of Mrs. John, whom she can mortify daily and deeply by interference with his education. Besides,

this interference is a daily demonstration that she is not as deaf as Mrs. John would make her out. Mrs. John's lessons, therefore, were always supplemented by those given by the old lady. At first the unfortunate child hated these exemplary second lessons as he used to hate the exemplary second toilets of his infancy, but after some time he would go up into the old lady's room with a resignation that seemed suspicious to Mrs. John. Accordingly one day she followed him up, and stood at the door, which was ajar, to hear him read to Mrs. Pybus. At first there was an absolute silence, then a shrill scream of "and," followed by stillness that might be felt, broken at last by a hissing "is," then another interval of progress as inaudible as the exquisite movement and music of the spheres, when again the important word "and" was shouted with all due emphasis, and the only other word thought worthy of mention by the young gentleman in a long and interesting description of the domestic hen, was the suggestive but tantalising disjunctive conjunction "but." Master Guard was only five years of age when he invented this system of reading made easy, which speaks much for his precocity and for his knowledge of the characteristics of Mrs. Pybus, if not of those of the domestic hen.

But in time he came to know something too of the characteristics of the domestic hen. Rev. John Pybus got the little country living of Chirnside, with a house and garden. Mrs. Pybus, who was country born and bred, at once claimed the garden as her own exclusive domain, and at the same time established a settlement of hens in the yard. Now a hen in the garden is as demoralising as was Mrs. Pybus in a schoolroom—it scratches up the good seed sown by others. And one of the

few gratifications Master Guard derived from the presence of Mrs. Pybus in the parsonage, was the pleasure of hunting the hens into the garden just at the lesson-hour, and out of it when it should have been in progress. He had hardly got well under weigh when with the quick eye of youth he would descry the intruders, and shout :

"The hens, Mrs. Pybus; the hens!"

"Dear—dear! Again! Go and hunt them out, child!"

Master Guard was a tactician of the wary school of Napoleon. He must first divide the enemy, and then overwhelm them in detail. He would scatter the hens to the four winds, then run each in separately to the yard. It is true this took time—generally all the time set apart for his lesson—but the boy never regarded or regretted this, if he could do his work thoroughly, and to the satisfaction of Mrs. Pybus. The old lady was rather astonished by the regular recurrence of the incursion at the lesson hour, but she set the coincidence down, not to the craft of Master Guard, but to the craft of her hens, who had come to know the precise hour when the guardian angel of the garden would be engaged elsewhere. This extraordinary instance of animal sagacity so impressed her that she told it almost daily, Master Guard listening demurely, and coming at last to think that he had somehow made an important contribution to natural history. Nor was Mrs. Pybus's faith in the sagacity of her hens—only her hens could have shown such sagacity—shaken by their incursion ceasing as suddenly as it began; for this proved only that the wily birds considered the game not worth the candle—the short stay in the garden not worth the sharp chase out of it. The fact was that Mrs. John, considering that no hen, however sagacious, could enjoy the agony of fright it went through in the chase, began to suspect they were driven to the slaughter, and taxed Master Guard with the deed.

"Archie, you've been driving the hens into the garden."

"Yes, mother," said the boy directly, but holding down his head.

He always called Mrs. John "mother," and worshipped her as such; but the Rev. John he would call only "uncle," and the old lady "Mrs. Pybus."

"You wouldn't have done it if you had thought about it, dear," smoothing back the hair from his flushed face; "it was deceit, Archy."

"Shall I tell her, mother?"

It was the most painful penance he could think of, for he detested Mrs. Pybus; but he would have been glad to do it to appease the self-reproach which his mother's words aroused. Decidedly Mrs. John, to be sternly moral, should have said "Yes," but she didn't. Mrs. Pybus was cruelly severe with the child, whom severity only hardened, and Mrs. John, who lost a good deal of time and temper in getting him out of the old lady's clutches, could not bring herself to send him to certain execution. So she said again, "You didn't think of what you were doing, dear," and drew the boy to her and kissed him. Whereat he wept more than he would have done under Mrs. Pybus's chastisement—and was a good boy ever after!

Not he; he was a good boy for an hour after. For Master Guard had a good deal of his father in him, and lived more than most children from moment to moment. With most children the joy or sorrow of the moment is perfect and rounded, with no looking before and after, intense as the sudden light and dark of a thunderstorm at night. And with Archie, more even than with most children, the present was eternal.

The self-reproach, therefore, which made him now hide his tears against his mother's dress was, indeed, real and poignant, and would prevent his hunting the harassed hens in and out of the garden in future; but it did not prevent him, the next morning, from pounding handfuls of the most harrowing discords on the piano as *The Blue Bells of Scotland* for the benefit of Mrs. Pybus.

"That will do, Archibald," said the old lady, nodding her head with qualified approval, the highest approval she ever vouchsafed him; "you are improving, but you want expression."

At this moment Mrs. John burst into the room.

"I thought the gasalier had fallen on the piano. What was it, Archie?"

"It was *The Blue Bells of Scotland*, mother," turning rather red; but then, seeing irrepressible laughter in her eyes, he added gleefully, "Mrs. Pybus says I'm improved."

"But the piano isn't."

"I'm very sorry, mother; but I wanted to see if I could make her hear anything," nodding towards Mrs. Pybus.

Mrs. Pybus, interpreting this reference to her as a request for a holiday, answered promptly :

"Certainly not; you've not begun your reading yet;" and then severely to Mrs. John: "You might have heard, I think, that he was at his music, Mrs. John."

"Do be a good boy, Archie."

"Archibald—reading!" as Mrs. John left the room.

This peremptory word of command was given more sternly even than usual in consequence of Mrs. John's interruption. Yet Master Guard got his book with less than his usual reluctance, for to-day Mrs. Pybus was not knitting. Generally she knitted during his lessons, and rapped his knuckles so with her long wooden knitting-needles that he had to tangle her wool beforehand—when he could get at it—to keep her innocently employed. But to-day, as for many days past, she was reading a devotional work lent her by a clergyman of her own school—of the straitest sect of the Calvinists—entitled *The Widow's Cruse*.

During her perusal of this oily work Archie was left at perfect peace. Therefore, as we said, he got his book with less than his usual reluctance and watched Mrs. Pybus take up hers with much satisfaction. But when she opened it this satisfaction died suddenly out of his face and gave way to a blank expression of perplexity and despair. His eyes widened, his jaw dropped. In a moment he realised how dreadful and irrepairable was the mistake he had made.

How? Well, in this way. For the first few days of Mrs. Pybus's devotional exercise he watched anxiously the blue woollen thread she used as a marker steal all too quickly through its pages, like the hand of a clock gliding towards a fatal hour. Why not put the hand of the clock back?

It was a happy inspiration. Every morning he put the blue thread a few pages back, without the old lady having the least suspicion of the pious fraud practised upon her.

In this way *The Widow's Cruse* might have lasted as long as the original oil, if this very morning Master Guard had not made the mistake which now clouds his cheery face. Just as he had drawn out the marker he was called off to do something for his mother, and on his return, emboldened by long impunity, he put back the thread, near the beginning of the book as he thought, but really near the end, for the volume was upside down. Hence his disgust and dismay. Would she finish it that morning? At her ordinary rate of reading she certainly would not have finished it;

but she was so tired of the interminable work, and so pleased to find herself in sight of land, that she skipped disgracefully and shut the book with a snap long before Master Guard's time was up.

"Fetch my knitting, Archibald."

It was sentence of death. She didn't chasten him for his reading, but for his bearing. His reading she hardly even affected to hear, but either his eyes, hands, arms, feet, or back always needed setting to rights, and were set to rights by many smart strokes of the knitting-needle on the knuckles.

Archie went miserably upon his errand, but on his return, "creeping like snail unwillingly to school," he was saved, as the Capitol was saved, by the foolish cackle of fowl.

Mrs. Pybus, being convinced that Jemima stole her eggs, gave strict orders that every cackle of the hens (of the churching kind) should be at once reported to her, that she might be beforehand with Jemima in the hen-house. Master Guard, when at his lessons, was most zealous in this service with a zeal that was not always according to knowledge, or at least good faith, for sometimes, when in desperation, he would report the barren clamour of the cock, without loss of credit, for, as Mrs. Pybus was much more anxious to suspect Jemima than Master Guard, she always set down her disappointment to Jemima's having been too quick for her. It was no use for that maligned handmaiden to shout at the top of an angry voice: "It was the cock, mum." The old lady would then pretend to have heard the alarm in dispute herself, and would ask whether "at her age she was likely to mistake a crow for a cackle?"

Master Guard—his credit having been made absolutely secure by this endorsement—could enjoy the battle with a disengaged mind, and as he detested Jemima only less than Mrs. Pybus, he did enjoy gleefully the tug of war between Greek and Greek.

It will be seen that the young gentleman had inherited his father's fertility of resource, and it might be thought that he was a sly youth naturally, yet he wasn't, but the reverse rather. As, however, Mrs. Pybus had been his relentless enemy ever since he could remember anything, and as all power was on her side, he was driven into a recourse to the craft which is the resource of all weak and hunted creatures. If you treat a child as a slave you will teach him a slave's vices, for fear is the

mother of meanness. Happily for Archie Mrs. John went on the opposite tack with him, and so counteracted the ill-effects of Mrs. Pybus's severity. Indeed, as he enjoyed the humour of his own tricks immensely, he would recount them sometimes to Mrs. John, who did not take as grave a view of most of them as of the affair of "the still vexed" hens, where the joke was rather too deep and long sustained, and was besides unconfessed.

Having escaped from Mrs. Pybus, Archie shot off to Tom Chown.

Tom was retained to clean the knives and boots, run errands, set an example in church to the other choir-boys, and to give the balance of his time to Mrs. Pybus's garden. This balance, however, Archie embezzled to the old lady's daily exasperation, exacerbated by Tom's bearing in the dock. Tom, indeed, when summoned by Mrs. Pybus for judgment, meant his bearing to be abject, and his defence (inculcating Archie) to be complete. But Archie took care to be present in court on these dread occasions, and to make Tom laugh by saying or singing some outrageous nonsense at the critical moment. When the wretched Tom had drawn a long breath, and made up his mouth to shout his explanation, Archie would sing out "A-men" with a really happy imitation of the model chorister, and Tom, who had no command over the muscles of his moon-face, would burst out into a laugh, whose supposed insolence drove Mrs. Pybus wild. It was useless, however, for her to complain to the Rev. John of Tom's iniquities, for to upset his faith in Tom (who had been baptised at birth by total immersion), would be to upset his hope of the millennium, and worse still, to upset the corner-stone of his great discovery. Thus Archie appropriated Tom with impunity. In an incredibly short time he had reduced the sucking saint to slavery, and had made him his hewer of wood and drawer of water in the grand enterprise of the moment, for Archie had always some grand enterprise on hand. It was Tom who bought for him the gunpowder for his patent cannon, and who, indeed, did him yeoman's service in forging that formidable piece of ordnance. Archie, it is true, designed it, but Tom did the most at its manufacture. It was made out of the nozzle of the bellows, blocked at the wider end with some lead, chopped with the help of a hammer and a carving-knife off one of the weights of the kitchen-clock, and melted in an electro-

plated dessertspoon. You see there was nothing, howsoever seemingly useless, that Archie's ingenuity couldn't find a use for. Even the castors of the study armchair could, he discovered, be turned to some use by filing off their brass settings and mounting his cannon upon them. When, however, his cannon was made so perfect that he was able to blow off his eyebrows with it, an unfortunate stop was put by Mrs. John to his inventions in this direction, and the docile Tom had to be set on other service.

The business in hand to-day was the completion of an ark to contain animals, clean and unclean—mostly the latter.

Archie had a variety of pets, which he was forced to hide away from Mrs. Pybus, who had a creepy horror of such vermin, and these pets, therefore, he kept in the false roof, which was inaccessible from within the house.

The house was a Gothic structure, with a very high pitched roof, which left room for attics if they were wanted. As they were not wanted, there was no staircase thereto, and no floor, only the naked joists with four planks upon them for the use of plumbers, etc. On these four planks, as on a raft, Archie had embarked his treasures—three lop-eared rabbits, two guinea-pigs, six white mice, four white rats, and a hedgehog.

How did he get them there? The place seemed accessible only from the outside, and there only by a ladder, and there was no ladder of that length within the youth's reach or his power to raise. But there was a great haystack at the back of the house, whose top was on a level with one of the windows of the false roof and within four feet of it, and there was a short ladder, which Archie hauled up, with Tom's help, to the top of the stack, and used as a drawbridge to span the chasm. Once across, they drew the ladder after them and breathed freely. They guarded against the only remaining chance of detection—that of being heard—by shifting the four planks, with great labour, till they rested over Mrs. Pybus's bedroom, with an absolute trust in her deafness.

To-day, Tom, under Archie's directions, put the finishing touch to the ark—formed out of an old wine-case—which was to contain, in separate compartments, all his pets, except the hedgehog. When it was at last completed, and the animals were being transferred to their new home, one of the rats, escaping during transhipment,

ran along between the joists, and was pursued so excitedly by Tom that, in scrambling after it, he leant his knee upon the lath and plaster, went through up to his thigh, and, by a convulsive effort to recover himself, made a frightful gash in the ceiling.

Mrs. Pybus, who was contemplating with much complacency a black silk dress spread out upon her bed, had her attention gently called to Tom's leg—swinging like the sword of Damocles above her head—by a brief, but brisk shower of lath and plaster, mingled with a white rat and a hedgehog—for Tom, in his frantic struggles, had swept the hedgehog off the plank with his elbow.

Before she could recover breath enough to scream, Tom's leg was withdrawn, amid another blinding shower of dust and plaster, followed by a perfect downpour of mice, rats, rabbits, and guinea-pigs. The fact was, Archie, in his struggles to extricate Tom, had knocked the ark over, and precipitated its lively contents into the chasm.

Mrs. Pybus stood amid the downpour, the picture of Horace's Pyrrha at the deluge—"Pyrrha nova monstra questæ." Having with some difficulty clambered from a chair on to the dressing-table, she uttered scream upon scream, partly to terrify and keep at bay the multitudinous monsters, and partly to summon help.

Soon the whole household were picking their steps in her room and listening to her tale. It was not credible. She was so far from identifying the saint's leg that she described it as vast and vicious-looking, an unmistakable limb of Satan—i.e., of a burglar—and insisted on having Tom sent at once for the police.

But why should a burglar carry a hedgehog in his pocket, or even a guinea-pig?

The Rev. John, as he listened to her tale and looked from one to the other of the strange beasts, was puzzled.

Mrs. John was not puzzled as to the criminal. She knew at once that Archie was at the bottom of the business, but she was puzzled as to how even he had got into the false roof. However, she kept a discreet silence, in the faint hope that she might yet be able to screen the culprit.

While Jemima went to look for Tom to send him for the police, Mrs. John hurried off to find Archie. Both youths were together, and busy—indeed, engrossed—

with what Bacon calls "the most innocent of human pleasures," gardening.

Mrs. John called Archie aside. If she had had any doubt before, she could have none at all now on beholding the rapt industry of the boy.

"Archie, how did you get up there?"

"By the haystack, mother."

"By the haystack!"

Mrs. John went round to the back of the house, followed by the crestfallen Archie.

"But how did you get across?" looking up with a breathless horror at the chasm, which seemed all the higher from its narrowness.

"We put the garden-ladder across, mother."

Archie, to his dying day, never forgot the effect of this confession on Mrs. John. Instead of scolding him soundly, as he expected, she caught him in her arms, pressing him close, and kissing him again and again, as if he had just escaped some horrible danger.

And, indeed, this was the idea of the little woman, whose vivid imagination pictured Archie a shapeless mass on the flags where they stood.

"You must never go up there again," she gasped with a kind of sob.

"No, mother," said Archie, putting his arms round her neck and kissing her penitently.

"And you must go at once and tell your uncle," said Mrs. John, recovering herself, "or they'll send for the police."

Archie's confession, which could not be kept from Mrs. Pybus, had a far-reaching effect of which poor Mrs. John never dreamed.

The old lady, indeed, said nothing, and, better still, sulked, and would not hear him his lessons; but Archie rejoiced prematurely, as we shall see, over this happy issue of his iniquities.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LINCOLNSHIRE. PART I.

OVER the flats and fens, a landmark for miles and miles around, rise the cathedral towers of Lincoln. Whether catching the first touch of rosy light out of the gloom of dawn; or towering over the grey mists that roll in from the marshes; or gleaming white in the sunshine against the storm-clouds that are brooding seawards; or glorified in the last glow of sunset from the

western sky—in any way or in any mood these towers seem to exercise an all-pervading influence on the scene. And this influence is recognised with a rude grasp of its power, in the popular saying, that the Evil One sits on Lincoln towers and looks over the world below. But there was a time when only beneficent influences were ascribed to Lincoln towers; when the swineherd from the forest, and the shepherd from the wold, and the fen-man from his marshy home, hurried to the shrine of Our Lady at Lincoln as the most august and venerable of earthly sanctuaries; and when a visit to its riches and wonders was among the brightest episodes in a life of labour and sorrow.

It is not till you reach the city of Lincoln itself that you lose the sense of the pervading presence of its cathedral, and certainly the first aspect of the city is a disenchantment. On the level ground about the cathedral heights a modern town has sprung up, a busy, thriving, brewing, malting town, with the reek of brewers' grains in the air; with horsey men, always ready for a deal or for a bet, thronging its principal inns; with a railway-crossing intersecting its main street, where there is always going on a vigorous shunting of cattle-trucks and pig-waggons.

But pass through the fair and mount the hill, you seem to leave the age behind you, and a different zone of existence marks each stage of the ascent. Here you find ancient houses, relics of the fourteenth century, the still earlier western porch of the cathedral, and Roman arches of a date even more remote. There is no disenchantment in a nearer view of the grandest of our English cathedrals. All seems perfect in its kind: the stern solid masonry of the Norman builders, the aerial vaulting, the riches of transept and choir, with all the charm of contrast and of colour; the work of many hands, of many ages, blended and joined with wondrous skill, and fused by time into a grand harmonious whole. Here in the porch we have the wide-jointed masonry of Remigius, whom William the Conqueror brought over from the abbey of Fécamp to show his new subjects how churches should be built. And Remigius had as his model, it is said, the cathedral of Rouen, not as we see it now with all the florid detail of the French school, but as it first rose square and massive among the green islands of the Seine. This first cathedral of Lincoln, built by its first bishop, for Remigius had

recently removed the episcopal seat from Dorchester in Oxfordshire, seems to have been seriously damaged by a great fire some thirty years after its erection—a fortunate circumstance for succeeding ages, as the building that rose upon its ruins was constructed in the palmy days of Gothic inspiration, when the skill of masons and artificers had outgrown the massive forms of the Romanesque, and taken flight heavenwards in soaring clusters of columns and fairy-like vaulting. Some of the best work in the cathedral, the choir, purest and best perhaps of cathedral choirs, and a great part of the noble transept, are attributed to Bishop Hugh, the amiable saint—for he was canonised in later days—whose attribute is the swan, as according to tradition he was constantly followed by swans, who left the sedge-bordered stream to feed out of his generous hands. From the time of Bishop Hugh the builders of the minster seemed to have worked backwards to the original porch of Remigius, which was incorporated into the new buildings. And when the great outline was complete, successive accretions of chapels and choirs continued to represent every stage in the progress and decline of ecclesiastical architecture.

Of Bishop Hugh and his swans something more may be said. It was Bishop Hugh who violated the grave of Fair Rosamond, whose remains had been laid before the high altar of the church attached to the nunnery of Godstow, of which she had in her life been a benefactress. Perhaps the fair penitent was hardly a good example for a convent of sacred nuns, but Christian charity would surely have let her bones remain in peace. Possibly, however, the good bishop compounded for charity to living sinners, by severity to those whom harshness could no longer harm.

The swans anyhow are historical; the beautiful swans of the Witham that may have flirted sometimes with the wild swans that came over the seas from the northern fiords to winter in the fens. Many of them were royal birds, and had the king's swanherd to look after them. The swanherd kept a book recording the swanmarks of the various proprietors, and swans unmarked, or with unregistered marks, were escheated to the crown. "All flying swans," so the laws of the river decreed, "to be seized for the king."

The river Witham was noted, as well as for its swans, for its pike, the fame of which

gave rise to a saying, "Witham pike, nothing like," or, as Drayton has it in *Polyolbion* :

Yet for my dainty pikes I am without compare.

But the Witham has declined a good deal from its former importance, not only in the way of fish and fowl, but also as a tidal river, which once brought to the gates of Lincoln the carracks and galleys of old times, while now

By the margin willow veiled
Glide the heavy barges trailed,
By slow horses.

Perhaps, indeed, Lincoln may be the original Camelot, and Arthur and his table round may have as likely established themselves at Lincoln as at any other of the places that lay claim to the honour. Anyhow the city can boast a remote antiquity, and possibly has enjoyed a continuous municipal life from the time when it was a Roman colony. Even its name has varied but little, and *Lindum colonia* may well have been shortened into Lincoln. And for all the time that elapsed—not more than two centuries—between the departure of the Roman garrison and the appearance of the city in written records, there is no evidence of any complete devastation or lying waste. Not so very long afterwards, in the seventh century, we get a glimpse of Lincoln with a governor of its own—suggesting independent civic life—a governor who was converted to Christianity by Paulinus, the Roman missionary bishop. And Paulinus built a church in Lincoln, the walls of which were still standing when Baeda wrote his history. From that time we get only occasional glimpses of Lincoln as practically a Danish settlement, till it comes to light for a moment in the formal record of Domesday. But even that formal record shows the city as one of the chief, if not the chiefest, of English towns. If there were a thousand "mansiones" at the time of the survey, that would imply at least three times the number of separate dwellings and a population almost as great as at present, say some twenty thousand souls; an estimate which is partly confirmed by the number of burgesses recorded—nine hundred and fifty—a privileged class; while women, children, servants, artificers, and churls formed the larger part of the population.

Thickly then must the houses have clustered within the ancient walls—the Roman walls patched and strengthened according to the exigencies of succeeding ages: narrow lanes and streets rising

steeply to the summit of the hill, where as yet minster and castle had no existence. So thickly indeed were clustered the houses that William the Conqueror swept many hundreds of them away in building his strong castle on the hill—with its massive keep, that was half within and half without the general line of defence, a keep with its frowning battlements threatening the city, and its sly little postern-gate towards the country; whence, at the worst extremity, the lord of the castle might take to flight. This peculiar construction of the keep gave rise to sundry historical episodes, as when the Empress Maud made her escape by night from the castle which was beleaguered by Stephen, the rival claimant of the crown, who then held the town, which was devoted to his interests. Soon after the empty shell of the castle was surrendered to the king, it was again wrested from him by the two powerful nobles of the Angevin faction, Ralph, Earl of Chester, and William de Romara, who claimed the Earldom of Lincoln, through his mother, a Saxon princess, descended from the famed Godiva. The men of Lincoln, however, were untouched by memories of Godiva. She had not lightened their taxation presumably, and they called upon their friend the king to drive out the intruders. The king hastened from London by forced marches, and forthwith invested the castle, while the rebel earls, as it seemed, lay fairly within his grasp. But Ralph, of Chester, favoured by the convenient arrangement of the keep, got away into the open country, and made his way to the west. Here he collected his own retainers and enlisted also a contingent of wild Welshmen from the hills, and with these he started back across the Midlands, a difficult and painful journey even in these railway times, with many breaks and junctions on the way. But Ralph had a favourable experience, his only junction, a fortunate one, being with his father-in-law, with more forces. And so the men from the west fell upon the eastern men, and put them to flight, and took prisoner Stephen the king. And there was an end of Stephen, you would think; but no, the aspect of affairs changed with kaleidoscopic rapidity. Ralph, of Chester, changed sides; Stephen was released, and made a triumphant entry into Lincoln.

A chronicler relates that on this occasion Stephen entered the city in his royal robes and with the royal circlet about his brow, and that, curiously enough, the men of

Lincoln, instead of feeling flattered at all this pageantry, took decided umbrage at it. Some Roman thought had struck them, perhaps some notions of civic independence that might have survived from the proud days of Roman citizenship. Anyhow this was not an isolated manifestation, for it is recorded that Stephen's successor, Henry Plantagenet, proposed to repeat the ceremony of his coronation before the citizens of Lincoln, but that these entreated him to forego his purpose. They had noticed, such was their excuse, that dire misfortune had always attended the exhibition of royal emblems in their city. The king, it is said, respected the prejudices of the citizens, and was crowned in due form at Wickford, a hamlet outside the city walls. Possibly, in this civic independence of the Lincoln men, we may have the ancestry of that stout republican sentiment that showed itself in the county at a later date, whence, perhaps, came the Mayflower emigration, and the Pilgrim Fathers, and the foundations of a mighty republic on the other side of the Atlantic.

Once more the royal castle of Lincoln brought the citizens into trouble, when, in King John's reign, the rebel barons in alliance with Louis of France, took possession of the city, and laid siege to the royal citadel. It was in marching to relieve his garrison that John made the unfortunate plunge into the fens, in which he lost treasure and baggage, and contracted the illness that hurried him to the grave. But the royal castle was not taken after all, for the Earl of Pembroke, raising a large army in the south in the name of the infant king, attacked the rebel barons to such good purpose that they were driven in rout from the city, where the royal soldiers found such stores of rich stuffs, and merchandise of all kinds, that they called the battle Lewes Fair. Perhaps they were Sussex men who perpetrated this joke, and they may have intended a pun on the name of the French prince and of their local capital among the South Downs.

Probably the citizens of Lincoln suffered a good deal in all this merry plundering. The Jews, anyhow, pretty certainly supplied a fair quota of the rich stuffs and merchandise. For the Jews of Lincoln were among the richest and most unpopular of their nation in England. These Jews were originally from Rouen, and came over to England in the Conqueror's train. They had a synagogue at Lincoln, and practised their rites openly and with-

out fear, protected by the governor of the king's castle, to whom only they were answerable, as they were exempt from the jurisdiction of the local bailiff or reeve. But with the accession of the Plantagenet kings, the Jews ceased to enjoy the royal favour. The Flemings, who were largely encouraged by the new line of monarchs, took the place of the Jews as financiers and farmers of the public revenues, and the Jews were delivered over to popular resentment. According to vulgar prejudice the Jews had long been in the habit of practising secret and unholy rites, and presently, on the disappearance of a Christian child, the Jews were accused of having put him to death in horrible travesty and mockery of the Crucifixion. Many Jews fell victims to this popular persecution, and then followed proscription by the royal officers on the more credible charge of sweating and clipping the king's coin. On this charge was executed a noble Jewess, Baessel de Wallingford, whose reputed dwelling-house is still pointed out by popular tradition, and known as the Jew's House, one of the few specimens of domestic architecture of the thirteenth century still left to us. A general edict of expulsion put the finishing touch to these persecutions, and the Jews left Lincoln in a body, never to return except as straggling isolated visitors.

The Flemings were no more popular than the Jews with the men of Lincoln; and the archers of Lincolnshire, who formed the backbone of the royal armies in the wars against the Scots, were engaged in perpetual broils with the king's Flemish auxiliaries; and we read of six thousand Lincoln archers forming a confederacy to revenge the death of certain of their comrades slain in a broil with the Hainaulters, during one of Edward the Third's campaigns against the Scots. Perhaps it was in view of having a vigorous viceroy over the Lincolnshire men, that the same Edward bestowed the castle of Lincoln upon his favourite son, John of Gaunt, who from this time resided mostly in Lincolnshire. John had hitherto done well in the way of marriage. His first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, had brought him the earldom of Lancaster, afterwards made by his father into a duchy palatine. A second wife, Constantia, brought him a titular right to the kingdom of Castille, which he prudently resigned for a handsome yearly income. But these were marriages of convenience, and the duke's

affections had long been centred on a Lincolnshire woman—though of Flemish extraction—Catherine, the widow of Sir Hugh Swyneford, and daughter of Sir Payne Roelt, a native of Hainault and Guienne king of arms. Catherine's pedigree inspires interest, as the poet Geoffrey Chaucer married her sister, and thus eventually became connected in ties of kinship with his great friend and patron, John of Gaunt. John and Catherine were married at Lincoln soon after the death of Constantia of Castille, and their numerous existing children were soon after legitimised by Act of Parliament. As the Beauforts they subsequently made their mark in history, and often proved thorns in the sides of their more legitimate kinsmen, as, for instance, Cardinal Beaufort, whose quarrels with the good Duke Humphrey of popular affection are embalmed in Shakespeare's Henry the Sixth. Catherine, and her daughter Joan, lie buried in the minster. And here and there fragments of the ducal palace, in which she spent the later years of her life, are still to be traced among the buildings that occupy its site.

Perhaps this period, when John of Gaunt held a kind of regal court at Lincoln, was the culminating point in the relative importance of the city. As a port it was still in brisk communication with the Low Countries, and it was now a staple town for wool, leather, lead, and other leading commodities. Richard the Second, visiting his uncle Gaunt, bestowed a state sword on the mayor and his successors, a gift that might have been held to carry with it the title of Lord Mayor. And with the accession of the House of Lancaster to the throne, Lincoln might feel assured of the sunshine of royal favour. Lincoln bowmen, no doubt, did good service at Agincourt, but with the Wars of the Roses the civic greatness of Lincoln came to an end. In these wars Lincoln played but a doubtful part. There might exist some hereditary attachment to the House of Lancaster, but as long as the Earl of Warwick adhered to the white rose, his influence in the district was too powerful to be withstood. When the king-maker began to change sides, and to muster his forces for a contest with Edward the Fourth, a contingent of Lincoln men marched to join him. But this force was intercepted at Stamford by the active king, who had not long before made his escape from Middleham. In this case the king's name proved a tower of strength, for the

Lincoln men hardly knew for which king they were fighting, Warwick not having yet openly declared for Henry the Sixth, and they dispersed in such haste as to throw away their buff jerkins and coats of mail as impediments to flight, whence this battle of Stamford is known in local annals as "Lose-coat Field."

But the citizens of Lincoln welcomed warmly enough the descendant of John of Gaunt and Catherine Swyneford, when, as Henry the Seventh, he came to receive their allegiance after Bosworth Field. Henry the Eighth, too, paid a flying visit to Lincoln when wooing Catherine Howard for his fifth wife. But before this a great change had come over ecclesiastical Lincoln; the ancient rule had been abolished, and the new liturgy was now sung daily in the minster, while the gorgeous shrine of Our Lady, the object of pilgrimage from heath, and wold, and fen, had long been desecrated and destroyed. The citizens of Lincoln, imbued with the new doctrines, had taken the matter quietly enough, but not so the country folk, who rose in arms, with sundry zealous priests in command, to restore the ancient rites. Chief among the leaders of the insurrection was Captain Cobler, the name assumed by Dr. Macarel, prior of Barlings, and the vicar of Louth was his lieutenant. Both of these fell into the hands of the king's officers, and were hanged at Tyburn; but the bulk of the rebels returned to their homes unmolested, and eventually received the king's pardon; and from this time we hear little of the old faith in Lincolnshire. The landed gentry, indeed, and the trading classes, became deeply imbued with the Calvinistic faith, and Lincolnshire eventually came to be a chief stronghold of the Independents.

But although in the civil wars Lincoln itself held to the Parliament, a strong body of Royalists took possession of the castle, and held it till it was taken by escaladé by the Parliamentary army under the Earl of Manchester. On this occasion it is said by local tradition that Cromwell, who was in command of the cavalry, stabled the horses in the minster nave, and, indeed, all the destruction that time and neglect have caused in sculpture or monument is ascribed to the much abused Oliver and his Ironsides.

From the breezy height of Lincoln towers, where the enemy of mankind is supposed to have his favoured seat, a vast expanse of country is visible—the hills and dales of the land of heath and wold to the north, which form the ancient

province of Lindsey, the great plain that stretches out towards Newark, with the tufted banks of the Trent, and in the blue distance the faraway hills of Derbyshire. Yes, there are hills and dales in Lincolnshire, although the general belief of strangers is to the contrary—hills all the more thought of that the country about is so level. It is as if the great plain had been raised by a gentle breeze from the eastward into a succession of swells, rising gradually and almost imperceptibly, and then dipping suddenly in a well-defined ridge towards the west. The ridge nearest the sea is dominated by Louth, with its handsome spire; the towns of Horncastle and Caistor are at either end of the second; while the river Welland finds its way through a gap in the third, with Lincoln Castle and the grand old minster crowning the brow. And this hilly part of Lincolnshire is in reality an island, and thus has earned its name of Lindsey. For the rivers Trent and Witham are united by the ancient cutting known as the Fosse-dyke, and indeed in times of heavy flood the two rivers have even in recent days often united their waters, thus forming a broad strait from the Wash to the Humber, and making a very distinct and unmistakable island of Lindsey. And this suggests the fact that there are no strong physical reasons, apart from artificial banks, why the Trent should not take a shorter cut along the bed of Witham to the sea, a fact that seems to have struck the attention of Hotspur, or, at all events, of Shakespeare.

See, how this river comes me cranking in,
And cuts me from the best of all my land,
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out.

And the gallant Hotspur might not have been wildly bragging when he continued :

I'll have the channel in this place damm'd up,
And here the smug and silver Trent shall run
In a new channel fair and evenly.

But indeed, in coveting the fat and fertile plains of Lincolnshire, the Percys were only repeating the policy of the old Saxon kings of Northumbria, whose power they might be said to have represented. For Lincolnshire had been always debatable land during the existence of the rival kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia, and went to one or the other as Fortune inclined her balance.

But to follow the ancient Fosse-dyke above alluded to, a quiet gloomy water, neither flowing nor stagnant, where great pike lurk under the green banks; passing

sometimes a secluded little hamlet or an inn that seems to be the last house in the world.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver,

and a strong eerie feeling comes over the traveller by this solemn, silent stream. And indeed the Fosse-dyke gives a strange impression of hoar antiquity that accords well with its real history. Who cut the dyke, to begin with, nobody knows. Antiquarians ascribe it to the Romans, as part of a plan of internal navigation for transporting corn from the fertile plains of East Anglia to the military stations in barren Northumbria. Torksey, an ancient municipal town, now decayed to a mere village, standing at the junction between the Fosse-dyke and the Trent, is supposed with some reason to have been one of the great Roman depôts of grain, while the castle—once a magnificent mediæval residence; now a ruin, with a fine front of brick and four stone turrets—stands on foundations of a Roman building supposed to be a granary. In Domesday, Torksey is noticed as having had two hundred and thirteen burgesses in the time of King Edward the Confessor, but at the date of the survey only one hundred and two, while many "mansiones" were lying waste, conveying a story of slaughter and rapine to be read between the exquisitely written lines of the stolid Norman scribe. But the tenure on which the municipal privileges were held, still jealously guarded by the remaining burgesses, was declared to be, that when the king's ambassadors came that way the men of Torksey should convey them in their own barges down the Trent to the Humber, and then up the Ouse to York.

Following the track of the king's ambassadors down the Trent, we come to Gainsborough, where the river assumes a sea-going character, the tide bringing ships of moderate burden to the port. Sometimes in the spring the tide comes up the channel in a distinct wave or bore that is locally called the Eager or Hyger, a name given to it originally by the Scandinavian sea-rovers, who were, no doubt, familiar with a similar phenomenon on the Severn, and on a much grander scale on the Seine. It is said that the incident of Canute and his courtiers, when the monarch commanded the waves to stand still—an incident worn threadbare in youthful lesson-books—took place on the banks of the Trent when the hyger was coming

foaming up the river. But apart from these associations there is nothing very interesting about Gainsborough unless it be its old hall, ascribed to John of Gaunt, a tall building framed in ancient and almost indestructible oak. At Gainsborough is the last bridge over the Trent, and from this point along the flats of the Isle of Axholme the ferryman becomes a person of importance. And Axholme, once a waste of fens and marshes, is now a well-cultivated tract.

The reclamation of Axholme and Hatfield Chase was one of the first great works of the kind attempted in England, at all events since the Romans left the land, and was undertaken in the reign of Charles the First, in the year 1626; that is, when Cornelius Vermuyden contracted to drain Axholme, Dikesmarsh, and Hatfield Chase. The contractor's remuneration was fixed at one-third of the reclaimed lands, another third went to the crown, while the remaining third was allowed to the commoners and others having an interest in the lands. Here we have the Flemings again, for Vermuyden called to his aid adventurers from the Low Countries, who provided money and labour, and took repayment from Vermuyden's share of the lands. Some two hundred Flemish families settled among the fens, and they built a chapel at Sandtoft, near the Yorkshire border, where service was performed alternately in Dutch and French. But the whole scheme was bitterly opposed by the original settlers in the land, and the Flemish adventurers were harassed and persecuted in every possible way.

When civil war broke out between king and parliament, the lot of the new settlers was still worse than before. The Parliamentary Committee sitting at Lincoln hearing a rumour that the royal forces in Yorkshire meditated an attack, opened the sluices and drowned the newly reclaimed country, and if they drowned a few of the king's tenants in the process it was not a matter of much consequence in those troubled times. In 1645 there was a general rising against the adventurers, when Lilburne, a Parliamentary leader, and Nodell, a lawless attorney, led the people to the foreign chapel at Sandtoft, dispersed the congregation, and, it seems, destroyed the chapel. The rights of the adventurers, however, prevailed in the law-courts, whether of king or commonwealth; but in the struggle, which lasted till 1719, the means and the patience of the adven-

turers became gradually exhausted. One by one the Flemish families disappeared from the land, and very few Flemish names are now to be traced in the district.

Crossing the Trent from Axholme, and gaining a firm footing again in Lindsey, we come to a woldy district about Humbermouth—a sort of amphibious district where one brother will go to the sea and another to the plough, and where the ferryman becomes a kind of ship-captain or pilot, navigating his craft through shallows and sand-banks, and among the ships that come up with the tide to busy Hull. On land we have big farms and wide corn-fields, where the steam-plough, at work on the long furrows, sometimes whistles a greeting to the steamship as she fares forth to the wide sea; and the skipper of the fields on his stout cob may wave a farewell to his brother skipper of the ocean perched aloft on the windy platform, where he looks into the eye of the coming storm.

And farther along the coast we come to Grimsby, the town that Gryme built, according to the story—Gryme not being the grim person his name would imply, but rather a man of a kindly nature, if tradition may be credited, which tells how a poor fisherman picked up a small babe abandoned on the shore and reared it as his own till it was claimed as a king's son. Whereupon Gryme was rewarded with the hand of a young princess with riches galore, and built a town of his own by Humber shore. But Grimsby has far outgrown this kind of nursery-tale and is now a flourishing seaport with fast steamers collecting the fruits of the sunny Rhineland and of fertile Normandy—Grimsby being the great emporium of the north-country for fruit and vegetables, while it has taken to supplying all the land with fish, being also the great centre of the North Sea fisheries. In all this, by the way, we have an instance of the revival of old marts and trade-routes for which the century is becoming remarkable. For long ago, when Hull was a mere village, and before even Ravenspurn—that lost city on the opposite coast of Yorkshire—had come into existence, Grimsby was the great emporium for merchants from Norway, Scotland, Orkney, and the Western Islands; and coins found in the neighbourhood in great quantities—Roman, Saxon, Flemish, Lombardic—testify to its ancient commercial activity.

Grimsby, indeed, furnished eleven ships

and one hundred and seventy mariners to Edward the Third at the siege of Calais, when Liverpool could only furnish one vessel, with a handful of sailors. And then came a period of decadence and decay, and Grimsby, like Ravenspurn, was deserted by its merchants, who flocked to the rising port of Hull. But time has its revenges, and Grimsby may soon look down upon Hull, perhaps, as slow and old-fashioned.

ALONE.

I MISS you, my darling, my darling ;
The embers burn low on the hearth ;
And stilled is the stir of the household,
And hushed is the voice of its mirth ;
The rain plashes fast on the terrace,
The winds past the lattices moan ;
The midnight chimes out from the minster,
And I am alone.

I want you, my darling, my darling ;
I am tired with care and with fret ;
I would nestle in silence beside you,
And all but your presence forget,
In the hush of the happiness given
To those, who through trusting have grown
To the fulness of love in contentment.
But I am alone.

I call you, my darling, my darling,
My voice echoes back on my heart.
I stretch my arms to you in longing,
And lo ! they fall empty, apart.
I whisper the sweet words you taught me,
The words that we only have known,
Till the blank of the dumb air is bitter,
For I am alone.

I need you, my darling, my darling,
With its yearning my very heart aches ;
The load that divides us weighs harder ;
I shrink from the jar that it makes.
Old sorrows rise up to beset me ;
Old doubts make my spirit their own.
Oh, come through the darkness, and save me,
For I am alone.

A BOARDING-HOUSE ROMANCE.

A STORY IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THE guests at the Pension Sommerrock were seated at their luncheon, or "second breakfast." It was an hour when social converse or cheerfulness usually prevailed, but the clatter of knives and forks had it all their own way this morning. A few whispered words between neighbours formed the only attempt at conversation, and even these were soon suspended. Everybody appeared more or less uneasy, not to say alarmed. Constant furtive glances were directed towards the first chair on the right-hand side of the table, in which was seated a gentleman who was evidently in a high state of irritation.

His thin face, sharply-cut features, keen penetrating eyes, spare athletic frame, and well-cut clothes, proclaimed that he was no German.

The anxious scandalised glances which

the elder ladies directed towards him through their lorgnettes no less loudly proclaimed him to be an English or American wild beast, from whom anything might be expected.

Clatter, clatter ! The plates were being collected.

Chink, chink ! The knives and forks, which had been snatched from them by their respective owners, with a view to further service, were being put down on the cloth.

A maid entered, panting audibly under the weight of a large dish. The hostess summoned her to her side, and with a wave of the hand directed her to offer the dish to the irritated gentleman.

"English beef-tek," murmured Frau Sommerrock in a timorous and propitiatory voice.

"It is the principle of the thing that I object to, madame," cried the foreigner in good German, but with little relevancy to the subject in hand.

"Tea for Herr Trevelyan, Lenchen," said Frau Sommerrock in nervous haste.

The cup of the irritated one was seized and carried off by the waitress, who saw breakers ahead as clearly as her mistress.

"Why, if a change was to be made, was I not consulted on the subject ? It would appear to me that my consent was the first necessity in the matter. I came in wet through an hour ago ; went to my room to change my coat ; and found the whole place turned inside out—not a trace of my fixings about. In reply to my enquiries, one of your maids led me to a small dark den at the back of the house, which she informed me was all you could place at my disposal for an indefinite period. Another private sitting-room, it seems, is out of the question. I suppose I have been singularly fortunate to have had the privilege of occupying one for so long. What is done is done, but I must, nevertheless, strongly protest against the principle of the thing, Frau Sommerrock."

These words, though meant only for the person addressed, reached the ears of all in the immediate neighbourhood of the speaker, those ears being for the most part preternaturally sharpened by curiosity. Some of them understood the speech, and, though sharp, considered it justifiable under the circumstances. Others—to whom it was Greek, being English—cried under their breaths that it was insolent, and cast fiery glances of contempt and anger at the undaunted American.

"So-o, Lenchen! No, no; the gnädiger herr takes no sugar and very little cream. I am very sorry, sir, that the change is so unpleasant to you—very sorry. I assure you, we put it off to the very last moment, in the hope of being able to consult you about it, but you remained out much longer than usual, and we were so pressed for time that I was compelled to act in your absence. But all that can be done shall be done. Your wishes shall be met as far as possible in every way. Oh, you shall have no cause to complain that you are uncomfortable at the Pension Sommerrock. I will visit your room after breakfast, and will see that all is arranged to your mind. I know the English and American requirements very perfectly. I should not have thought of making the change under ordinary circumstances, Herr Trevelyan, but a lady in whose family I lived many years in my younger days telegraphed that she and her daughter would arrive in the course of to-day. There was no time to send word that the house was full, and I could not do less than offer the best chamber to her excellency Gräfin Rolandseck."

"I should think not, Frau Sommerrock," cried a German lady at some little distance.

"There was clearly nothing else to be done when a Gräfin Rolandseck was in the question," said a gentleman, whom till this moment Trevelyan had regarded as a friend.

From the awe with which Frau Sommerrock had pronounced the distinguished name, and the general manifestation of interest it called forth, it was evident that the expected arrivals were people of importance.

"Enough, madame; I have not another word to say," said the American with a bow that a German could not have made more deferential—only his would probably have been serious, while this was satirical. "I will trouble you for a little more gravy. Thank you."

To Frau Sommerrock there was something very threatening in the sudden and excessive suavity of her best boarder. She ventured a side-glance at him. Yes, there certainly was a singular look of determination about his face, and he was visibly mortified, in spite of the spasmodic smiles with which he returned the little civilities of his neighbours.

"I see what it is," thought she; "he means to leave. My best boarder! After staying here six months he will remove to

The Golden Eagle, where they will receive him with open arms because he leaves me, and the thing will become the talk of the whole village. It will very likely be my ruin. It is all very well just now in the height of summer, when people are obliged to come to me because there are no beds to be had elsewhere for love or money; but these things tell upon one in the slack season, when I have as hard a fight of it as anybody. Oh dear me!"

The bare thought so overpowered the poor woman that, with an excuse and general bow, she left the room.

Her departure—not an unusual thing in the middle of a meal—was such a relief to the American that he began to enjoy the meal for which he had hitherto felt no appetite.

A minute had scarcely elapsed ere a stout, fair girl, with a good-natured, smiling face and the easiest possible manners, took Frau Sommerrock's seat. She also took her plate as it stood, with an explanatory remark to her neighbour, Mr. Trevelyan, in English.

"Behold, I complete the breakfast of my mamma."

A short "Oh" was the only rejoinder of which George E. Trevelyan was capable at that moment.

"They say me, Herr Trevelyan, that you are very cross at the changement which we must make. I believe them not, you are too kind, too gallant there for."

"Cross!" echoed Trevelyan with supreme disdain—he was boiling with rage at the very moment.

"Very, or so it seems me."

Mr. Trevelyan took no notice of this remark, contenting himself with inwardly execrating the fräulein's vile English. The next moment he rose to open the door for a lady, and took the opportunity of letting himself out behind her.

Fräulein Sommerrock reddened with vexation. She felt the eyes of all the ladies upon her, with more or less contempt in their expression. The truth was, the young fräulein had been laying a harmless siege to the heart of the good-looking American for some months past, and, as that gentleman had not shown himself disinclined to enter upon a mild flirtation, she already entertained the brightest hopes of the future, having gone so far as to shed sentimental tears in secret over the great distance she was about to place between herself and her Fatherland.

Mr. Trevelyan's conduct on the present

occasion, however, was not suggestive of proposing emigration at any early date, and the girl's heart sank accordingly.

Why had she ever been simple enough to give her heart to one of those terrible foreigners? she asked herself wildly. Had she not been warned from a child that the English and Americans were cold, heartless creatures, possessed of neither manners nor sentiment, dead alike to the charms of love and music? But Herr Trevelyan had behaved in an exceptionally treacherous manner, even for his nation. He had won her heart by exercising every art and fascination that man could employ, and, not satisfied with conveying a very clear notion of the state of his feelings to herself, he had made it evident to every person in the house that he loved her, and now he meant to throw her off as coolly as if she were a mere chance acquaintance of yesterday! The *fräulein* had, undoubtedly, an unusually lively imagination.

CHAPTER II.

FRAU SOMMERROCK, who could not have spared a moment to indulge her emotion in idleness had a serious calamity overtaken her, was in her little sitting-room counting over house-linen, previous to arranging it with scrupulous neatness in a cupboard. She was pondering over her morning's vexation the while.

A short, quick knock at the door startled her so that she dropped one of her best table-cloths, thereby crumpling it at one corner, to her deep chagrin.

"Herein," cried she in a voice that would fain have sounded imperious, but which became tremulous at the second syllable. She knew too well that that sharp rap was the American's. What must be the state of the feelings that had prompted him to hunt her down here, after having already said so much on the unpleasant subject of the change at the luncheon-table?

In response to her "come in," Mr. Trevelyan appeared on the threshold. Apparently he did not care to come farther, as he leant against the frame of the door, and said, in a smooth voice that was marked by a slight drawl, which, however, was more suggestive of laziness than of New York:

"Your maids need not trouble themselves further about cleaning that den on my account, madame; if they will be good enough to let the dust settle enough for my man to be able to find his way to my trunks, it is all I care about. Perhaps you will tell them so as they don't mind

my orders; and if it would not inconvenience you to jot down the sum total of one week's boarding and lodging for myself and servant, while I wait, I will settle my account at once, before leaving for the Eagle, where I remain for the rest of my stay here."

"It is only Monday, mein herr, and you have already settled the last week's account. You are always so prompt and considerate in such matters; if others were like you my life would be an easier one. It will be a sad blow to me to lose you, but if you are quite determined to go I will make out your little bill at once. It will be for one day and a half; you have only taken the second breakfast this morning. The amount will be——"

"Yankees don't do business like that, Frau Sommerrock; we are a good deal too sharp for it. If I leave without notice I am bound to pay a week's board. My time is precious, if I am to find a bed in this village for to-night, and so is yours. After all, there is no need for an account, I know the terms well enough by this time. That is exactly it. Good-morning!"

He was about to hurry away, but Frau Sommerrock made it impossible by holding out her hand.

She was deeply affected by Mr. Trevelyan's having paid for a full week.

"Excuse me, mein herr, but you must not go till I have wished you good-bye, and thanked you heartily for your patronage so far. There is not a soul in the house that has not enjoyed your society, and that will not miss you. I hope we have made you tolerably comfortable on the whole until the unfortunate misunderstanding of this morning. I suppose you are really bent on going, sir? I could promise you your old rooms at the end of a week if that would persuade you to stay. Gräfin Rolandseck and her daughter would be the first to make any arrangement, rather than be the cause of my losing such a boarder. If you would only consent to put up with the little bedroom for two or three nights——"

"Thank you, madame, no. I have been quite comfortable in your house so far, but I don't seem to care about the little trick I have been served. Very likely it is my own fault; I fancy I have been here a thought too long. Good-morning."

"Oh, sir, you cannot mean that! And then the disgrace of your having to leave my boarding-house for the Eagle! I cannot get over it. It will be a heavy blow to the

reputation of my pension. You have given so many proofs of a kind heart since you have been with us that I am emboldened to plead for a little indulgence on your part now. Consider, Herr Trevelyan, I am a widow, my calling is a precarious one at the best, and in the slack season——”

“My good Frau Sommerrock, you flatter me greatly, I assure you. In a case like the present my head acts quite independently of my heart, and I make a point of never changing my mind, although I have been so long in Europe. You may have observed this. I am prepared to admit that I lost my temper at luncheon this morning. I regret having done so, and I cannot be surprised if the fact has given you a mean opinion of my understanding. The storm has blown over, however, and I wish you good-bye in a friendly spirit. Remember me to your daughter, if you please.”

He drew the door to behind him, took his hat from the stand near, and strolled down the hilly high-road in the direction of the Eagle.

When he came to the cross-roads that disclosed a fine panorama of Swiss mountains, he paused a while, as he always did, watching the wonderful effects of colour and sunshine until he was almost blinded.

“A sublime view!” he said aloud.

He strolled on more leisurely than before, for the beauty of the scene left a feeling of profound calm upon him.

“Good-morning, mein herr,” cried, with Swiss freedom and good-nature, the coachman whom he employed when he drove anywhere.

“Good-morning,” returned Trevelyan cordially; and he looked at the carriage with some little curiosity as to its occupants, for everybody knew everybody else in the little place.

There seemed to be only one person inside, but, as it was waiting in front of the chemist's, it was probable that someone was in the shop. He slackened his pace purposely as he passed the carriage—a closed one—but he was only rewarded by catching a little glimpse of a brown-holland ulster, till, at the last moment, a lady bent forward and looked out of the open window at the range of mountains that he had just been enjoying.

The face was a striking one. It was very fair, with finely-formed features. The mouth looked proud, the eyes were still and dreamy.

Seeing that the girl had not observed

him, Mr. Trevelyan allowed himself to linger a moment for the pleasure of looking at her. He never cared to hurry past anything beautiful.

She gazed at the mountains for some minutes, during which he had time to note what a pretty profile she had; then she turned her eyes to the right, where they fell upon the picturesque, straggling village, the wooded mountain-side, and the blue lake at its feet. There was an air of restfulness and peace over the landscape to which the girl must have been keenly alive, for her face suddenly melted curiously. The dreamy eyes lighted up with a delight and comprehension that were eloquent of her feelings; a strange expression, which Trevelyan could not quite understand, but which touched him somehow, crept about her mouth.

Trevelyan enjoyed the picture for a few moments more. Then someone came out of the chemist's; the girl turned her head, took some parcels from a lady who entered the carriage, and they drove off.

Mr. Trevelyan looked after it in silence. He remained in the same attitude, looking in the same direction, long after it had disappeared.

The sunrise of expression on the girl's face had left a distinct reflection on his own. He had an odd and ridiculous sensation of a magic change having come over himself and the whole scene. There was a very strange feeling at his heart, half delight, half misgiving. He was not an impressionable man by nature, though he possessed a keen sense of the beautiful, yet a single moment had done what many years and greater charms had failed to effect.

George Trevelyan had fallen in love.

“If that woman is not married, she shall be my wife!” he said to himself deliberately, with the sublime belief in his own powers which belongs to a true-born American.

CHAPTER III.

MR. TREVELYAN turned straight into the chemist's.

“Good-morning. I want a couple of boxes of that tooth-powder I bought last week; you know the kind.”

The man, who could not have remembered if the purchase had been made half an hour ago, made no remark, but produced the whole of his little stock in that line.

“By the way, who is that English lady who left the shop just as I came in? She

is a stranger, I see. Do you know if she proposes to make anything of a stay among us?"

"That was no English lady, mein herr."

"American, then, I am sure."

"Also not; she is a German. I know nothing about her except that she is a Gräfin Rolandseck, and is going to stay at the Pension Sommerrock. She called here on her way from the station to order aerated waters to be sent daily."

The American started as if he had been stung.

"Countess Rolandseck!" he echoed blankly.

He did not go straight on to the Eagle, dangerous as was delay in securing rooms in the village at the present season. He walked down to the lake, and along its banks for some miles, revolving the situation in his mind, and trying to decide on the best line of action.

Two things only became perfectly clear to him—that he must make the acquaintance of the young Countess Rolandseck at all hazards, and that he had cut himself off from the possibility of doing so.

He had left the Pension Sommerrock in a spirit of almost ostentatious determination. The tears and entreaties of a widow had failed to affect him in the least; the uncertainty of his being able to find rest for the sole of his foot elsewhere had had no weight with him. He had been annoyed, and was determined to be revenged at any price.

How could he have guessed that the price would turn out so much beyond his calculations, that he would come to curse his precipitation?

The two things Mr. Trevelyan most disliked were to have to change his mind, and to have to ask a favour; yet if he wished to give himself a chance of securing what he fondly imagined would prove his life's happiness, he must do both.

No, he would be hanged first! What was the girl to him that he should humiliate himself for her sake before she knew that he even existed? He had merely taken a morning walk, and come across a pretty picture in the course of it—had happened to catch sight of a face fit for the scene he loved. Was he, a middle-aged man (he was thirty-five), to make a fool of himself on the strength of such a trifling occurrence? He rather thought not.

Nevertheless, the same middle-aged man feeling a strong inclination to promote

reflection by the aid of an havannah, after carefully cutting off the end, and with a lighted lucifer between his fingers, flung away both rather than risk having a suspicion of tobacco about him at dinner-time.

He looked at his watch. Four-thirty. He measured the distance to the village with his eye. A good hour's walk if he went back the way he had come, three-quarters if he made a circle, and did not mind passing the Pension Sommerrock. H'm, he would almost do that.

He mended his pace considerably, as he began to reflect that he had really left himself very little time to make arrangements for board and lodging of any kind.

The white walls and green balconies of Frau Sommerrock's house came in sight after some sharp walking,

Trevelyan halted for a moment, and regarded that residence somewhat shyly. He looked to the right and left, wondering if there were no side-path by which he could avoid going directly past the house. There was none. He did not know whether he was glad or sorry for it.

Someone came out of the open door as he stood there—a lady, but not *the* lady.

He suddenly took a resolution, and, walking quickly and firmly, went straight to the open door, and through it into the house.

He tapped at the door of Frau Sommerrock's sanctum. It was a spirited self-possessed kind of rap, but lacked some of its usual imperativeness all the same.

"Du liebe Zeit!" exclaimed a voice he knew well, and Frau Sommerrock stood before him, her hand held out, her face beaming with pleasure.

"They had no spare room at the Eagle, mein herr? Thank Heaven!"

Mr. Trevelyan laughed.

"I have not enquired, madame. I came to the conclusion that I would rather put up even with that den you offered me than make a change, always supposing that you do not object to receive me now."

"Object? I hail your return as an answer to prayer. I thought I was right in counting so much on your good-nature, Herr Trevelyan; I thought you could never find it in your heart to punish me so severely, although I had not behaved as I could have wished to you. Boarding-house-keepers occupy a very trying and difficult post, and they often have to—"

"Not another word, I beg, Frau Sommerrock, I feel considerably ashamed of myself already. You will scarcely believe that I

never gave you a thought in the matter. The considerations that drove me back were entirely selfish ones. There is the difference between us men and you ladies. I came back because I knew that I should be more comfortable in that little back bedroom of yours than in the best room at the Eagle, or anywhere else."

"Thank you—thank you, sir," and the simple woman blushed with as gratified and self-conscious an air as if she had been a girl of seventeen, and her beauty the subject of praise.

"And, by the way, Frau Sommerrock——" Mr. Trevelyan had to pause owing to a slight fit of coughing which raised grave apprehensions in the motherly soul of his hostess, as she attributed the unusual occurrence to the fact of his having been unable to change his damp coat in the morning, owing to the change in her domestic arrangements—it proved the first and last sign of his being the worse for his adventure, however. "By the way, I beg that you will not put your new guests to any inconvenience on my account. I am in no hurry to return to my old room, in fact when I once get settled in the little one at the back I sha'n't care about disturbing myself again, that is, not so long as the two ladies remain. If strangers came, why of course——"

"Do not give yourself the least anxiety on the subject, sir. The young countess shall learn the whole circumstances this very night, and I know she and her mother will not keep you one moment longer out of your room than is necessary to allow of their making arrangements to go elsewhere."

"You must do nothing of the kind, madame. I desire that you will not say a word to them about my having given up my rooms," put in Trevelyan with some heat.

"Ach, my dear Herr Trevelyan, you do me injustice there! You evidently do not understand how dear your interests are to me, and how jealously I shall guard them. Only the fact of my being under great obligations to these ladies made me wish to accommodate them for a day or two, even at the risk of inconveniencing you, but I do not forget that you have been my best boarder ever since the beginning of the spring, and your interests shall be considered the first of any. Your old rooms will be at your disposal before the end of the week."

"You are very kind, madame, but I earnestly beg you to do nothing of the

kind," said the American with the calmness of despair. "I am rather eccentric, you must know, and I have conceived a strange dislike to that room since there has been all this fuss made about it. I should certainly have the nightmare if I had to sleep in it again. I assure you I prefer the den. Of course you are at liberty to turn out your friends whenever you like, but I will not return to my old quarters. Be guided by me in the matter, and let things take their course, then nobody will be inconvenienced."

"If you insist upon it, Herr Trevelyan, I must do so, but really I cannot understand. It is the most singular suggestion, and quite unnecessary. I could so easily make other arrangements in a few days."

"American 'spleen,' as you Germans call it—nothing else. You know we are all slightly touched here;" and he tapped his forehead with a smile.

A SCHOOL BILL.

HOWEVER careful Paterfamilias may be, however rigid and consistent in his determination to pay cash for everything and to get the benefit of all the discounts that may be going about, there is one account he cannot fail to run, if he has his children educated away from home—the school-bill.

Except the doctor's little account—it is not necessary to consider the solicitor's document, which is, in its very nature, a burden to the flesh—none of the bills which vex the souls of fathers is so bad as this. And even the doctor's "attendance and medicine for the half-year, so much" is not so bad as the school-bill. If the smaller ailments which have necessitated certain visits of the doctor, and certain subsequent calls of the boy with the basket, have been forgotten, and the total at the foot of the account looms all too large before the eye of the paymaster, it is borne in mind that Tommy was got through the measles, that the little ones had the whooping-cough, that the parental rheumatism had to be attended to, and that, in short, something was done. Some value was got for the money which has to be paid, something obvious, and something, so to speak, tangible.

But the school-bill. How is that to be gauged, and what satisfactory result does it represent? So much of it, no doubt, means food and lodging. and. if the

children come home healthy and hearty, may be held to be money well spent. So much more may be set down as paying for that vague and rough-and-ready but useful training which children insensibly get from association with other children, and may also be considered complacently. So much more may even be looked upon as a reasonable premium for insuring the family furniture and ornaments from the playful assaults of restless youth. But how is the average middle-class father to know whether he is really getting value for that part of his cheque which represents absolute tuition, or how is he to prevent gloomy misgivings on that part of the subject from occasionally possessing his soul? He cannot examine the children himself. His own recollections of classics and mathematics are too dim and faded for that, and he probably left school before half the subjects, which are considered necessary in modern education, became fashionable. He must take things for granted. He must trust to the reports which are sent him every term, delusions as he well knows them to be, and hope for the best. He can do no more than pay for what he believes to be a good article, and trust to the boys and girls themselves to make the best use they can of what is given them.

If these doubts and fears disturb the pensive householder when he counts the cost and the possible results of the schooling of his own children, with what sort of feelings is he likely to approach the consideration of the question of the education of other people's children—a consideration which is brought to his mind at terribly regular and all-too-frequent intervals by the collector of the parish rates?

If he knows little about the progress of the education of his own children, he knows absolutely nothing about that of these others.

Unless he be in a station in life into which the attendance-officer of the School Board penetrates, he hears nothing of the Board, except when an election takes place, when the battle generally appears to him to be fought on issues which have really no practical bearing on the matter in hand; or when some party row in the council-chamber leads to the washing of a good deal of dirty linen in public; or when, as aforesaid, he is called upon to contribute his share towards the payment for a work which, so far as he knows, may be done well or ill, effectually or perfunctorily, but as to which little bits

of information which crop up now and then in the newspapers by no means reassure him.

If he complains that in some districts schools are built with accommodation far in excess of what is required, he is reminded that the number of children for whom places are wanted increases year by year, and that the School Board net sweeps in all but a few irreclaimable little outcasts—although he cannot see why the outcasts should escape at all, and wonders extremely when he reads in a police report of a street-orderly, aged fourteen, in the employ of the Corporation of the City of London, who is, notwithstanding the School Board, and all its inspectors and visitors, unable to read or write.

If he wants to know if the attendance of the children, who are neither outcasts nor street-orderlies, is regular and steady, the system of payment by results is flourished in his face, and row upon row of tabular statements of certified attendances is paraded before him—although, a few days afterwards, perhaps, the School Board has to confess that some of their teachers have for an unknown number of years been systematically falsifying their returns, and fraudulently giving prizes and rewards for regular attendance, with a view to increasing their own incomes.

If he complains of the expenditure of the Board as being out of all proportion to the work that is done, he is assured that no money in England is better administered than the income of the School Board, and that it is only that proverbial "ignorant impatience of taxation," which is the original sin of the ratepayer, which prompts him to grudge an expenditure in appearance, perhaps, large, but, in fact, reasonable and moderate almost to a fault.

Let us assume that our Paterfamilias, at about this stage of the argument, thinks that he would like to form for himself some sort of idea of the moderation and judiciousness which govern the expenses of the Board. He does not know much about the constitution of the School Board; is possibly ignorant of the very names of the representatives of his own parish. He does remember to have heard that at the last election at least two-thirds of the constituency did not take enough interest in the affair to make them record their votes; and remembers also that, even if he had felt inclined to vote, there really seemed but little to choose between the eight or ten highly respectable nobodies who

solicited his suffrages. He does not hope to solve the mysterious set of puzzles which is afforded by the system on which the incomes of the teachers are calculated—a system which lends itself, or, at all events, has lent itself as we have seen, to fraudulent practices—but accounts and balance-sheets he does understand. All he has to do is to get the financial statement of the Board, to analyse the figures for himself, and to discover at least what becomes of the enormous sum of money which is produced by the sevenpence in the pound which the ratepayers contribute.

As the estimated expenditure for the year ending Lady Day, 1884, was eight hundred and one thousand two hundred and ten pounds and eight shillings—there is a delusive air of certainty and finality about those eight shillings—it will be seen that the subject is well worth looking into.

Unlike most other publications of a similar nature, the "Account of the Income, Expenditure, and Liabilities" of the School Board for London is not difficult to procure. It can be purchased from the printers of the Board at the modest charge of a shilling, and has the additional advantage of being presented in a fairly simple and intelligible form. But it is in some respects a startling document.

How many of the people who complain of the cost of the Board Schools, and listen with eager credulity to the plausible candidates who promise that, if they are elected, an era of economy and retrenchment will at once set in, have any idea that the School Board owes about five millions for monies borrowed from the Public Works Loan Commissioners and from the Metropolitan Board of Works, for liabilities on purchases of land, and for other liabilities upon contracts for building and altering schools? A proportion of these loans has to be paid off year by year, whatever system of economy may be introduced, and the process of borrowing is almost as sure to go on as that of repayment, seeing that all the five millions have been spent with the exception of some seventy-five thousand pounds. It is true that Mr. Buxton, the chairman of the Board, is sanguine that in five years all the necessary accommodation will have been provided, and that there will then be school-places for six hundred and fifty thousand children. But, as scarcely any estimate of the work or expenses of the Board has ever turned out to be even approximately correct. we may be forgiven

if we look a good deal farther than five years ahead for the pleasing consummation which Mr. Buxton holds out to us.

It is certain that unfortunate ratepayers cannot hope for much reduction in the expenditure, while the number of attendance is being brought up to the large number mentioned by Mr. Buxton. As the number of schools and of children grows, so must the number of teachers, the amount expended in stores, and the general maintenance account increase likewise. It is scarcely necessary to refer to the Board's comparative statement of expenditure for the last ten years to prove so very simple a sum in arithmetic as this, but an examination of that account suggests some rather remarkable questions nevertheless.

That twenty thousand children should cost exactly twice as much as half the number may be granted; but why each individual of the twenty thousand should cost more than each one of the ten thousand is certainly a little surprising. But such is undoubtedly the fact.

Let us, for purposes of comparison, take the two half-years ending respectively the 24th of March of the present year, and the 25th of March, 1882.

From the figures which are given by the Board for these periods it appears that, under almost every important head of expenditure, the cost per child is heavier now than it was a year ago. Thus, to begin with, salaries of teachers show an average increase of fifteen pence per child—which, however, may not really be as great as it looks, as the children's attendances may have earned more than in the period taken for comparison. Then "Books, Apparatus, and Stationery" have cost three-pence a head more, or an increase of sixteen per cent., and this it is impossible to understand, for why the cost for "books, apparatus, and stationery," for the children already in the schools, should increase because they are joined by other children, is one of those things to which no explanation seems possible. The only head of expenditure which shows any material decrease is that of "Repairs to Buildings," but even here the figures suggest matter for much consideration. All the buildings of the School Board are new, all have been built with an eye to the best of all economy, the economy which pays a good price for a good article, and in none of them ought there to have been any work likely to call for much renewal or repairing. Yet very nearly fourteen thousand pounds had to be spent in repairs in

the half-year ending last March, as against nearly seventeen thousand pounds in the corresponding half-year of 1882, while the September half of the latter year only figures for some seven thousand pounds under this head. Why should the cost of repairs to these comparatively speaking new buildings in one half-year be double that of the repairs in the previous one? But repairs appear always to have been a favourite item of expenditure with the Board, for, when it was quite an infant institution of only two years old, it managed to spend in a half-year, under this head, five thousand pounds.

It is not necessary to go elaborately through all the details of the School Bill for London, as it is quite impossible to form a judgment as to whether the best value is got for the money which is spent in miscellaneous items, and it would only be tedious to set forth rows upon rows of figures which, to the general reader, could not possibly convey any but a very hazy meaning. But one fact, and one most important fact, is writ large in the accounts, and it is one which should never be forgotten in criticising the "policy" and the work of the London School Board.

The expenses of the Board are rising continually, not only because of the increase in the number of the children to be educated, but because of something in the system of management which makes every child more expensive every year. In most cases where large numbers have to be dealt with, it is found that, in certain items of expenditure, increase of numbers naturally brings about a decrease of expenditure per head, seeing that what is enough in management and office charges for one is generally enough for two. With the School Board for London it is different. Expenses go up relatively as well as absolutely. The cost per child in the March, 1883, half-year, was elevenpence more than in the March, 1882, half-year, and sixteenpence more than in the September, 1882, half-year, and that is the salient point on which the ratepayers would do well to insist upon some explanation from their representatives on the School Board.

Unfortunately the active interest taken in the proceedings of the Board is small, notwithstanding that Mr. Buxton, in snubbing the vestries who had ventured to remonstrate on the receipt of the Board's annually growing precepts, declared that "a very wide popular interest is taken in

our triennial election, and a large number of ratepayers record their votes." The number of voters is as a matter of fact dangerously small, and it is not possible to agree with Mr. Buxton that "the constitution of the School Board is thus a far more reliable index to the 'popular wishes' than that of the vestries, who are themselves chosen by a comparatively small number of electors for purposes having no bearing on educational questions."

Mr. Buxton and the supporters of what is, rather grandiloquently, called the "policy of the Board" would do well to remember that the financial, as well as the educational, side of the question is of vital importance to the already overburdened ratepayer, and that the increase in the cost of the schools cannot continue indefinitely. On the other hand, the ratepayers should reflect that the remedy for the excessive expenditure of which they complain is in their own hands, and that, if they find the School Bill too large, the way to change the system is to change the men and women who work it, and who seem powerless to effect any useful reform themselves.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXIII. EFFIE IS OUTSPOKEN.

JENIFER'S parting with her lover this night was characteristic of their engagement, and what would be likely to ensue from it.

"I may come to-morrow?" he asked as he tucked her wraps round her in the brougham.

"Certainly, but not too early; call about five, then my mother will have had several hours to think about it."

"You won't let anything she may think influence you now—now that you've promised?" he asked anxiously.

"Indeed I shall. Why, you must know that I shall. You understood that when I promised."

"You'll let her see that your heart is in it? You won't conceal your feelings and allow her to think that you're indifferent?"

Even as he said this in tones in which were mingled entreaty and command, he felt pretty sure that Jenifer's heart was not very much in it; and that if indifference was portrayed it would not be altogether feigned. Nevertheless he was unshaken in his desire and resolve to have her for his wife. His admiration for her

had risen to the height of the best love he had it in him to bestow on anyone, and additionally he had a strong instinct that she would do her duty as unswervingly by him, when she came to owe him duty, as she had always done by her mother. Perhaps also he thought complacently of the fortunes other women had sung themselves into, and saw no reason to doubt Jenifer's capability of doing likewise.

Old Ann admitted her as she had previously done her mistress, and imposing silence by laying her finger on her lips, led Jenifer softly into her mistress's sitting-room.

"Was anything said about my missus at the party when she came away ill to-night, Miss Ray? Was her name mentioned for the play-acting man to hear it?"

"The American actor? Yes; I heard him ask her name and address, and say he should call to enquire for her to-morrow. Free and easy of him, I thought; but Americans are that, and everyone makes such a hero of this one just now."

Ann groaned.

"I may as well tell you, Miss Ray—you'll know it all to-morrow; he's no more an American than he is anything else he ever says he is. There's his picture hanging in that dark corner there; he's poor missus's bad scamp of a husband, who married her, when she was little more than a child, for her fortune, and left her to do for herself the best she could when he had spent it all. He's a brute, that's what he is," Ann added vigorously; "and there's many a man who breaks his wife's head open with a poker that isn't more cruel to her in reality than Mr. Hatton was to her. While he thought it hurt her to stay away from her, he stayed away; and now, if he thinks 'twill hurt to come back, he'll come back. Talk of tigers! they're full of loving-kindness and tender mercy compared to Mr. Hatton."

"Perhaps now that he's rich again—for he's made a great deal of money, and will make much more here in England, they say—he'll be kinder to her," Jenifer suggested consolingly. And then she asked, thinking of her own love-affair: "Was she ever very fond of him?"

"Worshipped him when they married, aye! that she did, and he played on that, and nearly broke her heart by making her jealous; then, when she got a little bit hardened, and used to pretend she didn't mind being neglected and set aside, he used to pretend to think that she had friends

and amusements she oughtn't to have; he used to scold her with such bitter words for the leastest little thing, till she grew so frightened of him, that she shook at the sound of his voice, and that made her grow deceitful. I've heard the men-servants say that never a dinner passed when they were alone without his finding such fault with her that she'd leave the table in tears. And when all the money was gone, he railed at her for her extravagance, and made everyone believe that 'twas she had ruined him, not he her."

"What a picture of a married life!" Jenifer said sadly, as she drew her cloak round her, and went on to her mother's room, to tell the story of her engagement should her mother be awake.

"One comfort is, all men are not like Mr. Hatton, but there's a many of them that are. You're best off as you are, Miss Ray;" with which reassuring words Ann went on her way.

Mrs. Ray was asleep. The communication had to be deferred till the morning perforce, and after hearing the sketch of Mrs. Hatton's matrimonial experiences, Jenifer was really in no hurry to make it. Then she remembered that Effie was coming to-morrow with her selfish appeal for assistance, and she told herself that it was well her mother should have a man on whom she could fall back upon and rely, now that her sons had ceased to consider and care for her.

She was strengthened in this consideration the following morning by a brief note from Jack.

"MY DEAR JENNY,—Hubert is pressing me hard for the rent, and I've been spending so much in farm-buildings, etc., and generally improving the place, that I'm not prepared with it. Thurtle has lent me some money; if my mother will let me have fifty pounds it will square me for the present. Do ask her for me, Jenny dear. I know I don't deserve it at her hands, but I can't forget she's my mother, and I know she doesn't forget I'm her son. I suppose you'll soon be coming out and making a great fortune. My wife unites with me in best love.—Your affectionate brother,
"JACK."

Jenifer knew well that so far from her mother having it in her power to lend the fifty pounds, she had little more than fifty shillings in the house at present, and the fund would not increase till her jointure was paid at quarter-day. She was sorry for Jack, still her anger rose against him

for his thoughtlessness. "He must have wasted money indeed," she thought, remembering the three thousand pounds which had been left to him under her father's will; "he hasn't the temptations that Hubert has to be extravagant, since he has chosen to cast his lines in lowly places. Hubert at least has the excuse of being tempted to do and to live as other men of his class live. Jack's marriage cuts him out of all that."

Then she took herself to task for want of generosity towards her younger brother. But still she was angry with him, and urged herself on to feel something like exultation in the thought that her mother would soon have a guard and stay, a prop, adviser, philosopher, and friend, in the person of Captain Edgcomb.

"Perhaps Mrs. Hatton thought the same thing when she was Miss Somebody, and Mr. Hatton proposed to her; and it ended in his maddening her with jealousy, and then scolding her till she shook at the sound of his voice. I don't think I could be jealous, and I'm certain I shall never shake." Thus she communed with herself while she was dressing. Then arranging her mental pile of intelligence as well as she could, she betook herself to her mother's room. Mrs. Ray was up and dressed, was anxious to get breakfast over, and was altogether so much on the alert, that Jenifer began to think Captain Edgcomb had broken faith, and began his wooing of her mother's consent before the break of day. Mrs. Ray's words reassured her.

"I've had a telegram from Effie, saying she and Mrs. Jervoise will be here to lunch at half-past one. I got up directly I received it, and sent to consult Mrs. Hatton about luncheon, not liking to disturb you, dear, after your party; and I hear from Ann that Mrs. Hatton is ill, and that you can tell me all about it."

Jenifer told her mother all she knew; or rather all she could remember under pressure of her own great news. When she had wound up Mrs. Hatton's affairs, she broached her own.

"Captain Edgcomb was there last night, and he and I had a long talk, chiefly about you."

"About me, Jenny?"

"About you; he's very, very fond of you, and understands that it would be his first duty to try and make you happy, and—well, it came to this, that I've promised to ask you to agree to it."

"Is Captain Edgcomb mad, or are you?"

"I'm sane enough, dear mother, but I think he's rather silly."

"More than silly. Mad—quite mad to think of an old woman like me," Mrs. Ray said indignantly.

"If he didn't think of you before everyone else in the world I wouldn't think of marrying him," Jenifer said, and Mrs. Ray calmed down under the dawning of the idea that it was her daughter and not herself whom Captain Edgcomb aspired to marry.

Still she felt that she had spoken under the influence of a ridiculous mistake, and the knowledge that she had done so predisposed her to be lenient to any reasonable views Captain Edgcomb might be entertaining. Accordingly, when Jenifer began to pave the way for her lover's petition to be laid before her mother, Mrs. Ray assisted in the paving with the utmost graciousness.

"I think he is a good man, and will make you a good husband; he is desirable in every way. Jenifer, my own dear girl, I've never been a match-making mother; it's been too much the joy of my life to keep you to myself; but I'll give you up to him hopefully."

"You'll do nothing of the sort; it's not a question of his being a 'desirable husband.' I've no notion what one would be if I got the article; but it is a question of his being a desirable son for you. If he isn't that he's nothing."

Then Mrs. Ray affected to chide her daughter for uttering such un-young-womanly sentiments. But the chiding did not come from the heart, and Jenifer knew it.

By-and-by Mrs. Hatton came, avowedly in order to consult Mrs. Ray as to the luncheon which the latter wanted to have prepared for Mrs. Hubert Ray and Mrs. Jervoise. The clever little housewife had very soon taken the trouble of catering for them out of Mrs. Ray's hands. And it seemed to them that she fed them on luxuries at the cost of bread-and-cheese. They would have been better able to solve the problem of how she did it had they known of the weekly hampers which came from Mr. Boldero under the seal of secrecy.

It was evident to them both that Mrs. Hatton had sustained a shock with no affectation in it. She looked a lesser woman altogether than she had hitherto done, and there was expression of appeal, almost of supplication, in her eyes and voice as she said:

"The luncheon shall be all right. I've really come to ask if you are comfortable enough here to stay on under altered, and perhaps, less pleasant conditions. You have heard, I know, from poor old Ann, that I am expecting—dreading my husband's return."

Then when they told her they knew it, and sympathised with and pitied her, she cast all reserve aside, and told them as much of the story of her outraged life as her agitation would allow her to recall.

"Free yourself from the brute!" Jenifer said impetuously. "I can't imagine anyone tamely waiting to be taken into bondage when freedom's to be had."

"He has been too cautious both in his conduct and his cruelty for me to get a divorce," Mrs. Hatton sighed. "He never struck me a bodily blow, he never let me find him out in anything more flagrant than a flirtation. True he deserted me, and left me to perish or do worse. But the law takes no heed of such a minor sin of omission as that; and now he may be here any time, and if you go I shall be alone with him!"

The horror in her tone touched Jenifer.

"He can't drag you back by the hair of your head; if we go, you shall come with us if you will."

Then, having given her invitation, she remembered that she had promised to marry Captain Edgecumb, and that she would have to consult him in future before she issued them.

It was almost a relief to Jenifer when Effie and Mrs. Jervoise arrived. They came on horseback, accompanied by Hubert, and followed by Mrs. Jervoise's own pad-groom, on the neatest-stepping, stoutest-built black cob in London. They were both their easiest, airiest selves, and criticised the furniture and arrangements of the rooms with candour and affability.

"Really, if I had known what nice lodgings you had I should have come over before," Effie said frankly. "I had an idea they would be grubby, and it would have been dreadfully painful to me to see anyone connected with me in grubby lodgings."

"I don't know why you should have presupposed the 'grubbiness,'" Jenifer remarked. Whereupon Effie treated her to a fine stare, and replied:

"I thought economy was an object with you, as it is with us. I have been having some bitter experiences of lodging-hunting

lately, and I find the decent ones are all dreadfully dear. We are so pinched, that we can't pay four or five guineas a week for lodgings, can we, Hugh?"

"We've never thought of doing it, to the best of my knowledge," he said in some exasperation; "and as you've only looked at one set of lodgings, I don't think that you're justified in saying that your experiences of them have been bitter."

"Hugh is so literal," Effie explained to his mother and sister. "As he is disposed to edit my statements, I won't make any more before him. Mrs. Ray, you and I will have our talk out in another room, won't we? I dare say that funny little woman who mistook me for Belle Campbell, and afterwards left in a huff last night, has another room that we can sit in for half an hour."

"Come with me to the dining-room, dear," her mother-in-law said.

"Dining-room! you have gone in for luxuries," Effie said, starting up briskly, and Jenifer felt very powerless to save her mother from the impending application, as Mrs. Jervoise began engrossingly:

"Jenifer, do you know what Madame Voglio and I have planned? She is to give a concert at my house, and you are to come out at it."

"She has made no arrangement of the kind with me. I mean I've heard nothing about it," Jenifer said rather wildly. She was longing to free her mother from Effie's graceful grasp, and at the same time she feared to seem ungracious to Mrs. Jervoise.

"Dear old Voglio knows that if I take anything in hand, I never rest till I carry it through to a satisfactory conclusion," Mrs. Jervoise said complacently.

"When is the concert to be?" Jenifer asked with pardonable curiosity. "I haven't seen Madame Voglio to-day. I am glad that she thinks I'm ready to try my wings."

"I can't fix the date yet because of Mr. Jervoise; he's so tiresome, he will stay up in town instead of going to Brighton, as his doctors order; but as soon as I can get him out of the house, I'll fix the date, and send out invitations. It will be a tremendous start for you, won't it, Hugh?"

"And I'm sure Jenifer will be grateful to you for giving her the start, Flora," Hubert answered, but Jenifer did not endorse her brother's sentiment.

"When are we to have luncheon?" Mrs. Jervoise said impatiently. "Effie must have had her gossip out with your

mother; go and look for her, Hugh. I've hundreds of things to do to-day."

"I'll go," Jenifer said, jumping up hastily, glad of the excuse for going to see how her mother was faring in a tête-à-tête with the rapacious Effie. As soon as she was out of the room, Mrs. Jervoise said:

"Jenifer is better-looking than ever; you had better nip Harry Edgcomb's hopes in the bud, Hugh. Jenifer ought to marry a fortune, and will, if she doesn't get entangled before she has been seen and heard. I was sorry to hear of her being at the Archibald Campbells' last night. They're all very well, but it's not the set for her to marry. Art-folk and literary-folk are all very well, but to me there's always an air of living from hand to mouth about them."

"Edgcomb's neither literary nor artistic, to the best of my knowledge."

"No; but I was thinking more of the herd who were there last night, than of the individual. Here they are at last. Effie, you have spoilt my day by staying so long; I shall punish you by taking you away at once, without waiting for luncheon," Mrs. Jervoise cried, as her sister came into the room with Mrs. Ray and Jenifer.

"Luncheon is quite ready, and I shall be so distressed if you don't stay," Mrs. Ray said in consternation. And after a little persuasion Flora consented "just to go in and take a bit standing;" and the two sisters hovered round the table, selecting whatever was daintiest, and nibbling morsels of the same to the great disgust of old Ann, who thought it unchristian, not to say vulgar, for ladies and gentlemen to go "spiering round a table in that restless fashion, as if there was nothing on it worth sitting down to."

They were on the point of departing before old Mrs. Ray called up courage to say:

"Jenny dear, I think you owe it to Hubert—to your eldest brother, the head of the house as he is, to tell him of the change in your circumstances, of the step you have taken."

She said it all very hesitatingly and deprecatingly, and Effie asked sharply:

"What is it, Jenifer? Don't be mysterious, for my sake."

"It's only that I believe I am going to marry Captain Edgcomb."

Effie looked discontented.

"How awfully silly of you, Jenifer! We don't want any more poor struggling

people in the family, and you might have done ever so much better if you'd only had the common patience to wait till Flora had introduced you well. You meant to do it, didn't you, Flora? Now all that's at an end if you've engaged yourself to Captain Edgcomb; he'll want every fraction he gets from his secretaryship for himself. I must say Hugh is singularly unfortunate in having a brother and sister, neither of whom can ever be of the least use to him."

"I hope you'll be happy, Jenny dear, but Edgcomb's hardly the stamp of man I would have thought you'd have chosen," Hubert loitered behind to say, as his wife, after an ungracious but perfectly graceful and self-possessed leave-taking, went out with her sister in the rapid style in which they were wont to whirl through life.

"It seems to me that I'm bereft of the power of 'choosing' anything," Jenifer replied impatiently, whereat Hubert shrugged his shoulders in a resigned way he had caught from Effie, and remarked that "it would have been just as well, perhaps, if she had waited till after Mrs. Jervoise had introduced her in the splendid style contemplated, before she definitely fixed her future."

When they were gone, old Mrs. Ray—who had been in a pleasant perturbation about them at first, but who had been visibly depressed after Effie had interviewed her—told Jenifer, with tears of pity and dismay, that "poor Effie didn't know more than the lilies of the field where to turn for a few pounds for current expenses, and all I could do," the poor lady continued, "was to promise that I would let her have twenty-five at the coming quarter."

"You'll leave yourself without the means of getting one of the many things you want, my dearest," Jenifer said, and she thought: "I'd marry a couple of Captain Edgcombs, if it wasn't wicked, to secure my mother's peace and comfort; if I fail in doing that——"

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CHAPTER IV. CHANGE.

MRS. JOHN idolised Archie. A good woman's whole heart goes out towards a child who has utterly and always been dependent upon her alone. Love tends downwards in another sense than Aristotle's, and is, like the sun, warmest when highest above its object. And so Archie's helpless infancy, friendless boyhood, and lonely outlook in life evoked all the warmth of Mrs. John's generous heart. Now Mrs. Pybus's hatred of Archie was naturally proportioned to Mrs. John's love for him; for Mrs. Pybus was a model mother-in-law.

The old lady used Archie, as witches of old used wax figures of their foes, to stab Mrs. John through him; and now, after his last escapade, she meditated a stroke of death. She would write to Mr. Tuck and have the youth packed off forthwith to school.

Mr. Tuck is eight years older than when last we had the pleasure to meet him, and is, therefore, eight years more his own grandmother than he was then. His thought, and care, and kindness towards himself are searching and unceasing, and leave no act or moment of his life unregarded. Nor will he allow you to leave it unregarded. If he is an old woman towards himself he is a big baby towards others, and shows everyone his new frock, so to speak, or the latest pin-scratch he has got, with a generous confidence that a stranger's interest in it will be as deep as his own.

Therefore, no one could know Mr. Tuck without hearing of the unconscionable Archie Guard, or being asked for advice and sympathy in this distressing case. And as everyone so consulted politely

assented, if only by silence, to Mr. Tuck's view of the case, his sense of ill-usage deepened every successive quarter-day. It was not so long since Dr. Grice—of his own motion—had extorted from him ten pounds a year more, that is, sixty pounds a year for the boy's maintenance and education, and as Mr. Tuck had only two thousand five hundred pounds a year for his own support, he felt the drain grievously, and groaned, and grumbled, and growled more loudly than ever.

While in this mood he received Mrs. Pybus's letter containing a terrible picture of Archie's troublesomeness; a statement—most exasperatingly put—of all the unpaid pains Mrs. Pybus had taken with his education, and a suggestion that he might be sent to school. Of course, Mr. Tuck took this rasping epistle to be the production of the mistress of the house, and equally of course, he construed it into an extortionate demand for more money. As for the suggestion that Archie might be sent to school, it was obviously meant to bring him to terms by the hint of a more costly alternative. Costly or not costly he would choose it, if only for the pleasure of disappointing the scheming greed of these bloodsuckers. But need it be costly? Surely there were schools which would board the boy for less than sixty pounds a year. He might punish these people without punishing himself, or even with profit to himself. He would see at once about it.

Accordingly Mrs. Pybus's letter had quite a large circulation. He ran about reading it to every friend or acquaintance he had, as if the matter were of the most vital importance to all Kingsford and its neighbourhood, and he appealed helplessly for advice to all to whom he read it, down to his very housekeeper.

The result was the following letter to

the Rev. John (Mr. Tuck would not condescend to notice his fair correspondent), received a fortnight after the affair of the rats:

"REV. SIR,—I am glad at once to be able to relieve you of the great trouble and expense my nephew has been to you. I have arranged for his board and education at The College, Gretstane, near Duxhaven, under the care of Mr. Paul Kett, M.A., and have promised Mr. Kett that he shall be in his charge on Tuesday next. You will be good enough to send him there on that day. You will quite understand the shortness of the notice: It does not entitle you to the quarter's payment in advance (made three weeks ago), as I am assured by my solicitor; but to prevent all dispute and litigation I shall not reclaim it. I shall be glad to have your acknowledgment of this letter; but any other communication you may think fit to make, must be made through my solicitor, Elliot Nott, Esq., Kirkclose, Kingsford.—I am, rev. sir, yours, etc., JAMES TUCK."

Like most weak men Mr. Tuck was tremendous at a distance, and by letter.

The effect of this bombshell was all that Mr. Tuck or Mrs. Pybus could have desired. The Rev. John, after his manner, read the letter three times before he could take in its purport. When he did take it in he looked over at Mrs. John with an expression that made her set down hastily the tea-pot she had raised to pour out his tea, and ask in a startled voice:

"What is it, John?"

John, in his slow way, was thinking how best to break news which he knew would be to her as the shock of a dear friend's death; but before he could get his thoughts together Mrs. John had the letter in hands that trembled as she read and re-read the first sentence, while her face grew white to the lips. In four days her boy was to be taken from her for ever. The shock was sickening. She looked over at Archie. The little victim, unconscious of his doom, was playing with Ponto. He was a very handsome boy, with a bright, fearless, open face, and eyes like sunshine on waves—liquid light in ceaseless motion; and he never looked more winning than at this moment, when he was teaching Ponto to toss up and catch, at a word, a lump of sugar poised on his nose.

"Look, moth—"

The laugh died out of his face as he met her miserable look. What had he done? He could think of no iniquity so dreadful

as to cause the haggard sorrow in her face. He looked bewildered for a moment, and then faltered out:

"Is it the galoshes, mother?" going up to her with the trouble in her face fully reflected in his own.

He had rigged out his mother's galoshes as racing-boats, and was paying now compound interest of remorse for his guilty joy. Mrs. John said nothing, and could say nothing at the moment. She put her arm round Archie's neck and pressed his head against her bosom, and smoothed back with a trembling hand the golden hair from his forehead, and kissed it with a clinging kiss. It was plainly something more terrible than the galoshes.

"What is it, mother?" looking up with eyes wide with wonder and trouble, and filling fast with tears.

Then Mrs. John gave way and hurried out of the room, and having cried herself calmer upstairs, returned bonneted, to tell the helpless Rev. John that she was off to catch Dr. Grice before he set out upon his round.

Dr. Grice thought that all was not yet lost. He regretted bitterly his demand for an extra ten pounds—to which, of course, both he and Mrs. John ascribed Mr. Tuck's thunderbolt—but he believed that Mr. Tuck would be glad to leave the child where he was, if the Rev. John offered to maintain him at a shilling a year less than the terms of Mr. Paul Kett, M.A. Therefore, the doctor telegraphed at once to ask Mr. Kett's terms, and having a reply in an hour stating them to be thirteen guineas a quarter, he advised Mrs. John to write a conciliatory letter, offering to maintain Archie on the old terms. Mrs. John, to make assurance doubly sure, offered, through the Rev. John, to maintain the boy for forty pounds a year, and so, of course, confirmed Mr. Tuck's construction of Mrs. Pybus's letter. Mrs. John, after a sleepless night, hurried out to meet the postman when the answer was due, yet dared not open it when she got it, but carried it back at still greater speed to the vicarage, and to the Rev. John's study. He was not so long this time in taking its contents in, not only because he was prepared for them, but also because of their brevity.

"Mr. Tuck begs to decline the Rev. Mr. Pybus's generous offer, and to say that Mr. Kett expects Mr. Tuck's nephew at Gretstane not later than Tuesday next."

Poor Mrs. John! Even Mrs. Pybus

might have pitied her remorsefully if she had seen all the anguish of her soul. But the old lady saw little of it, and that little pleased her. She was surprised and relieved to find that Mr. Tuck had said nothing of her letter, and, this anxiety being at rest, she was able to enjoy, and did enjoy, the consternation she had caused. And Archie? He was sorry to leave Mrs. John; he was glad of going to school. When he was with Mrs. John he was wretched, yet half an hour later, when with Tom Chown, he was full of all the fun that was before him in this new world. But to do him bare justice, he was a good deal more with Mrs. John than Tom Chown in these last few hours, and when the sad morning dawned, he would have sacrificed his golden visions to have stayed to comfort her. She was so ill and prostrate that she could not go with him as she had intended, and Archie realised fully for the first time her love and his loss, as she clung to him as the drowning cling to the plank that is slipping from them. An hour later he was intensely interested and delighted at the spectacle of the Great Northern express engine, Number Two Hundred and Forty-two, backing to be coupled to the train which was to bear him away. What would you have?

The tear down childhood's cheek that flows,
Is like the dew-drop on the rose.
When next the summer breeze comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.

Once in the train Archie was too busy to have much thought of either home or school. He had not only to run restless as a caged hyena from one window of the carriage to the other, lest any of the wonders of the country flying from under him should be lost; but he had also to try to keep "Uncle" John's laggard attention abreast with these wonders—a Sisyphean effort. The Rev. John's mind could be brought only with immense difficulty to any point, and rebounded like a relaxed bow from it the moment he was left again to himself. Only a child, and a very sanguine child, could hope to call his attention in time to anything on either side of a Great Northern express. It was always at least two miles in arrear. It was in arrear even at Duxhaven, which they would have left behind if Archie had not called the Rev. John's attention to a couple of boys with pea-shooters who had got out at this station, seemingly for the sole purpose of trying their artillery on each other at a longer range. The sight of the schoolboys

recalled to the Rev. John the purport of his journey, and as the porters were shouting apparently "Buxton," even he knew that this was as near an approach to "Duxhaven" as any railway porter was likely to make.

Accordingly he asked if it were Duxhaven in a leisurely manner, and was at once bundled out with his charge in a manner not at all leisurely, as the express was due to start.

Fortunately Mrs. John, if she had forgotten to label her husband, had not forgotten to address Archie's box and hamper, which were on the platform before them.

The Rev. John went to look after them, leaving Archie at the bookstall and near the two other youths, who were disputing with some warmth about the honour of having shot the guard in the ear as he was getting into the moving van. Then their attention was diverted to the Rev. John, who was moving their boxes in his search for Archie's.

"I say, Bolus, look at that old guy at our boxes. He's slipped through his clothes," said the elder youth facetiously.

Indeed, as the Rev. John's old-fashioned stand-up collars reached his ears, whilst his trousers did not reach his boots, Master Tandy's description was not unhappy.

"Let's have a shy at him," said Bolus, whose real name was Bell; but who was honoured with the name of "Bolus" because of his father's profession.

Bolus had no sooner levelled his piece than Archie knocked up its muzzle.

"Hulloa!" shouted the amazed Bolus.

"He's my uncle," cried Archie, very wroth.

"You want it, do you?" retreating a step or two to send a stinging shot into Archie's face.

Archie sprang forward, snatched the pea-shooter, and flung it on to the line, where a passing goods demolished it next moment.

Bolus, when he had recovered from his surprise, made for Archie, whom he would certainly and thoroughly have thrashed then and there, uncle or no uncle, if it had not been for the intervention of Tandy. Holding Bolus back he shouted to Archie:

"Get to your uncle, young 'un."

"I won't," said Archie, whose blood was up, and who might be kicked but wouldn't be conquered.

"Be quiet, Bolus; we can't have a shindy here. Perhaps he's for Polecat's. Bound for Polecat's, Plucky?"

Archie didn't recognise Mr. Paul Kett.

M.A., under this unsavoury title, nor, if he had, would he have condescended to answer the question.

A porter, coming up with the Rev. John at that moment, answered it for him.

"These young gents are for Mr. Kett's, sir. You might all go together in Tigg's trap."

Now the Rev. John had got strict orders from Mrs. John to make friends for Archie at any cost of anyone who had anything to do with Gretstane College. Therefore he took the two lads into the refreshment-room at once, and plied them with the fossil pastry for which these establishments are famous. Moreover, he took Tandy, as the elder, aside, and, tipping him with a sovereign to be expended in a school-treat, begged him to befriend Archie.

"I'll look after him, sir," said Tandy, better known as "Cochin," from his supposed mental and bodily resemblance to a cock of that breed. "He's a young 'un for the place, though," looking critically at Archie, who was comparing penknives with his late enemy, now gorged and gracious.

"Is Mr. Kett severe?" asked the Rev. John, as Cochin's manner suggested this inference.

"He's the gout," said Cochin significantly. "And there's Skunk," continued Cochin. "Skunk's safe to skin him," nodding towards Archie, "he always skins the little chaps."

"One of the masters?"

"He's a son of Polecat's, and Fet's another. Fet's a spy!" with an expression of such disgust in his face as spoke volumes for Fet's loathsomeness.

"Skunk" and "Fet" were both of course derived from Polecat, but there was a conflict between the best authorities as to whether "Fet" was a contraction of "Ferret" or "Fetid."

"How does he skin them?" asked the Rev. John, as if he was enquiring into a process just patented by an inventive butcher.

"He'll get all his lush out of him, and bully him. He's an inf—I beg your pardon, sir."

At this point the porter returned to say that Tigg's trap was in the station-yard, and the Rev. John and Archie followed Cochin and Bolus into it.

It was worth waiting on the platform to hear Master Tandy's description of Gretstane College, since it was truer and terser than that of its prospectus; but we can wait no longer, as the Rev. John's train is

due in less than two hours, and it is three-quarters of an hour's drive to the college.

The college was an imposing structure. It looked palatial, but it was all front. Seen at a distance in profile it appeared a thick wall, for the rooms, all long and narrow, faced you lengthwise. On the left was the school-room, with the play-room for its upper storey; on the right, the dining-room, with the dormitories for its upper storey, and between lay the apartments of the principal.

Into the show-room of these apartments, the library, the Rev. John and Archie were ushered, while Cochin and Bolus shot off with steps swift (though stealthily while within Kett's dominions) to the playground.

"Archie," said the Rev. John while they were to themselves for a moment.

"Yes, uncle."

"You'll have little troubles, Archie, but don't write about them to your mother. It would only fret her and do no good."

"No, uncle," said the lad in a faltering voice, trying to keep back the tears, which the mention of his mother—not of his troubles—brought to his eyes.

The Rev. John, as he looked down on the wistful little face upturned to his, realised for the first time the desolation of the child, which he was making more desolate by this prohibition. He did what he had never done before—not even when Archie was a child—he stooped and kissed the boy's forehead.

"God bless you, my boy!" This extraordinary demonstration of tenderness from Uncle John showed the child, also for the first time, and as by a lightning flash, the great gulf which now separated him from his mother.

"Tell her," he said with a choking sob, "I'll—I'll not ek—ek—climb."

Not a moving message—ludicrous rather. But as his climbing of anything—house, tree, or haystack—was his own chief delight and his mother's chief terror, the promise was the dearest thing he could think of at the moment to send her.

Here the principal entered, an immense man, six feet two, and stout in proportion, with a fascinating squint. This mesmerising obliquity of vision was invaluable to him in his profession, since it gave him the semblance of omniscience; for, like a good portrait, he seemed to look at once at all who looked at him from any point. Any boy who glanced up from his book or his plate found himself held with one glittering

eye, while the other was piercing into the guilty soul of a youth at the opposite side of the room. With visitors, on the other hand, this Argus could beam simultaneously on parent and pupil, flattering each with the consciousness of a special attention. And he beamed sincerely on such; for, when in good-humour, he was the most genial and jocose of men, as little likely to be suspected of cutting anything but a joke in school, or of tickling a youth otherwise than with laughter, as Byron's pirate was of piracy:

He was the mildest mannered man
That ever scuttled ship, or cut a throat.

But he had a quick temper, quickened sometimes to ferocity by the gout.

"Mr. Pybus, how do you do? Master Tuck—eh? Time to tuck in, Master Tuck, tea-time, you know—eh?" giving Archie a playful box with the back of his hand on the ear.

"His name is Guard, Mr. Kett. Mr. Tuck is his uncle. Archie Guard."

"Oh, Guard, is it? Prenez garde, look out, take care, pay attention. Prenez garde's your motto, Master Guard. We shall keep guard, Mr. Pybus, depend upon it. Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Who's to guard Guard—eh? Why his guardian, to be sure. And who's your guardian now, my boy—eh? Mr. Paul Kett to be sure," with a sportive chuck under the chin. Mr. Kett could never resist a joke, and his one idea of a joke was a pun—especially a classical pun. "You'll join us at tea, Mr. Pybus?"

"No, thank you," said the Rev. John, shrinking nervously from such an ordeal. "I've kept the waggonette as I've to catch a train. Good-bye, Archie; good-bye, my child," pressing into Archie's hand the two sovereigns with which he was to have himself bribed the establishment. "For the servants, and to treat the boys," he whispered. "Thank you, Mr. Kett—no farther, pray. Good-bye;" and he was gone.

But the courteous Mr. Kett would see him to the door, and even to the carriage unfortunately. For at the bang of the carriage-door the horses, impatient to get home, started unexpectedly, and the hind-wheel passed over the principal's gouty toe, putting him to intolerable torture.

At this moment there was a tumultuous peal from a great bell hung outside the school-room, summoning the boys to tea. Mr. Kett limped in to preside, looking into the library on the way to summon Archie curtly to follow him. Now at

meal-times Mr. Kett, as a rule, was harassingly jocose, and kept the table on a roar; for the boys got his jokes done for them by a youth named Moffat. He sat next the principal, and was from long experience able to divine pretty correctly from Mr. Kett's manner whether a joke was or was not intended. The boys, therefore, kept one wary eye fixed on Master Moffat for the signal for an irrepressible outburst of laughter. If the joke was not an old one, or in Latin (for a Latin quotation was almost certain to be a joke, and a joke, too, which it was to one's credit to construe); if, we say, the joke was new and in the vernacular, and therefore too stiff for Mr. Moffat, he discriminated it, as the learned pig discriminates the letters he is told to pick out, from the manner of his revered preceptor. To-night, Mr. Kett, as we may well imagine, was not in a jocose mood, but in much anguish and a bitter bad temper. When, therefore, he had entered the dining-room, and had "sworn a prayer" in the form of a grace, he looked round with an eye a-hungered for a victim, and pounced upon the wretched Cochin. Cochin had omitted to pay his respects.

"Oh, Master Tandy," exclaimed Mr. Kett almost in the same breath with the grace, "I hope you'll pardon me, I ought to have paid my respects to you, in common politeness, before I sat down to tea. Maxima debetur puero reverentia."

Every eye was on the Coryphæus, Moffat. He was in doubt at the beginning of this satirical address, but was thoroughly reassured by the Latin quotation, and therefore gave an unhesitating signal for laughter. The hall shook with a shout of laughter. So hysterical was the delight of Bolus, that he must needs jump up and down on his chair, and give it full vent; but he was suddenly frozen in mid-air, in the attitude of one who holds a back for leap-frog. He dared not even sit down in the awful stillness, lest he should call fatal attention to himself. For the stillness was awful as the principal shot up like an explosion.

"Who laughed?" glaring from face to face to find on each an expression which said more plainly than words that it never had laughed, and never would laugh in this world. "Master Tandy, do me the favour to wait upon me after tea in the library. Mr. Nicholl"—Mr. Nicholl was the usher, better known by the name of "Tongs" from the expression of his legs—

"Mr. Nicholl, you will be good enough to keep the boys in the schoolroom every evening from six to nine, till the names of the ringleaders of this outburst of insolence are given up. Who's hiding behind backs there? Oh, Master Bell; Mas—ter Bell, perhaps you might find time when tea is over, Master Bell, to accompany Master Tandy to the library to pay your respects to the principal." The misguided Bolus resumed his seat with a Satanic look at Moffat, who had led him to the slaughter.

It was not to be wondered at that only decimation could appease the principal, so transparently factitious was the sudden and simultaneous roar of laughter; the only wonder was that Mr. Kett had so often been taken in by it when he was in a jocosse humour. But excessive vanity is as blind as excessive love.

After a doleful tea the boys gathered together for the few moments that remained to them before six, to abuse Moffat, as an African abuses his discredited fetish, and to decide by lot who the victims of the Minotaur were to be. Moffat magnanimously devoted himself, without lot, to the slaughter, resigning at the same time his perilous and thankless post of Coryphæus.

He'd be hanged, he said sorely, if he'd set Kett's jokes for them again, as though they were partridges.

He insisted besides upon there being at least three other victims sent with him to the slaughter. Lots were drawn for three, therefore, and Archie with two others came forth from the urn. This was preposterous, and was felt so to be; but, as the alternative was that the die should be recast, no one but Moffat and Archie's fellow-scapegoats would confess to seeing it in that light.

"If you send in the young 'un, Kett will see it's a sham, that's all," said Moffat decisively.

Archie's other fellow-victims also held his immolation to be monstrous, and clamoured for the lots to be drawn all over again, to find themselves, of course, in a minority of two. Hereupon Archie, seeing an opening for heroism, said he didn't mind going in, and was vociferously applauded therefore by all except his fellow-scapegoats.

It was an unfortunate step for the child. Kett had got from Mr. Tuck Mrs. Pybus's account of him at second-hand and with compound interest, and was prepared to find him incredibly incorrigible for his years. When, therefore, Archie was

marshalled with the others by Tonga into the library, Kett took another view of the case altogether from that feared by the boys. He fancied Archie had volunteered from bravado. Now it was his fixed principle that an obstinate boy must be mastered at once and once for all.

"Oh, you were one of the ringleaders, were you? Come here, sir."

Archie came near, trembling. Mr. Kett held in his hand a cane, hot from the hands of Bolus and Cochin.

"What brings you here, sir?"

"I came myself, sir."

"Oh, you came yourself, sir, did you? No one sent you—eh?"

"No, sir."

"You wanted to find out what this was like?" with a fierce flourish of the cane.

Archie, truth to tell, repented of his heroism and stood dumbfounded and fascinated by the fierce eye which was fixed on him, while the other fork of the flashing lightning pierced Moffat and Co. to the marrow. Mr. Kett, full of his prepossession about the child, took his dazed look for the expression of dogged defiance.

"Very well, young gentleman, very well. We shall see who'll tire first at this game. Come, hold out your hand. Now, sir, what brought you in here?"

Archie looked up, silent and helpless. Down came the cane with all the force of fury on the little soft hand. The pain was stunning and the child cried out.

"Oh, we can sing, can we? I thought we should hear something at last. Perhaps we may be taught to talk presently. The other hand, my little friend, the other hand," tapping Archie's left shoulder with the cane.

But the child was quite stunned and bewildered, and heard nothing but a singing sound in his ears, while he saw Mr. Kett and the boys as through broken and scudding clouds, mistily and intermittently. But Mr. Kett of course took his stupefaction for contumacy, and, as his wrath rose, struck Archie's shoulder more and more sharply.

"Come, come, sir; out with it; out with the other hand. You won't, won't you!" with sudden savageness, seizing Archie by the collar of his coat and flogging him on the back till he was breathless, when he flung him from him, a limp heap, into a corner of the room.

Cochin, to his immortal honour, did an act as heroic for his years as many that have earned the Victoria Cross. He started

forward, raised Archie up, and helped him from the room, Kett being too much confounded by his audacity to interfere. Cochin was certain that he would be paid out for it many times over, but he was wrong. Mr. Kett, at bottom, was a kind-hearted man, though a demoniac when enraged, and Cochin's courageous kindness went to his credit with the principal when he came to himself.

Cochin helped Archie into the now deserted dining-room, got him a glass of water, and sat by him, saying soothing things till the convulsive sobs, which shook his whole frame, began to grow less frequent and violent.

"Would you like to come into the playground, Guard?"

"Oh, please——" pausing for his friend's name.

"Cochin," filled in that young gentleman as naturally as if he had got this name at the font.

"Please, Cochin, do you think I might go to bed?"

Archie, like other wounded creatures, wanted to be alone, and thought bed the safest solitude. The boy had no business in bed at that hour, and before prayers; but Cochin, thinking he himself might as well be in for a pound as a penny, resolved to risk the responsibility of taking Archie to the dormitory. Accordingly, when Archie had got his night-shirt from his box, Cochin stole upstairs with him to the dormitory, showed him his bed, and left him by its side, on his knees, sobbing still.

An hour later, Cochin stole up again, at really great risk to himself—for the dormitory was forbidden ground at this hour—to console Archie with some cake. He found the child asleep, with the tears still on his eyelashes, and with an envelope clutched in his hand. It was a stamped envelope, addressed by Mrs. John to herself for Archie to enclose a letter in. He had taken it out of his box when he had got his night-shirt, to find what solace he could in it, and had fallen asleep with it in his hand. Cochin knew what it was and what it meant, and was moved.

"Poor little beggar! He's a young 'un for the place," he said, as he slipped the slice of cake under his pillow.

Archie did not go through very heroically with his self-devotion as a scapegoat, but the letter he enclosed next day in this envelope was, in its way, heroic, for, remembering the Rev. John's parting

caution, he did not put into it a word about his trouble.

"DEAR MOTHER,—Please write soon. There are a great many boys here. There's no boy as little as me. The boy we saw at the station—the big boy—is very kind. His name is Kochin. He was very kind to me last night. I'm to learn Laten and jography. Please write when you get this.—Your affectionate son,

"ARCHIE GUARD."

AS OTHERS SEE US.

"KNOW thyself" was the advice of the Greek philosopher, and it was in a somewhat similar spirit that Robert Burns penned the wish for the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us. Still, the two things are not exactly alike, for, although it would be extremely useful in private or business life to be able to see exactly what impression we are making on our friends and acquaintances, it does not by any means follow that that impression would be any nearer the truth than the extremely erroneous ideas we are all apt, at times, to form of ourselves.

How unlike the actual truth may be the impressions we make upon others, can be very well proved by a study of books of travel of the ordinary type. The average globe-trotter's view of the national characteristics, temperament, and life of the people of Japan, of China, and of India, for instance, has probably but a very remote connection with actual fact, and we know that even the most observant adherent of Cook or of Gaze is not likely to bring back any very trustworthy or valuable observations as the result of a tour of a couple of months on the Continent. Even the lively Gaul, who is usually credited with a more brilliant insight and with keener powers of observation than fall to the lot of more plodding and less mercurial mortals, is apt to hold up to nature a mirror which distorts and exaggerates, rather than to reproduce actual facts in a way which may be useful and instructive to the people whose manners and customs are supposed to be reflected. And it is not only to the flippant insolence and self-satisfied ignorance of such slap-dash feuilletonists as M. Assolant that this remark applies. The cultivated intellect and trained habits of observation of even so able a critic as M. Taine appear to have been warped in some way, when he

came to describe the English people, their ways, and their literature, and it is scarcely too much to say that, until within the last few months, no Frenchman has ever published a book which could be described as giving a fair picture of England and its inhabitants, painted from a real, intelligent, and impartial study of the people, and of the circumstances which mould and influence the national character.

The exception to the rule has been a long time in coming, but it has come at last, and English people may read with profit and interest, as well as with amusement, by far the greater part of the contents of the last contribution to the history of the English people as written by their neighbours.*

M. Max O'Rell is understood to have been, when at work in London under his real name, the teacher of French at an important public school, and, according to his own preface, has lived among us, a respectable, tax-paying citizen, for ten years. During that time he has evidently acquired an intimate knowledge of the English language, and has used his eyes and his ears to excellent purpose. His familiarity with our political, legal, and ecclesiastical customs, principles, and prejudices, is, it is not too much to say, far greater than that possessed by the average Briton; while his analysis of the national character is keen, subtle, and ingenious, severe sometimes, but always, in the main, just. Indeed, his fairness, and his desire to do justice to the people whom he undertakes to describe, are conspicuous throughout the book. Even where his conclusions may appear to an English mind a little forced, a little, perhaps, over-coloured, his case is always fairly argued, and his points carefully and soundly made. The motto from Montaigne, which appears on the title page, "C'est icy un livre de bonne foy, lecteur," is amply borne out by the greater part of the contents of the book. It is undoubtedly written in good faith, and much of it, as we have already said, is infinitely more interesting and valuable than the great majority of French criticisms on the people of this country. But—there is an awkward but—it is a thousand times that M. Max O'Rell has allowed the occasional temptation to be smart to be too much for him; has found it impossible, indeed, to avoid writing what so keen an observer and so able a writer must have

known to be nonsense. By far the greater part of the book has been written thoughtfully and with an evident sense of responsibility—"de bonne foy," in fact—but occasionally the author has be-thought himself of his Parisian "gallery," and has fallen back on some of those good old stock boulevard traditions of England and English people, which French wags can never resist, and the result is that truth and fiction, observation and hearsay, sense and nonsense are mixed up together in the book in the strangest possible salad. Two or three good old-fashioned Joe Millers also show that he has picked up every kind of information during his stay among us, and the courage with which he relates these as having happened to himself or to his friends is worthy of special admiration.

Let us turn over the pages of "John Bull et Son Ile," and pick out a few things which strike us as being scarcely generally known to English people, premising, on M. O'Rell's authority, that the word *monsieur* is invariably pronounced by English people "mossou," "mossié," "mochou," "mochié," or "monnezire."

As we are proud, brave, calm, obstinate as the mule and tenacious as the octopus, as well as past-masters in the arts of the diplomatist—surely M. O'Rell is poking his fun here—besides being a little eccentric and even mad, it naturally follows that we do all sorts of odd things, and are not very nice people in public. It is a common thing for people to walk from London to Edinburgh for pleasure (and, indeed, the custom of taking healthy exercise is so general, that nobody dies in England except in a green old age), and it is probably in view of journeys of this kind that the British tourist requires nothing in the way of luggage but a flannel shirt, a dozen collars, a walking-stick, and a couple of pairs of socks. When we do travel by rail we are rude to each other, and look at each other with a suspicious and grumbling expression, which is, after all, not surprising, seeing that any women whom we may happen to meet travelling alone are probably either prepared to levy black-mail on the unsuspecting, or to overwhelm us with tracts; and, even if we see that our neighbour's fuseses have ignited and set light to his coat-tails, we do not think of disturbing him for so trifling a matter—even if we happen to remember that M. Max O'Rell has derived this national trait from an exceedingly venerable story.

* John Bull et Son Ile, Mœurs Anglaises Contemporaines, par Max O'Rell. Paris, Calmann Lévy, Rue Auber 3.

In English family-life there are reserve and constraint, but no intimacy, no expansion. There is friendship, but little love. Sons seldom kiss their mothers, never their fathers; and hence it naturally follows that, when the father dies, the only question which is asked is, "Was he insured?" and, that point being satisfactorily disposed of, the worthy man is buried, and no more is thought about him. In Scotland the relations between father and children are even worse. Unless you have been in Scotland you can have no idea how serious life can be. A Scotch friend of our author's goes, it appears, every year to spend a month with his father, a minister of the Presbyterian Church and in other respects a person of consideration. On the day of the son's departure he always finds on the breakfast-table his little account for the month, and, being a wary Scotchman like his father, carefully checks the items and the addition before paying it, when this is the sort of conversation which takes place:

"But, father, I see you have charged me with eggs and bacon for breakfast yesterday. I assure you I never touched the eggs."

"You are wrong, my boy," says papa. "They were on the table. There was nothing to prevent your having them!"

Another interesting Scottish friend of M. O'Rell's presents his children, when they attain their majority, with an account of all that he has paid for them from the time of the monthly nurse upwards, and the dutiful children sign an undertaking to pay the amount in due course.

We should be sorry to say that these two stories are not facts, but we have certainly heard something very like them before. At all events such cases are hardly sufficiently common to form the basis of an argument.

English girls—except that they have terribly long feet—appear to have fascinated M. O'Rell. "When they are pretty," he says, "they have no equals on earth; they are angels of beauty." It is a pity, therefore, that their faces should be so often without expression, that their eyes should be frequently without brilliancy and piquancy, that their teeth should be long and prominent, and that they should frequently laugh like rhinoceroses and disclose their gums in the process. Also it is sad that English women should so rarely be pretty after thirty. M. O'Rell, however, pays so high a compliment to English women all round—except those

of the lower classes, for whom he has not a good word—that it would be ungenerous to pick out the little blots on this part of the picture.

M. O'Rell is justly severe on the "jerry builders" by whom the greater part of the suburbs of London have been built, and has much to say about the villa residence, with its bad bricks, its ill-fitting doors and windows, its damp, and its leakages. "It rains in your house," he had occasion to remark to his landlord one day. "Well," was the reply, "umbrellas are cheap!"

This state of things, it appears, is principally due to free trade, and to that furious struggle to buy everything in the cheapest market which is natural to us. To this cause were also due the faulty material and ultimate collapse of a pair of evening shoes, for which M. O'Rell paid eleven and sixpence, and which "gave out" after an hour's dancing—to the intense disgust of the shoemaker, who had not intended to guarantee the shoes for any such purpose. Either M. O'Rell or the shoemaker procured this story, if not in the cheapest, certainly in the oldest market.

Altogether our shopkeepers and men of business did not please M. O'Rell, and, from the chapter in which he deals with them, some odd things are to be learnt. Thus, if you pay a shopkeeper a sovereign, he will try it on a metal slab, and to be even with him, you will, in your turn, test in the same way every coin he gives you in change. The adjective "German" is, it appears, in English commerce the synonym for "bad," as, for instance, German silver and German sausages.

M. O'Rell maintains apparently seriously enough "that a London shopkeeper would think himself dishonoured if he did not use false weights; that a railway clerk would hang himself if he did not rob you of a shilling in passing your change for a sovereign through his window; and that an omnibus conductor would not keep his place a month if he did not find some way of doubling his income by robbing the company or the passengers;" though why the omnibus proprietors should discharge a man for not robbing them does not quite appear. Strange to say M. O'Rell limits his censure to the inferior class of London tradesmen (of the "basse classe," as he says later on), although he talks before about "un boutiquier de Londres," as if they were all alike. All the tradesmen he had to do with in the country were agreeable.

honest, and "I may almost say of superior education."

Finally, M. O'Rell knows an English shipowner who sold all his sailing-vessels to his sons, and immediately set up a line of steamers in opposition to them, and yet another Englishman who invariably takes an insurance ticket when he travels by rail, and is always rather disappointed when he arrives safe and sound at his destination. This Englishman again seems like an old friend.

According to "John Bull et Son Ile," the streets and public places of London are not at all nice places, and, besides being gloomy and repellent, abound with all sorts of dangers, of which that of having to pay black-mail rather than be accused of all sorts of offences against the law, appears to have most excited M. O'Rell's occasionally rather lively imagination. He is especially rough on the parks. Hyde Park is a vast field, badly kept up, in which, as indeed in all the other parks, beggars and squalid wretches of all sorts swarm all day—M. O'Rell is quite sure of this, for he goes out of his way to contradict another French writer on the point—and in which all sorts of horrors of a cut-throat nature are perpetrated after dark. On the whole, it is desirable to avoid the parks altogether, for M. O'Rell declares, and it is only polite to believe him, that he heard a magistrate say to a gentleman who had got into a difficulty in the park, "I am quite ready to believe that you are innocent, but what were you doing in the park?" In this connection it may be noted that M. O'Rell describes the London police-magistrates as the failures of the English bar.

No one ever strolls in the streets. When an Englishman has finished his work he walks home as quickly as he can, and never goes out again in the evening. At nightfall the parks and the less-frequented districts of the metropolis are entirely given up to thieves and other bad characters, of whom the police take no notice.

Under these circumstances it is natural that "Le flaneur n'existe pas à Londres; dans les parcs il serait suspect." Certainly M. O'Rell has a mysterious grudge against the London parks. For the rest he finds it impossible to describe the drunkenness visible in the streets, except to say that Saturday night is a veritable witches' sabbath, and that the women get as drunk as the men. Unhappily we know that there is too much truth in this last complaint, although M. O'Rell considerably

over-states his case, and here, as elsewhere, weakens the effect of his criticism by a habit of over-hasty generalisation.

But if M. O'Rell finds the exterior of our cities more sad and gloomy than it is possible to describe, he has nothing but good to say of our homes. They are the paradise of rational comfort and of well-considered luxury, and in them, amid a sufficiency of carpets and with plenty of tea to drink, the Englishwoman is thoroughly happy. The tea-kettle in England, like the pot-au-feu in France, is the emblem of the domestic virtues. That we should have studied the art of making ourselves comfortable is natural enough. Our winter lasts for eight months of the year, and the weather during this period is so grey and dull, so wet and dirty, and we suffer so grievously from the spleen, that comfortable homes—with plenty of tea and carpets—are a necessity of our existence. It is odd to find so generally well-informed and acute a writer dallying with that fine, crusted, old French superstition, "le spleen Anglais."

Another good old superstition crops up in a somewhat modified manner. We seem to have given up selling our wives at Smithfield, for M. O'Rell only remembers one man who sold his wife to a friend, and then the sale appears to have been by private contract; but they do not enjoy a high place in our consideration, nevertheless. "Married women only occupy a secondary position in society," the student of English manners is informed. "In the lower classes the husband stakes his wife at play against ten shillings, or half-a-crown, or a drink."

Comfortable, however, as are our homes, there is only one moment when the Englishman really puts aside the cares of business and gives himself up to gaiety. This is at Christmas time, when the sacred rites of the plum-pudding are celebrated—the plum-pudding, the ingredients of which are startling indeed. Such vast quantities of beer, brandy, and spice are added to this truly national dish by the vulgar classes, that the pudding burns your throat—something after the manner, we may suppose, of the famous American whisky, which is said to resemble, in its passage down the drinker's throat, a torchlight procession—and it is not surprising to hear that it is necessary to go on all-fours and to cling to the table before one can swallow a mouthful or two!

Except, it may be assumed, at Christmas, dinner in England is but a dull

business. The English middle-class takes care that its meal shall be as simple and unappetising as possible, from a puritanical feeling that we have been put into the world to mortify the flesh by refusing the good things which Providence has given us, and M. O'Rell's account of the way in which food is taken is strictly in accord with this view. Everybody is motionless and silent. If you venture to make a remark, you are answered in monosyllables. You are only spoken to to be asked if you want any more beef—when it is considered "comme il faut" to decline—unless, indeed, you are a foreigner, in which case you are sure to be asked two invariable questions: "Have you been long in England?" and "How do you like it?" To these you must return the shortest possible answers. It is not surprising that M. O'Rell—who surely must have been unfortunate in his hosts—declares that, after an hour of this sort of thing, a strong desire used to come over him to shriek aloud, or to pinch his neighbours to see if they were real or only stuffed. Nor does he seem to have had much more lively experiences of the virtuous tea, if we may judge by his description, which is worth translating in full.

"It is when John drinks his hot tea in little draughts, nibbling a piece of toast or bread-and-butter, that he is really beautiful and edifying. Almost all the middle-class takes tea at five o'clock and makes a meal of it. More than that, John sometimes gives a 'tea-party.' The company then sits down to bread-and-butter, and toast, and jam, and a dry and black cake, which in colour and taste resembles gingerbread. All the old maids are in the seventh heaven. You should see them, with an angelic smile, displaying their tusks of an inch long, their eyes modestly cast down, and their hands clasped on the edge of the table, waiting for the mistress of the house to ask them if they take milk and sugar, or if their tea is to their liking.

"Is your tea as you like it?"

"Oh, very nice, thank you!"

"No one moves his body, which should remain perfectly upright, the head only being slightly moved. . . . At dinner, even if the conversation languishes every moment, the beef and the pale ale, at all events, keep you up a little, but, with tea and a slice of bread-and-butter, you have not the strength even to try to revive it. You give up the attempt at once, and the conversation dies in agonies. . . . It is appalling."

And so it must have been. Even Mr. J. L. Toole's friend, who always came home to tea, would have thought twice before committing himself to such an entertainment.

Of course, M. O'Rell has a great deal to say about our climate—that terrible English climate which is responsible for so much "spleen," and for so many other British maladies. To say that the sun shines in England is merely a rhetorical image, and the phenomenon occurs so seldom that whenever it does happen—there is no mistake about it, "chaque fois que le soleil parait"—his photograph is taken as a remembrance. Our fogs are terrible inflictions, and of two kinds. Of these, the yellow variety, which is known as the "pea-soup," is of such terrible malignity that, if you do not wear a respirator, you will spit blood or be promptly suffocated. Our author handsomely admits that these fogs do not occur so frequently as most Frenchmen suppose. They rarely appear for more than fifteen days in the year, but then the other three hundred and fifty are generally hazy. When the day is clear, it is delicious, but unfortunately this is a rare phenomenon. And yet there must be enough pleasant weather to impress itself upon the mind, for M. O'Rell says in another passage: "If the morning is fine, you cannot fail to admire in the Park that softened pearl-grey light which I have really never seen in my life except in the London Parks."

The chapter on the administration of justice in "John Bull et son Ile," shows a much clearer comprehension of the subject than is probably possessed by nine Englishmen out of ten, but contains one of those singular mistakes which strike one the more forcibly from their occurring in the midst of so much that is well observed and acutely criticised. "In England," says M. O'Rell; contrasting our police arrangements with those of his own country, "in England you collar a policeman who has insulted or touched you, and walk him off to the station-house." It is to be hoped that touchy French gentlemen, who may repose absolute confidence in M. O'Rell's statements, will not venture upon this experiment.

M. O'Rell's opinion of the state of the drama in England is extremely uncompromising. "The English stage of the nineteenth century has fallen as low as possible," and if his description of English audiences could be taken as fairly correct, it would

not be necessary to go far to find a reason for this state of things. John Bull thinks it "de mauvais ton" to applaud, and only looks with pity on the artists who try to amuse him. Any actor who really gives himself up to the passion of the scene is considered ridiculous. The aristocracy only goes to the theatre to kill time and to yawn; the *bourgeoisie* has no taste for the theatre; the lower orders never dream of going there. M. O'Rell's experience of London theatres seems to have been principally obtained at Drury Lane, during the run of "Pluck," and of the Surrey, during the run of "Mankind" (where, however, he must assuredly have seen plenty of the *bourgeoisie* in the pit and boxes, and of the lower orders in the gallery); but he is good enough to admit that there is one theatre in London which one can call serious, the Lyceum. Such theatres as the Haymarket, the St. James's, the Vaudeville, the Princess's, and the Adelphi at the West End, and the Britannia and the Standard in the East, seem to be unknown to our author. He mentions Mr. Irving, but has apparently never heard of Mrs. Kendal or Mrs. Bancroft, of Mr. Wilson Barrett or Mr. Coghlan, of Mrs. Stirling or Miss Terry. The principal actor is little, if at all, assisted by the rest of the company, and, even in the leading theatres, if the two principal parts are well or fairly played, the others are insufferably bad. At a time when we have all been, with justice, congratulating ourselves on the improvement which has taken place in the ensemble of our theatrical performances, this criticism reads oddly. We may be permitted, however, to attach but little weight to M. O'Rell's opinions on the subject, seeing that he seriously declares that, with the exception of Shakespeare's plays, and of "The School for Scandal" and the "Rivals," there is no English acting drama at all. "It is a fact, strange and incomprehensible even in this country of contrasts. To have Shakespeare and to have nothing else in the national repertoire; Shakespeare, the king of poets, inimitable, inaccessible, a sort of demi-god—and after him nothing, absolutely nothing!" M. O'Rell's enthusiasm for Shakespeare does him honour, but he does not seem to know much about our stage, for all that.

Every British cobbler has a piano in his back-shop, and all the women, without exception, play on that ubiquitous instrument, but the favourite music of John Bull is the oratorio, which he enjoys "sitting motionless

and with his eyes shut, as if he were listening to a sermon." An oratorio is for John a foretaste of the joys which await him in the next world. M. O'Rell, for his part, takes a different view of the sacred music of "the Haydns, the Handels, the Bachs, and the Mendelssohns." Their oratorios seem to him to have been written under the influence of the terrible "spleen;" they are Thames fogs set to music! M. O'Rell's opinion of English musicians is not, on the whole, favourable. The big drum, he declares, is "the foundation of all English music."

Himself a teacher, M. O'Rell has much to say about our schools, public and private, and has been considerably impressed by the freedom enjoyed by the boys and young men in our great public schools and universities, and by the confidence which is reposed in them. How it may be with public schools in London we do not know, but a rather more intimate acquaintance with Eton than M. O'Rell has apparently enjoyed would, we should imagine, have made him think twice before saying "the cigarette is unknown in the great English educational centres;" and Dr. Hornby would scarcely let this expression of opinion pass muster, "if it were forbidden as strictly as it is with us, we should see it prospering in England as it does in France. The only attraction about smoking is that it is forbidden fruit; allow it, and it loses all its flavour." In our own time at Eton smoking was one of the highest crimes and misdemeanours of which a boy could be capable, and we believe that the rule has been little, if at all, relaxed since. With regard to private schools it is odd to find that M. O'Rell is under the impression that "schoolmaster" is a word which excites nothing but contempt, and that the proprietor of a private school is a poor devil whose trade has never recovered the blow which was dealt it when Mr. Wackford Squeers was created. Whether the young gentlemen of Oxford are always at the "Grand Club of the University, the Union" when they are not at their studies, may be doubted, and it is possible that it may strike instructed readers of "John Bull," that its author has looked upon this side of his subject with spectacles of too roseate a tint altogether.

M. O'Rell gives a singularly clear and lucid description of our political system, and of the functions and proceedings of our Houses of Parliament, except that he has some odd views as to the constitution of the House of Lords, which, by the way, he

describes as an insult to the common-sense of the English nation. Nine-tenths of the peerages date only from the last century; "The heroes who are ennobled are the heroes of money, the 'pale-ale' and the 'double-stout' have more Earls and Barons on their conscience than all the rest of the national products put together."

Sunday in London, as may be supposed, produced a terrible effect on M. O'Rell. It is a day of mourning, a day of death, he declares, and any one who wants a remembrance of London which will never be effaced from his memory, should come and look at it on Sunday. If an east wind happens to be blowing, the experience will be all the more striking. On Sunday in London not a living soul is to be seen in the streets, except the good folks who go to church, and the few vagabonds who lean up against the walls until such time as the public-houses open their doors. Everybody, or nearly everybody, goes to church, which is not difficult, seeing that there are nearly as many churches as public-houses, and if by chance any well-brought-up Englishman absents himself from divine service, he never thinks of going out of doors during the canonical hours. Stay, M. O'Rell recalls one instance of a backslider who took a walk with him one Sunday morning, but even this sinner was not lost to all sense of decency and propriety, for, on seeing that M. O'Rell was about to sally forth armed with a walking-stick, he implored him to substitute for it an umbrella as being more respectable. After morning service all England—M. O'Rell puts it plainly enough, L'Angleterre—goes home to dinner. During the interval between this meal and evening service—there does not appear to have been any afternoon service in the part of the world in which our author pursued his enquiries—all England takes a siesta, during which papa and mamma crack nuts and drink port wine, half asleep in their easy-chairs. As a crucial instance of the terrible severity of the English Sunday, M. O'Rell treats us to the following curious anecdote of Prince Bismarck: "M. de Bismarck, who, it appears, has a remarkable talent for whistling, landed at Hull on Sunday. 'It was the first time,' he says, 'that I had set foot on English soil. I began to whistle in the street. An Englishman stopped me and said, "Please not to whistle, sir." "Not whistle, why not?" "Because it is forbidden, it's Sunday." I resolved not to remain in Hull another hour, and started

for Edinburgh.'" It seems a pity that the ingenious author of this story did not, while he was about it, give it a greater air of probability.

For some other queer experiences of English life, which M. O'Rell appears to have had, we must refer our readers to his book, which, as we have before intimated, well deserves to be carefully studied. The moral to be drawn from the strange mistakes the writer makes is, that we should all do well to mistrust the superficial views of men and manners which casual foreign travel is likely to give us, and that, when we find so careful and well-informed a writer going so wrong as M. O'Rell sometimes does, we should recognise the extreme difficulty of forming a fair judgment of foreign customs and manners, and generalise on such matters a little less than we are all too much accustomed to do.

SONG.

A BOUQUET for my love who loves me not !
What shall I gather? Rich dark roses set
In thorns, ah me, like love; or lilies fair,
Tall bloodless lily-blooms; or violets wet
And sweet with night's dews; or carnations rare?

And yet—
White poppy buds are best, that teach one to
forget.

A song for my dear love who loves me not !
Sing, blackbird, thrilling in yon leafy brake;
Coo, cushat, coo; chant, thrush, thy sweetest
strain;

Thou nightingale with passionate throbbings
wake

Pain in her heart, who heeds not of my pain,

And make
Her pity him, who dies for her sweet sake.

A BOARDING-HOUSE ROMANCE.

A STORY IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

MOST of the guests were already in their places at the dinner-table when the Gräfin Rolandseck and her daughter entered.

At Mr. Trevelyan's request two seats had been reserved for them at Frau Sommerrock's right hand. By the law of boarding-house precedence, Trevelyan, as the guest of longest standing, was entitled to the seat of honour, but by his cunning suggestion he found himself third, and neighbour to the younger of the two ladies.

He was the only person present whom Frau Sommerrock introduced formally, and the cold inclination of the head with which he was favoured by both ladies made him more than suspect that they would have been better pleased if no exception had been made in the way of introduction. After a few conventional remarks upon the weather, Mr. Trevelyan relapsed into silence, not

feeling sure enough either of his German, or of their attention, to venture more.

Without any appearance of doing so, he observed them closely throughout the meal. He was not prepossessed by the elder lady, who looked haughty and discontented. He supposed she must have been a beauty once, unless she was only the stepmother of the young gräfin, but wrinkles, and the loss of anything like a complexion, had spirited away all pretensions to good looks. Her figure was too stout and shapeless for dignity, her manners were snappish and unpleasant. On the whole, the American felt a little curious as to the grounds on which she set up for being so very little lower than the angels.

She seemed "uncertain, coy, and hard to please" as regarded her food. He saw her daughter and Frau Sommerrock exchange more than one glance of understanding when she refused anything in a particularly impatient manner, and marvelled at the gentle persuasiveness they both employed to induce her to partake of the dishes for which her contempt was less openly expressed. He saw, too, that they both bent their energies to entertaining her with lively and amusing conversation, and on her occasionally rewarding them with a slight smile, they looked positively delighted. She talked to her daughter in French, but she was obliged to carry on her conversation with Frau Sommerrock in her native tongue. She spoke to her, however, as if they were alone, or at a restaurant, carefully ignoring the presence of the rest of the visitors. Fortunately these were for the most part engaged in conversation among themselves, and the countess's rudeness excited little or no notice except from Mr. Trevelyan.

He admired the young gräfin's conduct throughout the repast; it betrayed a great deal of affection and unselfishness, combined with no little tact. With her appearance he was not nearly so much struck as in the morning. She was undeniably handsome, but after all, her beauty turned out to be of a proud, reserved type, that seemed over-conscious of its own value. On nearer acquaintance he missed the rare play of expression which had thrilled him in the morning, as a beautiful poem or a fine strain of music thrills. When he remarked how unchanged the beautiful face remained during the long meal, and the perfect self-possession the girl displayed in each action, he almost wondered whether he had invested her with a charm in his mind,

which was foreign to her naturally. He tried to recall that something in her face which had inspired him with a kind of pity for her. Looking at her now, as she sat there serene, beautiful, perfectly dressed, it seemed folly to have imagined that she knew any care beyond occasional ennui, a liberty to have assumed that her happiness could in any great degree be dependent upon another.

At the conclusion of the meal everybody went into the drawing-room—the Rolandsecks alone failed to put in an appearance.

Mr. Trevelyan went out upon the balcony and was soon apparently absorbed in contemplation of the mountains—not so absorbed, however, but that he would have been instantly conscious of the entrance of a certain person into the salon, and have abandoned his post of observation and his unsocial behaviour simultaneously.

Calm as he appeared outwardly, the American found it very hard work to remain passively upon the balcony until coffee was served at eight, yet he could not tear himself away earlier, as there was just a chance that the Rolandsecks might come down for it. As soon as he had satisfied himself that this was not the case, he left the room and set out for a long, lonely walk.

The sense of being free from observation was a great relief. He was not a little ashamed of the excited state of his feelings; it was something quite new to him, who by nature possessed more than the usual coolness and indifference of his countrymen. For the first time that he could remember his coolness and self-confidence were a little shaken. Not that he did not even now entertain a sufficiently high opinion of himself and his desirability as a sound investment for any lady matrimonially inclined, but he was not by any means sure that his fancy had lighted upon precisely the lady who would know how to properly appreciate the advantages he had to offer.

He was wealthy, but he reflected that the Germans did not know the real value of money. His wife would have the entrée into the first society in the States, society as accomplished and brilliant as anything in Europe, but the German nobility being bigoted and exclusive on the subject of rank in inverse ratio to their enlightenment on other subjects, it was a thousand to one that a Countess Rolandseck would sneer at that society. He flattered himself that his own mental

endowments were beyond those "common to the race," but as they were all bent in the direction of progress and liberty—as not only education but his own judgment made him a Republican—how could he hope they would tell in his favour with an aristocrat?

He ended his reflections with a sigh, yet his face did not fall nor did the resolute expression of his mouth waver, for the simple reason that he was only admitting to himself the difficulties of the situation, while the determination to overcome them was so strong upon him that they only lent additional piquancy to the undertaking. In his heart of hearts he never dreamed that he would be thwarted in the fulfilment of his wish; he flattered himself that he could grapple successfully with greater difficulties than those which threatened to obstruct his path.

As a matter of fact, however, Trevelyan had a much smaller likelihood of success in his suit than he had any idea of, if he could be said to have any at all.

Personally Gabrielle von Rolandseck was all that he dreamed her to be, allowing only for the limelight which the imagination of a lover will always throw upon the object of his choice:

Her character was a fine one by nature, but it had also many natural faults as all noble, outspoken characters have. A very sweet disposition and much unselfishness are rarely united to great personal beauty and unusual talents, where the lungs are altogether sound. This was the case with Gabrielle now, but it would certainly not have been so had her life been a different one, had the chastening hand of sorrow been laid less heavily upon her. As a child she had been self-willed, exacting, passionate, and proud—she was the latter still in a dangerous degree.

Her mother loved her devotedly, and had sacrificed her life to her from her infancy. It was many years before Gabrielle learned that that love was a gift and not a right.

Gabrielle's childhood had been a singularly lonely one, but it was not sad, she herself having spirits enough to have brightened a dungeon. In after years, when she came to look back upon the past, she fancied that her mother must have been in rather narrow circumstances in her earliest youth, for her first memories were of a very small and simple household. A change occurred when she was nearly eleven. They removed to a large

town. Their manner of life was no longer as simple as it had been; their house was large and handsomely furnished; they had a carriage, and more servants than before.

In spite of these changes Countess Rolandseck saw as little of society as ever, and her young daughter began to feel the lack of acquaintance keenly. She grew tired of perpetual walks and drives with no one but her mother for company. As she grew older she frequently complained bitterly about it, but on this one point her wishes were powerless to affect her mother's decision. She told Gabrielle that she had a great antipathy to visiting, herself, and that she did not intend to allow her daughter to become dependent on society for her happiness; that she would find a greater, as well as a more reliable source of pleasure in her music, painting, and other studies. The girl shook her head impatiently, saying those things were all very well, but she wanted to see something of the world, too. A little time after she begged her mother to let her read some novels, as she was seventeen now.

The request startled Gräfin Rolandseck, and made her very uneasy. She had thought to shut out the world and all its ways by shutting out the books that told of it; but Gabrielle was beginning to find out that certain things had been kept from her, and beginning to crave for them with the longing that the forbidden always inspires.

The gräfin could not conceal her anxiety about her daughter's state of feeling, but she remained firm to her decision nevertheless. Gabrielle was never to go into society as other girls did.

Her daughter had too much pride to pursue the subject, but she showed decided resentment at this treatment.

The countess bore her changed manner for some time with outward calmness, but secret grief. Gabrielle was the one object she loved out of the whole world, her happiness was more precious to her than her own life; it was nothing but constant brooding and grieving over certain existing bars to that happiness that had undermined her mother's health and affected her temper. It now seemed to the sad and disappointed woman as if fate were not satisfied with the measure of her misfortunes, but meant her to lose with everything else the last thing her heart clung to—her daughter's love.

Dismayed at the bare idea, she hastened

to take what she regarded as a desperate measure against it.

She wrote to her sister, the wife of an officer, who lived in Berlin, and told her that in spite of having refused her many previous invitations, she would be glad if she would have Gabrielle with her for a few weeks, as the girl needed a change of scene greatly. She need not impress upon her sister to be careful that her daughter was regarded just as one of her own younger girls in spite of Gabrielle's being a few years older than they; Frau von Schönberg knowing sufficiently well the reasons that would prevent her ever being formally introduced into society.

The girl went to Berlin shortly after.

Her uncle and aunt, whom she found two warm and sympathetic characters, were delighted with her; she had not been in the house a week before she could wind every inmate of it round her finger.

Frau von Schönberg, in accordance with her sister's wish, meant to keep her strictly in the schoolroom, but the girl enjoyed her company so much, and had such a naive pleasure in seeing an occasional caller, that her kind-hearted aunt could not find it in her heart to deny her such a trifling indulgence. Besides which, since she had come to know her niece, the reasons against her going into society, which had seemed sufficiently strong before, dwindled down considerably. Frau von Schönberg would have given a great deal to be allowed to take her under her wing and introduce her with her own eldest girl, but prudence forbade such a course too decidedly for her to think about the matter seriously, much less broach it to Gräfin Rolandseck.

It so happened that a lady who had chanced to see Gabrielle when calling upon her aunt, included her with her relatives when sending out cards for a dance.

If the invitation had not been addressed to the girl herself she would never have heard of it; as it was, it came direct into her hands.

She handed the card to Frau von Schönberg with a kindling eye, and an ecstatic "Oh, look, auntie!"

"But you cannot go, you know, my dear," remonstrated the lady feebly, for she saw the delight in the girl's face.

Gabrielle looked at her not only with disappointment but reproach.

Frau von Schönberg sympathised so thoroughly with the girl's longing for a little of the pleasure natural to her age and station, that she could not refuse her silent

entreaty with enough decision to silence her effectually.

Gabrielle had never wished for anything so much in her life as she wished to go to this ball. She knew that her aunt was very fond of her and very indulgent, and she presumed a little upon both facts. By dint of endless entreaties, some even accompanied by the "unanswerable tear," she succeeded in wringing an unwilling consent from Frau von Schönberg.

It should be said that in thus allowing herself to be over-persuaded, her aunt was not altogether acting against her better judgment, although she knew she was doing what was not quite right towards the girl's mother, entertaining the views she did. Like other women of the world, Frau von Schönberg was a match-maker, and she could not but think that it would be a great advantage to Gabrielle if she could overcome the scruples which made her mother hesitate to allow her to take her proper place in the world. If all went smoothly and successfully on her first appearance, might not Gräfin Rolandseck be persuaded to alter her resolution?

The evening came.

Gabrielle felt uneasy, for she knew that she was about to run counter to the only express command her mother had ever laid upon her. At the same time she felt greatly elated, and full of pleasant anticipations.

She was secretly astonished and delighted with her appearance when the maid had completed her toilet, sentiments that were evidently shared by her uncle and aunt.

They had not been in the ball-room a quarter of an hour, before everyone was asking who the distinguished-looking fair girl in white Indian silk was.

She soon found her programme filled, and herself dancing with all the youthful enjoyment of Cinderella, and long before the witching hour of midnight she had as completely forgotten that she was running any risk in doing so. She had forgotten everything, in fact, but the intoxicating incense of homage and admiration which she was drinking in for the first time in her life. She had never been at a brilliant entertainment before, much less the flower of such an assembly.

Her latent pride flashed out in this first public triumph. It shone through the veiled lustre of her grey eyes, it was stamped on her delicate mouth, except when her lips chanced to part for a moment in a happy smile.

It grew late, only one last polonaise with her uncle as partner, and she would leave the enchanted palace behind her for ever.

Herr von Schönberg stopped a moment to exchange a greeting with the wife of a brother-officer.

"Who is she?" Gabrielle heard a lady behind ask another in French.

She strained her ears to catch the reply, eager for a little more flattery to the much she had already received.

"Don't you know?" came the answer; "she is the talk of the whole room."

"Ah!" thought Gabrielle with a delicious sense of gratified vanity.

"She is the daughter of that Count Rolandseck who died in prison some twelve years ago. He had committed forgery, you remember? It was said that the countess had the good taste to keep out of society, although she came into a fortune after her husband's death, but of course with a pretty daughter like that she could scarcely resist making a desperate effort to marry her even though her father was a criminal. But it is a little hard that people of our position should run the risk of meeting such persons in society on an equal footing. It might not matter so much for us ladies, but our sons——"

The colonel, who had been absorbed in conversation, suddenly remarked that his niece leant very heavily upon his arm. He looked at her; her face was white and rigid, there was an expression of acute suffering in her eyes.

"My dear, you feel faint?"

"I—I have danced too much. Come away."

It was after twelve, but Cinderella's fine clothes had suddenly changed to rags all the same.

CHAPTER V.

So that was the spectre that had haunted her mother's life, that the grim fact that had underlain all her devotion and tenderness!

What suffering such knowledge must have caused the proud woman! Gabrielle could not endure the bare thought of it. Stung to the quick with shame and humiliation as she herself was, this revelation of what her mother had been secretly going through all these years appalled her. There was something little less than awful in the mere discovery of the complete mystery that a human being might be, even to the nearest and dearest. Gabrielle thought with keen self-reproach and remorse of how

little she had valued her mother's affection all her life, how little she had dreamed of the high and noble motives which had prompted her to persevere in a course that she herself had rendered so bitter and difficult. How blind and mad had been her longing after the forbidden fruit—what punishment her disobedience had brought with it!

She went home the next day; her one desire was to go back to her mother and to never leave her more.

Her first words when the greeting was over, were:

"Mother, I have done a very wicked thing, but you must forgive me, for your love is all I have in the world, all I have and all I want, but if I ever lose that I do not see how I am to live."

Gräfin Rolandseck looked at her, suspense and agitation in her face.

Gabrielle told the story, concealing and palliating nothing.

The gräfin listened to the end with a sad but most compassionate expression.

Then she took the girl in her arms, and Gabrielle learnt what "as one whom his mother comforteth" means. In the midst of suffering which might otherwise have deepened into despair, she first began to realise the depth of the affection that had been hers all her life, and which, stronger than ever, was given for her solace now. Wrung as her heart was she was satisfied with the compensation.

In broken words to her mother, in a solemn vow to her own heart, she promised never to forsake her from that day forth, never to seek pleasures or interests in which she could have no share, but to be her one friend and companion, as well as daughter, all her life.

Gräfin Rolandseck had listened to her with mingled feelings. It was a great shock to her to know that the disgrace, which she had made it the business of her life to keep from her daughter, because the knowledge of it could not fail to embitter her whole life, had, nevertheless, come to her ears; yet it was a relief to know that poor Gabrielle saw her position in its true colours at last, that she knew of the existence of that something underneath her rank and wealth that took the glamour from both.

They shed no tears, and they spoke very little about the matter, but they looked into each other's eyes, and knew what the mournful yet proud expression in both meant.

They knew that for this fair young head

no orange-blossoms were ever to bloom—that for this warm young heart no kindred soul was to exist, for between her and that earthly paradise was the barred gate of a disgrace, guarded by the stern angel of righteous pride.

The aspect of her life having been thus changed, Gabrielle persuaded her mother to change the way of it, too. The loneliness and monotony of her home were even harder to bear now than formerly. Wisdom told her that if she meant to make anything of her life it must be filled up, that emptiness and idleness would be fatal to her peace of mind.

Gräfin Rolandseck was ready to meet her daughter's wishes in everything as far as she could.

They shut up their house and spent the next two years abroad, wintering in Italy, and passing one summer in England and one in France.

The third winter they spent in their old house, Gabrielle devoting her leisure to music and painting, for the study of which the town—one of the great art-centres of Germany—offered every advantage. From that time it became a settled thing for them to pass the winter at home, and to spend the summer in travelling. They made a point of staying at pensions on the Continent in preference to hotels, as it was a necessity for Gabrielle to associate with people sometimes.

Gräfin Rolandseck at first feared that this kind of life might have its dangers for so attractive a girl as her daughter, under the exceptional circumstances. Experience, however, proved her fears to be groundless. The mother's eyes grew very sharp now, for she felt that the happiness of her child's future might depend upon them. She knew that Gabrielle could not fail to inspire admiration wherever she went, and might very easily inspire something more difficult to deal with, therefore at the first sign of anything of the kind the gräfin took care to propose that they should continue their journey immediately. Although in more than one instance it was a disappointment to Gabrielle to have to cut short a time of enjoyment, she felt the wisdom of her mother's decision, and obeyed her without a murmur. What little secret pangs such sudden breaks caused her she never betrayed, nor did they last long, for the trouble she and her mother shared in common had knitted their hearts together very closely, and in the consciousness of making her mother's

life happy Gabrielle found a very real happiness herself, so much so that she was usually unaffectedly cheerful, and believed that on the whole few people found more to enjoy in life than she.

SOME ROMAN REMAINS.

PERHAPS no more distinct evidence is required of the thoroughness which characterised the old Roman system of colonisation than the existence at this day of manners and customs which have descended to us from them, but slightly changed through all the periods of revolution and disruption which have swept over our island since the day when the last Roman legion was recalled home.

Fewer and fewer every day are growing the more palpable vestiges of that iron rule in the shape of buildings and constructions. Modern exigencies and comparatively modern vandalism have changed the face of Roman England as it existed until a comparatively recent date, and yet the old Roman social influence has lingered amongst us to an extent hardly to be realised except by those to whom the pottering about in the odd nooks and corners of a long-dead world is the delight of life. When we consider that this influence was the work of an occupation extending over five hundred years, it does not seem so remarkable that we should still possess traces of it; but when we compare its extent with that of the later Danish and Saxon influences still amongst us; when we run back over the pages of our subsequent history; when we think for a moment of the dark, desolate age which succeeded the departure of the last Roman in the year 411, an age full of influences sufficiently strong to sweep away everything but what was built on the surest foundations; when we consider how many other influences have been born, have flourished, and have utterly disappeared since that date, we are obliged to confess that the social as well as the military rule of Rome was, as it has always been characterised, indeed of iron.

The study of these influences upon England is so interesting, and partakes so little of the dry character of usual antiquarian researches, that we have selected a few instances which will serve to show that many of what we are accustomed to deem our most typically national observances and customs, are in reality but the shadows

—in some cases the substantial shadows—of observances and customs which were popular in the Roman world when Britain was but a vast forest and morass, inhabited by savages and wild beasts.

For simplicity and regularity we have chosen to follow briefly the course of our calendar, and to note in how many instances our modern observances are traceable to Roman origin.

We open the very first day of the year with a distinctly Roman custom—that of giving presents. Slaves and clients in ancient Rome presented their masters and patrons with figs and dates, wrapped up in tinsel, upon the first day of the New Year, in return for which, of course, they received largesse. The custom of present-giving from inferiors to superiors in England is not a general one; but we may note that when it is carried out, if it be not on a birthday, it is on New Year's Day.

The instance of our modern celebration of Twelfth Night brings us face to face with a still more striking analogy. The Roman Saturnalia, which were held just about our Christmas time, ended about the sixth of January, and the occasion was, of course, marked by a climax of festivity and rejoicing.

Just as we used, not long ago, to draw lots by beans for the election of a king and queen of the evening, so did the Romans in the same manner choose the "Rex Convivii" or the "Arbiter bibendi" of the closing feast of their Saturnalia.

The popular origin of Candlemas is attributed to the Catholic practice of blessing the church tapers on this day; but we find, as in so many other cases, that the apparently Christian derivation of the feast is in reality but a relic of paganism with which the common people would not part, and which, therefore, although altered in significance, remained unchanged in outward form by the early fathers of the Church. Upon this day, or near it, the Romans worshipped Proserpine, who was stolen by Pluto from the Sicilian meadows; her mother, Ceres, sought for her with lighted tapers, hence tapers were the votive offerings on the day.

Antiquaries have sufficiently proved that St. Valentine had no more to do with the familiar customs on the 14th of February than had St. George with England, and that their real origin is a relic of the Roman rule in Britain.

Just at this period of the year the Lupercalia were in full swing, and the

Roman youths were accustomed to draw the names of lasses in honour of the goddess Februa - Juno, because, they said, with their usual combination of observation of Nature with superstitious observance, at this time of the year birds choose their mates.

Upon the mid-Sunday of Lent, in some places in England—notably Bristol in the south and Durham in the north—apprentices and servants were accustomed to make presents to their masters, and the name given to the day, Mothering Sunday, still exists in places where the observances have long since died out.

This Mothering Sunday custom can be plainly traced to the Roman Hilaria, which were celebrated about the same time of the year; a festival held in honour of the mother of the gods, offerings to her being laid upon the altars. The fathers of the Church, however, objected to this relic of paganism. Mothering Sunday was observed by visits to the mother churches, and the offerings, originally laid at the feet of Juno, became assimilated with what are now known as Easter offerings.

In the north of England, especially in the counties of Northumberland and Durham, the second Sunday before Easter is still known as Carling Sunday, and the popular dish consists of beans fried in butter, a sort of extra mortification, which may, perhaps, have some foundation in the fact that the orthodox funeral feast of the Romans consisted of fried beans. "Furmety" also, a northern dish peculiar to this season, is indubitably derived from the Latin "frumentum."

The May Day celebrations of merrie England may be traced, perhaps, more distinctly than any other to Roman sources. At this time of the year the Floralia were celebrated, wherever the Roman rule was recognised, with the utmost enthusiasm and unanimity. Most notably are the modern festivals at Lynn in Norfolk, and at Helston in Cornwall, on the 8th of May, of Roman likeness. The horn-blowing at Lynn reminds us that the citizens of ancient Rome were summoned to the celebration of the Floralia by the notes of the horn; the garlanded doll carried about is of course all that remains of the original Flora; whilst at Helston the inexorable condition, that no one of any rank soever should put his hand to work upon "Furry" Day, is a remnant of the Roman decree of universal holiday and rejoicing during the Floralia.

During Rogation Week it is still the custom in Kent, Devonshire, and Herefordshire to go "youling," that is to say, invoking the apple-trees to bear a good crop, and the origin of the term "youling" has even been traced to Æolus, the god of the winds, although the connection of "youling," as also Yuletide, with the Hindoo Huli festival appears more probable when we consider how many of our customs and stories owe their origin to the East.

On Ascension Day the bounds are regularly beaten in the London City parishes, although the custom has fallen into disuse in the country, and this is traced to the annual perambulations of the Romans in honour of their god Terminus, who presided over gates and boundaries. Where the custom yet exists in rustic England, it is sometimes termed "doing the dole," "dole" being the Anglo-Saxon for "boundary"—hence its part formation of the word "dolmen" as incorrectly applied to sepulchral monuments.

Another Rogation Week custom of distinctly Roman origin is that of well "dressing" or "flowering" as practised to this day in many of the Derbyshire dales, and especially at Tissington. The Romans deemed wells and fountains and rivers as particularly sacred, and the Fontinalia was a prominent festival in their year. We may remember in connection with this what Seneca says: "Wherever a spring rises or a river flows, there should we build altars and offer sacrifices."

On the 23rd of June—Midsummer or St. John's Eve—bonfires were, and may be occasionally now, lighted in honour of the sun. These are often called Bal-fires, and derive their origin from Bel or Baal, the sun-god of the Phœnicians, and hence of the Britons; but from the fact that at this season the ancient Romans celebrated their Palilia, the festival in honour of Pales, the god of shepherds and flocks, the suggestion occurs that the name Bal-fire might be connected with Pales as well as with Bel.

In Northamptonshire a custom existed upon this day which bore a true Roman stamp. The country folk placed a cushion garlanded with flowers upon a stool at the junction of cross-roads, and solicited alms, which they spent, in the orthodox English manner, upon a grand carouse in the evening. Now at this time of the year the Romans celebrated their games of the cross-roads, a prominent feature of which was the exposure of the domestic Lares

and Penates, duly garlanded and decked out, and all who passed expressed their wishes for future domestic felicity in the shape of offerings.

In September the great Stourbridge Fair was held, and in the seventeenth century was regarded as the principal fair without exception of all Europe. It is said to have originated with the Emperor Carausius, who extended, if he did not absolutely cut, the great canal which runs from Peterborough through the fens of Lincolnshire to the Trent, whence it passes by a series of natural rivers to York and the north in one direction, and by the fens of Huntingdon and Cambridge to the north in another. By this canal the produce of the south—principally corn—was brought to the north, and during the time the boats were gathering together and discharging their loads to each other at the junction of the two branches—generally a fortnight—the fair was held, and has been held ever since in spite of the loss of its original significance.

Undoubtedly the origin of the old custom of harvest-homes is to be found in the usages of the Romans, who at the season of ingathering the crops, worshipped Ceres with most important rites and ceremonies. Until within the past quarter of a century Ceres might be found reproduced upon the harvest-fields of all England, whether as in Northumberland and the eastern counties under the guise of a "Harvest Queen," or as in Devonshire as a twisted figure of choice stalks called a "knack," or in Norfolk as a "ben," or in the north as a "kern baby." The harvest-homes or "horkey suppers" exactly reproduce, in their temporary conditions of perfect equality between master and servants, the harvest-feasts held in the ancient days amongst the pleasant plains of Campania and under the shadow of the Alps.

Martinmas was invariably marked in Merrie England as a period of feasting and revelry, and corresponds exactly with the period occupied by the Venalia of the Romans. Indeed the saint himself is said to have been introduced into the place of Bacchus, for the reasons given before that the Early Church missionaries found it impossible to wean the people entirely from their prejudice in favour of old customs; hence he is deemed the patron of drunkards. So faithfully indeed did the English rustic carry out to the letter the old spirit of the Roman Bacchanalia,

that growls from landowners and farmers about the inability to get men to work during the Martinmas season, and patriotic laments that the common people should so debase themselves by drink and debauchery, are to be met with frequently in the annals of rustic England. To be "Martin drunk," says Mr. Brewer, was synonymous with being very intoxicated indeed, and he quotes the usage by Baxter in his *Saint's Rest* of the word Martin as meaning a drunkard.

It would be perhaps going too far to say that the nut-burning charms believed in by the peasantry of the North of England and of Scotland upon Hallowe'en, are of Roman origin, yet we know that the festival of Pomona was held about the end of November; that auguries and omens were invariably watched by the Romans during the celebration of their feasts; and that nuts in particular entered largely into the means employed in divination, especially upon the occasion of marriage, when it was the custom for the bridegroom to throw nuts amongst his relations and friends.

Even our Christmas festivities are an instance of the gradual transformation of Pagan into Christian observances, in deference to deeply-rooted popular prejudice. The period of time allotted to the Roman Saturnalia exactly corresponds with the old Christmas holidays of our forefathers. Our practice of giving Christmas boxes is clearly derived from the Roman custom of compounding for the annual license given to slaves of exchanging positions with their masters during the festival by a present of money. There is even an analogy discovered between our Innocents' Day and the great feast day of Saturn, upon which he was supposed to devour his own children, and during which festival all temples and houses were decorated with evergreens, hence, say some authorities, the origin of our custom of church and domestic ornamentation.

Sir Isaac Newton in his *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel*, quotes from Gregory Nyssen with relation to the fact that many of our old English Christian observances are the offspring of pagan customs. Nyssen says:

"The heathens were delighted with the festivals of their gods, and unwilling to part with those delights; and therefore Gregory, to facilitate their conversion, instituted annual festivals to the saints and martyrs. Hence it came to pass that for abolishing the festivals of the heathens, the

principal festivals of the Christians succeeded in their room, as the keeping of Christmas with ivy and feasting, with playing and sports in the room of the Bacchanalia and Saturnalia; the celebrating of May Day with flowers, in the room of the Floralia; and the keeping of festivals to the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and divers of the apostles, in the room of the solemnities at the entrance of the sun into the signs of the Zodiac in the old Julian Calendar."

Apart from the greater instances of the lingering of old Roman influences in merrie England, we may note smaller facts which point to a similar origin.

For instance, we may cite the frequent custom of planting rose-trees upon graves. This may be noted at the village of Ockley, in Surrey, which was a minor station on the old Roman Stane Street, and we know that it was a constant habit amongst the Romans. Again, the prevalent superstition of hanging horse-shoes on doors, to keep away evil spirits, is analogous to the Roman custom of driving in nails for the same purpose. Again, the fast dying out custom of holding hiring-fairs is a survival of an invariable Roman institution; and, lastly, the common public-house sign of The Chequers, which is popularly supposed to have its origin in the coat-of-arms of the Earls Warenne, who held a monopoly of the licensing system in the reign of Edward the Third, should be properly attributed to ancient Rome, where it was almost universal as the sign of a house of public entertainment wherein "duodecim scripta" could be played—a fact proved by excavations in Rome, in Pompeii, and in England itself.

We might go on multiplying instances showing how the print of the five hundred years of Roman rule in England, although rapidly becoming undecipherable, may yet be detected here and there, but we should go far beyond the limits of a paper intended rather as an instructive sketch than as a learned disquisition.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXIV. A SURPRISE FOR
MRS. HATTON.

OF the two visitors whose appearance was looked forward to with anxiety and dread this day in the household of which

Jenifer was a part, Mr. Josiah H. Whittler was the first to arrive.

His card, bearing his address at a New York club, but with no London address on it, was taken in grim silence by Ann, whose stern gaze he returned with a frank and open glance of utter unconsciousness.

"Did he speak to you? Did he ask you any questions?" Mrs. Hatton enquired, shivering as the card was given to her.

"He looked at me as innocent as a newborn babe, and never showed a sign of ever having seen me in his life. If I didn't know there's a trick hid behind everything he does, I should say I'm altered out of his knowledge and memory."

"You're not that, Ann," her mistress answered. Then the poor woman went in to meet the man whom she had once preferred to every relation, friend, and advantage the world offered her.

An instinct had made her dress herself and arrange her hair with unattractive sombreness and severity. She had been looking her best the previous night, she knew. Had she been looking her worst, perhaps he would not have sought her.

He was standing before the mantel-piece looking at an oil-painting of a picturesquely-situated old house, which had been left with its adjoining lands to Mrs. Hatton by her parents, and sold away from her by her husband. His countenance, as he turned round to meet her, betrayed the most placid indifference and contentment, and her indignation rose as she remembered that old home, and by whom it had been wrested from her.

His first words staggered her.

"I trust, Mrs. Hatton, that you will pardon a perfect stranger to England, its manners and social etiquette, for the liberty he has taken in calling to enquire for the health of a lady who so amiably and flatteringly did him the honour to desire an introduction to him last night."

These introductory sentences were spoken with the strongest American intonation, and most marked American mannerism, that Mrs. Hatton had ever heard. Nevertheless, though they staggered, they did not reassure her.

"Why have you come?" she gasped.

"Why have I come? The reply to such a question is obvious; it can simply be a repetition of my first remarks. A perfect stranger as I am to England and its social etiquette, I conceived I could be doing nothing wrong in seeking to make the acquaintance of a lady to-day who so

amiably did me the honour to wish to make mine last night. If I have been in error, I can only solemnly pledge myself never to intrude upon you again."

"What fresh wickedness are you planning?" she cried excitedly; "what mischief are you going to try and work for me now?"

"Again I must repeat that this being the first time I have ever set foot upon English soil, I am in ignorance of some of the more subtle forms of its social etiquette. Still, it strikes a stranger as just a little peculiar that he should be charged with wickedness, and accused of desiring to work mischief, when he does himself the honour of calling on a lady who so amiably requested to make his acquaintance the previous night."

"What is it you want!—speak out plainly," she sighed wearily, sitting down and clasping her arms in front of her, as if she would protect herself from him.

"I want nothing more than to receive the assurance that your health is completely restored."

She shuddered.

"You will, I trust, allow me to place a box at your disposal on the night of my first appearance on the English boards. It would give me the most profound pleasure to see you there, accompanied by the young lady who was with you last night. I did not have the opportunity of studying the young lady's lineaments, but I presumed she was your sister."

She knew he had presumed nothing of the kind; still, she was getting sorely perplexed.

"The young lady is lodging here. You know well that I have no sister."

"Mrs. Hatton, I do assure you that, in my ignorance of English social etiquette, I have omitted to make myself acquainted with your antecedents. Have I been remiss?"

"If I'd had a sister, probably she would have shared the property with me, and you wouldn't have been able to make ducks and drakes of it. Can you sit here quietly before me and ignore the past connected with that old-home and me?"

She flung her hand out in passionate indication of the picture, and he turned and looked at it again with calm interest.

"Now, this is indeed a curious coincidence," he remarked coolly. "You are indignant with me for not knowing all about you, though this is the first time I have had the pleasure of treading English

soil, and I once had the pleasure of the acquaintance of a gentleman of your name, who was supposed to resemble me greatly."

She was startled into silent attention now.

"Yes, so it was," he went on, looking her steadily in the eyes. "Away in Frisco, on the occasion of my first adopting the theatrical profession, I had the melancholy satisfaction of burying my friend, Mr. Hatton. He died, and his friend, Josiah H. Whittler, was the solitary mourner at his grave. Before he died he gave me two photographs—one of a beautiful old English house, the other of a most interesting young English lady. As I look at you, I see that you are the original of the latter, and that this most interesting oil-painting is that of the former. I return the copies to your hands, for I feel that the painful office is laid upon me of informing you that you are a widow."

She knew that he was lying to her, but her horror of being in bondage and doubt again was so great, her yearning for peace and liberty was so strong!

She took the photographs. He rose to leave. She turned her head aside and heaved a sigh to relieve the feelings that she did not dare to speak.

"Having made you acquainted with the melancholy fact that you are a widow, I will not put myself to the useless pain of staying to witness your woe. I quite appreciate your suffering; in short, I am certain that I gauge the depth of it with accuracy. You have my best wishes for your future happiness. At the same time, I venture to ask for your congratulations on my own approaching nuptials, which will be celebrated in a magnificent manner with a wealthy and prepossessing woman immediately on my return to New York."

He took his departure shortly after this, after uttering a few commonplaces that passed by her unheeding ear—took his departure in a cool unruffled manner that was ghastly in its familiarity to her; and she sat on, half-stunned, knowing that what he had told her was false, yet resolving not to expose the falsity of it, because of the peace, the rest, the liberty it would give her.

So she sat alone for an hour, during which hour she formed and unformed numerous resolutions. But through all there ran this strong thread of determination—she would accept without further enquiry all he had said.

At the end of the hour Ann came to her,

pinning to hear the worst and comfort her mistress. But Mrs. Hatton's determination forbade her having any confidante.

She kept her face buried on her arms as they rested on the table, so that its expression was concealed from the old servant, who knew how to read it like a book. But as Ann came close to her with the words, "My dearie, my dearie, how is it to be?" she put her hand out, and clasping her faithful old friend, said glibly and effectively:

"My fright has been for nothing. I was deceived by the likeness, which is extraordinary. The oddest part of it all is that he was attracted to call on me by hearing my name, for he was at Mr. Hatton's funeral in—some place in California. Yes—don't exclaim, for the shock of the whole thing has been almost more than I can bear—my husband is dead! He will never trouble me again."

"Look up, my dear missus, look up—look at me!"

But for answer, Mrs. Hatton only buried her face more closely on her arms, and said:

"Go and tell Mrs. and Miss Ray what I have told you. Tell them the shock has been great, and I shall not be able to speak of it for a long time. They have delicate tact; they will not wound me with questions."

On this hint, Ann withdrew, but as she went on her mission to the Rays, she thought:

"He've laid a trap, and she've fallen into it. I read so much as that in his face as he went away. Poor dear! who'd have thought it the day she was married that she'd live to welcome the news from his own lips that he was dead?"

As five o'clock drew near, Mrs. Ray worked herself up into quite a state of glad expectancy. It would be quite pleasant, she felt, to give her consent to Jenifer's marriage with a man who could relieve her of the trouble, and hard work, and anxieties, and disappointments of a public life. For, without having exchanged a word with her daughter on the subject, Mrs. Ray had made up her mind that Jenifer would give up Madame Voglio and all her hopes of being a queen of song.

"She sings well enough already for the best society, and as, naturally, that will be the only sphere in which Captain Edgecumb will allow his wife to sing, my dear girl will have rest from this time," the

mother thought with motherly consideration and complacency.

Then she looked at the clock, saw that the hour had come, and felt happily nervous as well as gladly exultant.

Jenifer had gone out for a walk.

"I can't take up the ways of an engaged young woman all at once," she had explained to her mother. "If he comes to dinner, I shall see him then, and it will all seem easier and more natural while we are eating and drinking."

"He will naturally expect to see you as soon as he has spoken to me," Mrs. Ray instructed.

But Jenifer declined to receive instruction on that point, and her mother had to give in.

"I shouldn't know what to do with him here for two hours without other people. It will all come to me in time to know how to behave, but I can't begin till dinner to-night."

She walked away briskly through the many leafy roads and places that abound in this neighbourhood, along the canal, through the Bishop's Road into Queen's Road, and so on to the welcome shade of the avenues in Kensington Gardens.

Being under green trees always made her think much of Moor Royal. She was thinking so much of Moor Royal this day, that she felt no surprise at finding herself face to face with Mr. Boldero.

"I only came to town this afternoon; and, Jenifer, my good genius is in the ascendant. It led me for a stroll before dinner, after which I'm going to Hamilton Place to see you and your mother and Mrs. Hatton."

All thoughts of Captain Edgcomb fled from Jenifer's mind and memory.

"You shall dine with us; you shall walk home with me—not just yet, I want more turf and trees—and dine with us, nowhere else. I have so much to tell you and so much to hear."

"First tell me, are you happy?" he asked.

And she told him that she was.

"But seeing you makes me so much happier, that I suppose I've been deluding myself a little about being perfectly satisfied all this time. You seem to bring Moor Royal and the old life back to me."

Then she began to tell him about Hubert and Jack's necessities, and of her own

indignation at their applying to her mother for help from her pittance.

"This weary three years! Never mind, Jenifer, they will soon pass, and then—"

He did not say what "then," but somehow Jenifer felt that, if he was content, so might she be.

She told him about the "groundless fright and shock" poor Mrs. Hatton had received the night before, and somehow the neutral ground occupied their attention a considerable time. She confessed that at first she had not liked Mrs. Hatton, but that now she felt how all the little artificial airs which had annoyed her had been assumed to cover a deep grief.

"But now all that's over; she has been in a false position so long, that the reality of her life now will bring out all that's good in her, I'm sure," she said, little thinking how far false the poor woman's position was now than it had ever been before. Then in her kind-hearted desire to please him about his old friend, she went on to tell him how excellently Mrs. Hatton managed for them, and how daintily and economically they were boarded and lodged. And he listened and looked as if he knew nothing about it.

By the time they had discoursed Mrs. Hatton and her dawning excellencies they were close upon Hamilton Place.

"Won't Mrs. Ray object to my surprising her at your dinner-hour in this unexpected way?" he asked.

And Jenifer remembered Captain Edgcomb would be there—and all that his being there meant.

"Stay," she said, stopping and facing him with the whole revelation in her glowing face, and kind truthful eyes. "I ought to have told you before, but I forgot it. Captain Edgcomb will be here. I've promised to marry him. I did it only last night."

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CHAPTER V. SCHOOL.

ARCHIE got from the boys the credit of "gameness," to which he had no claim. The child had simply been stupefied by the sudden and savage onslaught. So far from being fearless, he had a terror of his tormentor, which was in itself an agony, and to which no trouble of his after life was to be compared. This terror he never got over, and had no chance to get over. Mr. Kett came to dislike him intensely. Henceforth he always took the child's stupefaction for contumacy, and his dumb and dazed helplessness for defiance. It was a struggle for the mastery, and he would be master.

This idea Archie confirmed by his sudden lapses into seeming imbecility. He was clever enough, and could learn what he set his mind to learn; and he did set his mind to learn his lessons for the principal; but, if the principal was in one of his desolating tempers, the child got confused, and answered wildly, or not at all. Then Mr. Kett would strike him on the head with his clenched fist, and then everything was a blank. Archie couldn't have said the letters of the alphabet if his life depended on it. Then followed question upon question, each simpler than the last; then blow upon blow. It was sickening.

We say children know nothing of sorrow compared with their elders. It is their elders who know nothing of sorrow compared with their children. Their trouble looks to us as little as a cloud the size of a man's hand, but it is total eclipse to them, and eternal eclipse—eternal to their thinking. It may not last more than a day, but

in their thought it is eternal—no light, no hope, no future.

Poor Archie's school-life was a succession of such sorrows, for hardly a day passed without its beating. Nor was his life out of school happier, for there he fell into Skunk's clutches. This young gentleman bullied all the smaller boys, but those especially whose ill odour with his parents left them defenceless. And Archie had not only this claim upon Skunk's attention but also that of having got the young bully put into Coventry by the boys. It happened in this way:

When Archie, the morning after his arrival, went to his box to get out paper to write to his mother, Skunk followed him after his custom, to levy blackmail on the stores brought from home.

"I say, Guard, what have you got?"

Archie, after a moment's perplexity, thought he must refer to the money his uncle gave him for the servants and the boys.

"I've got one pound for the servants, and one to treat the boys."

"Crickey! two pounds! I'll tip 'em for you if you like. They're our servants, you know. Bildad, five bob; three to Polly, and three to Spots; five to Margaret (she's the cook); that's sixteen; and four to Fatty—or, if you like, five to Fatty and four to Bildad."

Bildad was the "shuhite," or shoe-cleaner, of the establishment.

"I don't know them," said Archie, handing over a sovereign without a misgiving.

"It's just as you like—it's your money, you know," said Skunk as he pocketed it. "But, I say, Guard," he continued confidentially, "what about the treat? The gov. doesn't allow treats. I tell you what, though, Bildad will get the lush for me if

I ask him. But you mustn't talk about it, or the gov. may get to know. Mind, now, you don't tell the fellows," pocketing the second sovereign.

Three days later Cochin said to Archie:

"Zeb"—Archie was christened "Zebra" by a facetious youth on sight of the weals on his back, seen while he was dressing the morning after the caning—"Zeb, we can get the things to-day."

"What things?"

"Didn't your uncle tell you he'd tipped me a sov. to treat the fellows?"

"No."

"He did, though, and Peck's got leave for town to-day."

"But if it's found out, Cochin?"

"How found out?"

"By Kett?"

"What's Kett to do with it if we don't go in for beer or baccy?"

"Skunk says it's safer to get it through Bildad."

"Did your uncle tip Skunk too?"

"No, but he gave me two pounds—one for the servants, and one for a treat; and Skunk's going to do it for me."

"Phew!" whistled Cochin. "Look here, Zeb, don't say a word about it, do you hear?"

"No; he told me not."

"Oh, he did, did he? then don't."

Cochin, having sought out Bildad and found as he expected that he hadn't got either tip or commission, bore down upon Skunk.

"Look here, boys," he said to a group, of which Skunk was one, "Peck's for town, and he's going to spend a sov. Zeb's uncle gave me to treat the fellows. What's it to be?"

Hereupon there was great rejoicing, and many and confusing suggestions.

"We can't do all that, nor half that, with a sov.," said Cochin decisively. "What do you say, Skunk?"

Skunk wasn't flattered by being so called, and said sulkily he'd nothing to do with it.

"You've as much do with it as I have," retorted Cochin. "You've the other sov."

"What other sov.?"

"The sov. Zeb gave you to treat the fellows with."

Skunk, with a face of scarlet, produced it, muttering something about meaning to get the things himself to-morrow.

"And you meant to tip the servants

to-morrow with the other quid," sneered Cochin.

Skunk was thrown into Coventry for this ineffable villainy—the cheating of schoolfellows—and never forgave Archie for his share in the business. He was a dogged and deliberate bully. He bullied, not as other boys from delight in the sense of power, but for its own sake, seeming to take that kind of almost sensual pleasure in the sight of the sufferings of his victims which the Assyrians are supposed to have derived from the tortures of their captives. He went about the work in a plodding and methodical manner which did credit to his sense of duty and order. When he could get Archie to himself into a corner, he would take first his right arm and twist it till he cried out with pain, and then count accurately twenty blows with his fist on the biceps muscle; then he would take and twist in the same agonising way his left arm and give it its proportion, till the child could not use his arms in play or at meals without pain. Then he would set Archie against the wall and use him as a target for a fives' ball, or a pea-shooter. Many a time the wretched child escaped from school only to hide in a hole under the staircase, which led from the school-room to the play-room, to escape threatened assault from his tormentor. In this dismal hole he would spend, trembling, the hours the other boys spent in play.

We repeat that no older sorrow of man or woman who "looks before and after," is to be compared with the sorrow of a child who does not look beyond the moment. Archie's spirit was quite crushed under this unremitting tyranny in and out of school. He couldn't eat, wouldn't play, and, when he was let alone, he moped on his box in the box-room, reading over his letters from home. He was getting quite ill when things came at last to a climax in a round-about way, which it will take a few words to make intelligible.

Mr. Kett's scholarship was like the school he built with his wife's money, mere frontage—a vast surface, but all surface. The list of subjects printed on the monthly report sent to each parent was prodigious, portentous; but the bulk of these subjects was contained in two or three shallow and showy books. There was, for example, one rascally little humbug of a book of two hundred and twenty pages, which contributed no fewer than seven subjects to the list—astronomy, geology, geography, physiography, ethnology, physiology, and

anatomy. All these, as well as Latin, Greek, French, and German, were taught by the encyclopedic principal. In fact, he was a mere shop-window of a man, and consequently dogmatism itself. He knew so little as to think he knew everything. Therefore the main business of the boys was to show, not their own learning, but that of their principal. Indeed, as their fate hung upon his humour, their own learning was of no account to them at all. If he was in a bad humour they were thrashed, if he was in a good humour they escaped—utterly irrespective of their knowledge or ignorance of the work in hand. On gouty days especially the boys were taught to sympathise with the sufferings of their beloved principal. Then class after class was called up in quick succession, to go for a minute through the form of saying its lesson. But this form, like the reading of the Riot Act, was meant merely to legalise the slaughter which ensued.

On the other hand, when the principal was in good health and spirits, the boys had simply to draw him out on his favourite topics, and to listen to a mouldy scrap of the mere rind of science as to a new revelation, with eyes and mouth open as though they would never close again, and a gaze of such awe as that with which stout Cortez stared at the Pacific,

Silent upon a peak in Darien.

Now, the principal's favourite science was anthropology, not merely because it was the most encyclopedic of sciences, but chiefly because he had found a flint arrow-head among other curiosities he had bought at haphazard at an auction. On this subject he never wearied of speaking, nor the boys of listening—in lesson-hours. Among these youths there was a turncock, so to speak, named Snape, who was always set on to tap Kett, to ask with a simple perplexity such questions as would draw the principal out upon his favourite topic. Master Snape had two qualifications for the post. In the first place he came from a village with the incredible name of Giggleswick, where there is a museum stored with the anthropological treasures exhumed from the famous Settle Cave. In the second place, the youth had a cherubic face, a countenance all wonder and innocence, which he could keep in the most trying circumstances. A most ingenuous youth was Master Snape, round-eyed, round-cheeked, with an ever ready smooth and round unvarnished tale—a youth afflicted with a dipsomania for information.

Like Bacon, he took all learning for his province, Mr. Kett being the encyclopedia in which he studied it.

To this youth it had occurred to give some part of his holiday to the composition of a work of his own. It was a desultory but graphic production. With the help of a hammer, a stone chisel, a file, and a gimlet, he manufactured fair imitations of the Giggleswick treasures, flint flakes, and arrow-heads—rude, indeed, but creditable to savages of the year 1,000,000 B.C.—and awls, and needles of bone. A few pieces of broken pottery and old iron supplied the chapter given to Roman remains, while the padding of his history was made up mostly of the teeth of horses, oxen, dogs, and men. To these priceless treasures Master Snape, being not without a sense of humour, had added the charred and splintered remains of a gigantic paper-knife, which had been the pride of the principal and the terror of the school. Mr. Kett, when in a bad temper, used to wield it as an offensive weapon—a most offensive weapon. He never could see a knuckle without rapping it therewith; and when he took it off his desk, every knuckle, not engaged in writing, used to shoot out of sight into a pocket, like a rabbit into its burrow when the keeper is on his round. Master Snape, who was not as expert at writing copies as at writing history, got to hate this bastinado with a rancorous intensity, and at last stole it on the morning when the school broke up. Yet, on its reassembling, with a rare honesty, he not only restored it, but restored it enhanced in value a thousandfold. For of all the anthropological treasures he brought back with him, Mr. Kett thought most of these charred fragments of the paper-knife, since they gave most scope for bold speculation. The other antiquities had their end and origin unmistakably written on them, but these splinters might have been anything, and therefore admitted, like a prophecy, of the most fearless and dogmatic interpretation.

These relics, which probably would have imposed only on such a pretentious impostor as Kett, and on him only when presented by so plausible an impostor as this cherub-faced Chatterton of a Snape, were treasured in a glass-case, which the principal henceforth called a museum. They were said by Master Snape to have been collected by an uncle of his who lived at Skipton, and who was only too glad to present them to the

principal in acknowledgment of his kindness to his nephew. By this bold stroke Master Snape not only gained favour with the principal and fame with the boys, but seven shillings also, the amount of shilling bets made with schoolfellows that he would not only steal the paper-knife but be thanked for the theft. But Master Snape came soon to know the value of

The noisy praise
Of giddy crowds, as changeable as winds,
Servants to chance, and blowing in the tide
Of swollen success; but veering with the ebb,
It leaves the channel dry.

For Mr. Kett was so proud of his acquisition that, in the first place, he had at once printed and forwarded to the parents of his pupils this postscript to the prospectus:

"Attached to the college is a museum containing a collection, unique in its kind, of Roman, British, savage, archæological, and palæontological remains of supreme intrinsic interest and of incalculable advantage to such of the students as prefer to peruse the pre-Christian and pre-historic past by direct rather than by reflected light, and to take primeval man himself as their guide in sounding on the dim paths of anthropology."

This was the first innocent outburst of pride manifested by Mr. Kett on being presented by this young Greek with these gifts. But the second was not innocent by any means, for the principal at once instituted a weekly lecture on the relics, and gave it on the Wednesday half-holiday. And what made the thing maddening was that this thrice-confounded lecture was given in the middle of the half-holiday, for Kett took some time to prepare it. Just as the boys got into swing at cricket, football etc., the great bell would ring out, and with an outburst of passion and strong language the boys would slink in with the cheery alacrity of a costermonger's donkey being backed into the shafts not without kicks. Even Master Snape himself (better known by the name of "Leery") was disgusted by being hoist with his own petard. No doubt it was flattering to an author's vanity to have his books held up to the admiration of his contemporaries as "perhaps the most perfect existing specimens of the tools and weapons of the palæolithic age;" but the lecture itself was a big price to pay for it, to say nothing of the after-execration with which he was overwhelmed. It is true, the lecture was voluntary. No one need have attended it who did not like. But who dared not to enjoy it? Mr. Kett would

have liked to have seen that boy. But he never did. The boys crushed in in crowds to hear their eloquent and beloved preceptor. When they had all assembled in the dining-room—for the lecture; as being a banquet, not a task; was given in the dining-room rather than in the schoolroom—when, we say, the boys had all assembled in the dining-room, the principal would burst in abruptly, after the manner of popular lecturers, to be received with deafening applause from sore hands and sorer hearts. Poor Archie, on the occasion we are speaking of—the third lecture—did not applaud. The child was seriously ill, had a splitting headache, and hardly knew where he was. Therefore he did not applaud, and was noted by Kett as being contumaciously sullen and silent.

On this occasion the lecture was upon the charred fragments of the paper-knife, which, as we have said, had a singular fascination for the principal. They were like the number of the beast. Any one might make anything he liked out of them with the least ingenuity. Mr. Kett made a harpoon out of them, and found distinct traces of a barb in one of the fragments.

"Gentlemen, in my last two lectures I went through all the evidence geological, palæontological, archæological, and climatological for the extreme antiquity of these wrecks and relics, jetsam and flotsam flung at our feet by the waves of the ocean of Time, giving us some dim idea of the unsearchable riches lost in its depths. This afternoon I have chosen for my subject, perhaps the most instructive, certainly the most interesting of all those immemorial and mysterious messages from 'that unfathomable sea whose waves are years.' What is that? What is it, I ask, that I hold this moment in my hand!" holding up the charred fragments of the paper-knife. Here the stillness of suspense was oppressive. "Who shaped this thus, and for what purpose was it so shaped? Where now is the hand which chopped out this burnt, blunted, and broken, but still unmistakable barb!" fixing Leery—always the most spell-bound of his auditors—with one questioning eye.

Every other eye also was fastened on the youth with lurid reproach; while two kicks, simultaneously administered by the fellows at either side of him, tried to rouse him to self-consciousness, but tried in vain. His mind was far away in the primeval past, roaming wild in woods with the noble savage.

"How long is it," continued the lecturer, "how long is it since this harpoon, impelled by a savage hand, struck the quivering flesh of its defenceless victim?"

None knew better than Leery, who here asked with wide-eyed eagerness:

"Was it a whale, sir, please?"

"It may have been a whale, sir, or it may not have been a whale, sir," cried the justly enraged lecturer, completely put out by this interruption in the full flow and flood of his eloquence. "Will you allow me, sir, or, if you will not allow me, sir—will you allow this piece of bone to tell its own story in its own way? Man may lie, history may lie, books may lie, but this piece of bone cannot lie. Look at it. Was it shaped yesterday? Or will you tell me it was not shaped by the hand of man?"

"Oh no, sir," humbly replied Leery with pathetic earnestness.

"With your permission, then, sir, I shall resume where I was interrupted, and ask you, gentlemen, to picture to yourselves the man who wielded once this weapon, what he was and when he lived. He was a savage," tremendous applause, clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and a choked cheer from Bolus, in all which the pent-up exasperation of the audience found vent.

The lecturer was, for a moment, taken aback by the unexpected applause, but ascribed it to his demolition of Leery, and resumed, therefore, with still more spirit and emphasis:

"Yes, gentlemen, in some respects he was little better than a wild beast."

Here the applause broke out again with such fury that the principal thought all was not right, and glaring round for an example, fixed upon the ever-luckless Bolus, who was pounding the floor with a cricket-bat in a perfect frenzy of approbation.

"Master Bell, this is not the place, and that is not the use, for a cricket-bat."

That was all. He said no more, but it was enough. The eye of the man expressed as plainly as words a promise to pay Master Bell one day after date a thorough thrashing. It would not do to thrash him for applause, or to scare the audience from the lectures, but Mr. Kett knew well how to nurse his wrath to keep it warm. Bolus also knew, as well as if he had the I O U in his pocket, that he would be paid his due to-morrow, with interest; and the bitterness in his heart towards the founder of the museum over-

flowed. For the rest of the lecture the audience was as still and sad as a brood of birds under a hawk's shadow.

The lecture over, the ill-starred Bolus went about stirring sedition among the chiefs. Though but a youth he was plucky, and had boxed his way up to the House of Lords. Now he got its members together by an urgent whip into their chamber, the box-room, to consider whether Leery, the Frankenstein who had called this monster, the museum, into existence, was not bound to destroy it or be himself destroyed by it and with it, through a disclosure of the cheat to "Fet," and through him to his father.

What all this has to do with Archie's fortunes we shall proceed to tell in the next chapter.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LINCOLNSHIRE. PART II.

FROM Grimsby, the old post-road leads through a pleasant country to Caistor, —sometimes called Thorny Castor—where numerous Roman remains bear witness to its former importance as a Roman station. The church, itself ancient, is built upon the site of the old Saxon or Danish fortress of Thong Castle, with a story attached of a gift by the king to one of his followers of as much land as he could cover with the skin of an ox. The spirited grantee cut the skin into thongs, and thus enclosed a goodly share of mother earth. The same story is also attached to a Thong Castle near Sittingbourne in Kent. From Caistor the road northwards to the Humber is noticeable for the number of villages and hamlets, nearly all with the termination "by," showing the settlements to have been originally Danish, a line of settlements beginning with Tealby near Market Rasen, and ending with Ferriby, where there is a ferry over the Humber; the villages mostly snugly placed at the foot of the hill ridge. The population of this part of Lincolnshire is distinctly Scandinavian in character, the people tall, sanguine, sandy or red haired, sociable and hospitable.

But most people take the iron road from Grimsby—the railway that runs straight as an arrow over the wide-spreading wolds to Louth, with its fine steeple before-mentioned, a landmark for all the country round; its excellent grammar-school of

the date of Edward the Sixth, and at Louth Park the remains of a small abbey, an offshoot from Fountains in Yorkshire. To the south the monotony of the wolds is relieved by a district of parks and woodlands. There is Burwell with a small priory, once a cell to the abbey of St. Mary, Bordeaux, while at Burwell Park was born the vivacious Sarah Jennings, victor over the conqueror of Blenheim and Ramilies. Then there is Belleau, with the copious springs that obtained from the village its fine Norman name, and the ruins of a building locally known as The Abbey, in reality an ancient mansion of the Berties, Earls of Lindsey.

But to start from Lincoln again as a centre, and follow the course of the river, where, as Drayton has it,

Delicious Wytham leads to lively Botolph's town.

The railway follows the course of the river through a landscape something of the Dutch school, flat and fertile, with watercourses and canals, and cattle quietly grazing, while

From the dark fen the oxen's low hardly disturbs the quietude of the scene. Bardney lies to the left, an ancient Saxon settlement, with the foundations of an old abbey that had for its first abbot King Ethelred of Mercia, who founded it in the seventh century; and a large earthen tumulus which is reputed to be the king's sepulchre. The Danes, of course, destroyed the monastery, but one of the Conqueror's barons refounded the abbey, and peopled it with Benedictine monks. Lower down the river is Kirkstead, with its abbey or priory, a small Cistercian offshoot of Rievaulx in Yorkshire. The ancient priory chapel, of beautiful Early English style, is now the parish church. The living is a donative, and exempt from the Bishop of Lincoln's jurisdiction, and during the last century it was held by a succession of Nonconformist ministers, the patron of the living being then of the same persuasion. Near Kirkstead is a curious military tower of brick, known as Moor Tower, said to have been designed as a watch-tower for Tattershall Castle.

For Tattershall Castle is now well in view, an immense square brick tower, defended by enormous fosses; the latter belonging to the earlier-Norman castle that occupied the site, one of the early feudal castles built to bridle the fen-men, and guard against possible invaders from Scandinavia. The present castle was built

by Sir Ralph Cromwell, treasurer of the exchequer to King Henry the Sixth. Subsequently the castle came into the possession of the Crown, and was granted by Henry the Seventh to his mother, the cold and stately Countess of Derby and Richmond, a woman whose influence was much felt in the fen-countries in her day, as she had a keen interest in the improvement of her property in the way of embankment and reclamation. The castle reverting to the Crown, Edward the Sixth gave it to Edward, Lord Clinton, who was afterwards created Earl of Lincoln, an ancestor of the present Duke of Newcastle.

Tattershall lies at the junction of the little river Bain with the main river, and guards the road to the richest and pleasantest part of Lincolnshire, a district covered with towns, hamlets, and country seats. Here lies Horncastle, noted for its horse and cattle fairs, once Hyrnchester, and, as its name implies, a fortified Roman station; and the general coincidence of famous fairs and markets with important Roman centres seems to point to the continuous existence of these great gatherings from very remote periods. Near Horncastle is Scrivelsby, the ancient seat of the Marmions.

They hailed Lord Marmion,
They hailed him Lord of Fontenays,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelsbays,

though in reality the main stem of the Marmions merged in females in the reign of Edward the First, and the Lord Marmion of the poem has no counterpart in history. But the incident on which the poem of Marmion is founded, actually began in Lincolnshire, as Leland relates: "About this tyme, in the reign of Edward ii, there was a greate feste made in Lincolnshir to which came many gentlemen and ladies; and amonge them one lady brought a heaulme for a man of werre with a very riche creste of gold to William Marmion knight . . . that he should go into the dangerest place in England and ther to let the heaulme be seene and known as famous." And hence Sir William, who must have been of some younger branch of the house of Marmion, made his way to Norham, on the Scotch border, as best fulfilling the above conditions.

The Marmions were hereditary champions of England, having filled the same office in the ducal court of Normandy, and continuing to champion their patrons after they became kings of England. When the line of Marmions ended in co-heiresses,

the Dymokes, who had secured one of the heiresses, secured also the championship, with the manor of Scrivelsby, to which it was attached. The story has been often told, how at the coronation of George the Second, somebody in the Pretender's interest—a skilful swordsman, it was said—disguised as an old woman, picked up the glove which the champion had thrown down, and demanded a meeting in St. James's Park on the following day. It is hardly necessary to say that the hereditary champion did not appear on the field of battle.

A few miles to the eastward of Scrivelsby lies Bolingbroke, with some remains of an ancient castle, built by William de Romara, who claimed the earldom of Lincoln through the Godiva strain of blood, it will be remembered. Descending to an heiress, this castle was lost for love; the lady preferring a man of her own choice to the official candidate for her hand, proposed by King Edward the Second, her guardian—a contempt of court that was punished by the forfeiture of the castle to the Crown. And thus in the next reign the castle came to John of Gaunt; and within its rugged walls was born the eldest son of John and his first wife, Blanche; the haughty Bolingbroke, whom all who witnessed the Kean revival of Shakespeare's Richard the Second at the Princess's Theatre will associate with the imposing presence of the now veteran Mr. Ryder. Still some miles to the eastward lies Spilsby, the chief town of this border country between wold and fen, and with extensive prospects of the wide expanse of fen country below.

We are now fairly on the margin of the great fen country, and—in view of these now fertile plains where corn is waving, or where the plough is turning up the rich, black, peaty soil, while elsewhere cattle are grazing, and the sheep feeding by hundreds, on what in old times was a dreary watery waste—a natural curiosity arises to know something of the history of the reclamation of this vast tract of country, and something, too, of the former dwellers in the watery wilderness. Of these last Camden gives us the first distinct account:

"They that inhabit this fennish country (and all the rest beside which form the edge and borders of Suffolk, as far as Wainfleet in Lincolnshire, contains three score and eight miles, and millions of acres) were in the Saxon times called Gyrvii, that is Fenmen or Fendwellers, a kind of people according to the nature of the place where

they dwelt, rude, uncivil, and envious to all others whom they call upland-men; who stalking on high upon stilts, apply their minds to grazing, fishing, or fowling."

The men upon stilts may still be seen here and there, and there are nooks and corners of the fen country where fishing and fowling are still pursued as distinct callings. In other parts the ancient fame of Lincolnshire fens for geese, is not altogether lost sight of. Here may be met the gozzard or gooseherd who drives the geese of the whole village to the water twice a day, the geese on returning filing off to their respective habitations with the utmost gravity and decorum. According to old-fashioned ways the geese were kept—perhaps are still kept—in the cottages of their owners, where they occupied wicker pens, arranged in three flats or storeys, one above the other. At Brothertoft, a village near Boston, the qualification for parochial offices was the number of geese of which a man was the owner.

Nor can a man be raised to dignity,
But as his geese increase and multiply.

The poor geese underwent a good deal of plucking—five times a year according to the orthodox method. At Lady Day for quills and feathers, and again at Midsummer, Lammas, Michaelmas, and Martinmas. It was said that the geese had no objection to being plucked, as the operation was performed when the feathers were ripe for coming out. Anyhow, the steel pen has replaced the goose-quill, and the spring-mattress the feather-bed; and the goose is now reared chiefly for the table.

In addition to fowl, both wild and tame, the fen-men grazed a certain number of sheep and cattle, for which they had plentiful feed in the summer time, while they made hay when the sun shone, and the rivers had retired within their channels, and the boundless plains were green with the rank fat herbage. Enclosures of any kind were few, but the boundaries of parishes were well defined, and each parish had its own special form of brand, with which all the cattle and sheep of the parishioners were bound to be marked. Then on certain appointed days in spring and autumn the fen-reeves met to exchange and return all strayed animals, and generally to discuss the affairs of the fens.

We get a glimpse of the fen-men in their habits as they live in some of the engravings of the last century—these Gyrvii, as Camden calls them (a name rather Welsh

than Saxon, with deference to the celebrated "nourice of antiquity"); Breedlings, or Slodgers as they were called in more modern times—strange uncouth figures with a rude mantle or short cloak over the shoulders, long boots reaching to the hips, and slouched hats. Rude and uncivil they may have been to the last, in respect of upland-men, but then it must be remembered that most of their visitors were not unjustly to be suspected of the amiable desire of improving the poor fen-men off from the face of the land, where they and their forefathers for generations had lived hardly and honestly.

As to the origin of the fens in their fennish condition, whether they are due to the gradual elevation of the land leaving a once shallow archipelago to be annexed to the dominions of the human family, or to the distinctly contrary operation of Nature by which originally habitable lands have been drowned and overspread by the sea, it is not within the province of the chronicler to enquire. The former would seem the more probable account, although it is difficult to explain the existence of an extensive forest, traces of which are often brought to light, buried under the peaty soil. But in whatever way the fens were formed, there is evidence of early and persistent efforts to drain and reclaim them. The so-called Roman banks, which at different points defend the lowlands from the sea, seem to be part of an extensive scheme of reclamation, which, if it was not attempted by the Romans themselves, it is difficult to ascribe to any other race. The Carr Dyke, a really fine work, that would do credit to the age of Brindley or Stephenson, is a channel of forty miles in length, sixty feet in width, with a broad flat bank, connecting the rivers Welland and Witham. This channel seems to have been designed as a catch-water drain, to intercept the waters from the uplands, and if the Romans had no hand in it—for there is no record of its origin—it only remains to ascribe it to that cunning master of works who has hollowed out so many punch-bowls, raised so many dykes and embankments, and even built a bridge or two in various parts of the land.

But coming to firmer ground, among the quaking fens of history, we find that even before the Norman conquest the religious houses, so thickly scattered among the fens, began or resumed the work of reclamation. Causeways were made here and there, and embankments to confine the

rivers within their channels. Soon after the Conquest, one of William's trusted officers, Richard de Rulos, took Deeping Fen in hand, and according to Dugdale, "excluding the Welland with a mighty bank, he reduces those low grounds, which were before time deep lakes and impassable fens, into most fruitful fields and pastures, and the most humid and moorish into a garden of pleasure." But promising as was this beginning, little more was done for centuries. We come to the reign of Henry the Seventh before we find another systematic attempt at reclamation; and then, under the influence of Margaret, Countess of Derby and Richmond, Witham Marshes were attacked. There were no English engineers, it seems, capable of undertaking the work, and one Mayhave Hake, of Graveling, a Fleming, was engaged to conduct the enterprise. The iron-work required was shipped from Calais, no doubt forged in Flemish workshops. The management of the drains and banks when completed was to be according to the law of Romney Marsh, a code of high antiquity. From this time the work of reclamation went on, but in an intermittent, desultory way. Then came the efforts to reclaim the north fens which drain into the Trent and Humber—the Axholme and Hatfield districts, that is, which have already been described; and, encouraged by the partial success of this undertaking, Francis, Earl of Bedford, with thirteen other gentleman-adventurers, obtained a concession from Charles the First, which authorised them to attempt the reclamation of the great level which stretched from the mouth of the Welland far into the counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, Norfolk, and Suffolk, a tract of three hundred and ten thousand acres, afterwards known as the Bedford Level. The great channel, called the Old Bedford River—cutting off a great bend of the river Ouse—was the chief work of these adventurers. But the civil wars between Charles and his Parliament interrupted the enterprise, and the commoners and fen-men in the confusion of the times did their best to ruin and destroy the works already made. Under the firm rule of the Commonwealth, the work of reclamation was resumed by the son of Earl Francis, afterwards the first Duke of Bedford. Vermuyden was appointed engineer in chief, and the new Bedford river, running parallel to the old one, was the result of the enterprise. But while much land was reclaimed

for the benefit of the adventurers, the effect upon the rest of the fens was hardly satisfactory, as much land, that was pretty dry before, was made swampy, and wet land was rendered wetter still. This was owing to a neglect of the outfalls of the rivers and their estuaries, which was only retrieved by a more systematic and comprehensive plan of drainage devised by the great engineer Rennie, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Since that time, except for an occasional breaking forth of the waters in times of flood and tempest, the fens have to show a satisfactory record of agricultural prosperity.

When the fens were a wide watery waste, East Holland, where there was a strip of firm ground protected from the sea by the ancient Roman banks, was practically more closely connected than now with the Holland on the other side of the North Sea. And Boston—lively Botolph's town—was probably more in sympathy with the free cities of the Low Countries opposite, than with the feudal land on the other side of the fens. Thus, when in 1612, one John Cotton, Fellow of Magdalen, Cambridge, was elected Vicar of Boston, his bishop, Barlow, of Lincoln, warns him as to the proclivities of his flock. "A factious people," writes the bishop, "imbued with the Puritan spirit." Cotton, however, was more in sympathy with his flock than with his bishop; and he expounded the word in the grand old parish church of St. Botolph in a way that drew about him the thoughtful and austere—the men who considered the ritual of the Church as so many rags of Popery. Already many of this way of thinking had separated themselves from the Established Church. In 1602 there existed two congregations of Puritan Separatists, one at Gainsbro', on the banks of the Trent, and the second at Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, and these being subject to the severe laws against Nonconformity then existing, determined to seek religious freedom in Holland. Some of these were intercepted at Boston, and forced to return to their former homes. But eventually the bulk of them found their way to Holland, where they remained for eleven years—not very prosperous, it seems, nor contented, but feeling themselves pilgrims in a strange country, while the land of promise was as yet unrevealed to them. This land of promise they resolved to seek at last in the new world, and chartered the now famous Mayflower, in which they sailed from Plymouth, and

crossing the Atlantic in a long and tedious voyage, landed at Cape Cod, and presently founded a settlement which they called, in remembrance of the old country, New Plymouth. Soon after, Winthrop, probably a Lincolnshire man, and a large company of Puritans, mostly of good condition and fortune, fitted out a number of vessels and sailed for Massachusetts Bay, "where they laid the foundation of a city," says our authority, "to which they gave the name of Boston, out of regard to several of their most prominent members who had lived in Boston, Lincoln."

This last assertion, by the way, may be qualified as a judicious guess, for it does not appear that researches in the matter have brought to light any Boston names among the original settlers. Indeed, the infant town seems to have been at first known by its Indian name, Shawmut, or, from its position upon three hills, as Tri-mountain.

And here we come to John Cotton again, Cotton, who has been preaching the word more and more after the pattern of Calvin, rather than of Laud, and has got himself into serious trouble with the authorities. It is a Star Chamber matter now, and Cotton, who is no enthusiast for martyrdom, but honestly anxious to retain his living and position, if he can do so without violence to his conscience, requests the intercession of powerful friends. The Earl of Dorset, one of these powerful friends, tries what he can do with the archbishop and those who surround the king. In the end he advises Cotton to fly. Had it been murder, or any crime most disgraceful to the cloth, the earl tells Cotton, he could have got his pardon. But Cotton was accused of Puritanism, and there was no pardon for that. And thus Cotton hurriedly resigns his living, and with his wife, not long married, makes his way in disguise to the Downs, where he embarks on board the Griffin, which sails forthwith for America, without touching at any of the Channel ports, where the officers of the Star Chamber were waiting to pounce upon him. On the voyage Cotton's first child is born, and is named Seaborn; and, seven weeks after sailing from the Downs, they all land in safety at the new settlement, Boston, as it is to be henceforth. For there is little doubt that the new Boston owed its name to John Cotton. The Puritans were proud of their new adherent, whom they at once chose as teacher of the flock—there was

already a chosen pastor—and, no doubt, they wanted to make the place as home-like as possible for him, although the thatched barn, in which he was henceforth to preach, could hardly remind him of the noble aisles of his old parish church.

All this is a long way from Lincolnshire, and yet a little discursiveness may be forgiven in tracing the link that binds the two great nations, while, even to this day, Lincolnshire seems more akin to New England than any other part of the kingdom. The American twang may be traced in Lincolnshire voices, and many of the words and phrases known as Americanisms might be traced to their origin in Lincolnshire and its borders.

But it is time to return to the maternal Boston, with its old-world histories—the Boston of St. Botolph's founding, with its quays and guilds; the Boston that owned the Duke of Bretagne as its over-lord, an outlying appanage to the rich earldom of Richmond; the Boston whose old Roman sea-bank broke down in the twelfth century, and let the waters in upon the half-drowned lands; the Boston that was even then at work with its looms, and making cloth that was worn by all the country round; the Boston with its great fair where the cloth was sold, with hardware and all that a fen-man could want for his year's supply; the Boston that was so rich with its fleets at sea and its flats on the river, that it could build up its grand church with its fine tower that was to be a land and sea mark by day and night (a tower irreverently called "the stump" by the people round about); the old Boston that had done and suffered so much already before young Boston was born.

In these days it is easy enough to get anywhere from Boston, with its railways radiating in all directions; but in the days when the fens were really fens, squelchy and reedy, the way was along narrow causeways mostly built by the monks of old. And to this day the highways follow the track of the monkish causeways; and if you follow the road to the south from Boston it leads to Spalding's ancient priory, with nothing on the way to interest anybody unless the vague speculation, looking over into some drain or watercourse, that it would be a comfortable and useful thing to recover the lost luggage that lies somewhere silted up among these marshes—the lost luggage of King John, with his golden crown, and his jewels, and his treasure-

chests. It was not far from here that he lost them; for yonder, over the flats, lies the site of Swineshead Abbey, where King John spent the night after his misfortune, and where it was rumoured that some jolly old monk gave the monarch a dose of poison with his posset. And then, if your thought is upon buried gold, you may wonder when you come to Pinchbeck whether the imitation metal took its rise at this particular place. Once at Spalding we are within the limits of the "Camp of Refuge." Here lived the wicked Ivo de Taillebois in his strong castle, with the priory close by, a dignified Benedictine house whose chief was called "Lord Prior."

But Spalding and its priory have a peculiar interest, as in them we may trace the germ of the modern book-club, library, literary society, and what not. The pedigree of the evolution is a little shaky perhaps in places; the record here and there may be wanting; but still here it is—fairly beginning with Spalding Priory and the inventory of its possessions, which, not being of much value, were handed over to the parochial authorities. "Item, one messe book and one Pax and one library with thirteen bookes in it, and one messe book with silver claspa." It is to be feared that the parish turned the silver clasps into coin, but the library survived, and who knows how much enlightenment may not have been diffused in the neighbourhood by the perusal of these thirteen volumes! Anyhow, in 1637 we find the minister of the parish persuading his parishioners to board, cut, and shelve the room over the north porch of the church, turning out the town arms—the halberts, and fire-locks, and bows and arrows that might have done duty at Agincourt, or likelier still at Flodden. But the north porch is henceforth to be a library, an eerie place for a student to burn the midnight oil in, with the white graves outside, and the strange creaking, groaning, mysterious noises from within. There is a considerable hiatus here, during which the thirteen volumes are reduced to one. In fact the literary germ seemed well-nigh reduced to an addled condition when a revival set in.

"Then, in 1709, that great genius, Captain Richard Steele, published the *Tatlers*, which, as they came out in half-sheets, were taken in by a gentleman who communicated them to his acquaintances at the coffee-house in the abbey yard." The priory, it will be observed, had been raised

by tradition to an abbey. "And these papers being approved as instructive and entertaining, they ordered them to be sent down with the Gazette and votes, and were accordingly had and read there every post-day, generally aloud to the company." And in this way began the once-famous Spalding Gentleman's Society, the origin and model of many others of the same kind. "They meet every Monday at Mr. Younger's coffee-house in Spalding, at two in the afternoon from September to May, and in the other months at four." Punctuality and regularity in attendance was enforced by a fine of twopence. An absentee for four Mondays must either communicate something new and curious or pay sixpence. But this last rule was felt to be too harsh, and was abrogated at the request of the society's most distinguished member, Sir Isaac Newton. But members were urged to be communicative by the same illustrious savant, and that such a light of the world could find profit in the communications of the country squires about Spalding should be an encouragement to those who are given to hiding their little lights under bushel baskets. Then "they celebrate their anniversary in a public manner, with music and a polite audience, from the year 1730, when there was sung an ode beginning, 'To love and social joys,' etc." But in 1786 the society is found quite decayed, its library dusty and neglected, its transactions no longer recorded, for it transacts nothing to record. The old savants who founded it are dead; the young squires are of a different mould; and so the society dwindles out of existence without anyone to record its final throes of dissolution.

From Spalding the causeway leads over the fens, along the banks of the Welland river, to Crowland, the abbey founded by St. Guthlac in the form of a mud cabin, where he lived in sordid sanctity among the meres and fens, then only tenanted by myriads of wild-fowl, and then, as sanctity became celebrity, the haunt of hundreds of cenobites, who emulated the austerities of their chief; and thus a community was founded that became one of the most famous and best endowed of the Anglo-Saxon abbeys. The fine west front of the abbey is still in existence, adorned with seven tiers of statuary, recalling its abbot, Ingulphus, from pleasant St. Wandrille, on the Seine, under whose rule it rose from its charred ruins. Another curiosity of Crowland is an ancient triangular bridge,

where three roads meet over the river—almost unique among bridges.

From Crowland the way lies through Market Deeping to Stamford, a well-built and once well-fortified town of high antiquity. King Bladud founded Stamford, and would have made it a second Athens, in the days when the Trojan heroes and other classical persons had taken refuge among us. "But this is like a dreme," as Leland says. The Gilbertines had a college there—a religious order that took its origin in Lincolnshire—at Semperingham, where Sir Gilbert, the lord of the manor, founded in the twelfth century a new order of celibates, in which women as well as men were included—an order which hardly spread beyond its original limits. In the fourteenth century, on a violent quarrel between the scholars of north and south at Oxford, a great number of masters and scholars belonging to the northern division came to settle at Stamford. And the schools at Stamford were in high credit amongst scholars, notwithstanding royal and official disfavour, till the Wars of the Roses caused their dispersion. From that date we hear no more of learned Stamford, and according to Drunken Barnaby, who writes in the seventeenth century, the inhabitants had then given themselves over to the manufacture of purses—

Where are the Schollars, Proctors, Fellows, College,
They've into purses crammed their former know-
ledge.

But the memory of Brazen-nose College is still preserved in the names of old houses—a Brazen-nose that was more ancient than its namesake at Oxford.

As for the strong castle at Stamford, it was demolished in the time of Richard the Third, and its materials went to build the Carmelite, or White Priory; and after that the site was given to the Oecils—probably to build Burleigh House, itself somewhat of an antiquity. What a tale would those hewn stones have to tell if they could record their history! But great must have been the store of building materials at the dissolution of the religious houses, for Stamford was full of them. Besides the White Friars, were those of orders Grey and the Black Friars, and the Austin Friars, and a very ancient foundation of Benedictines—so that the town must have been vocal all day long with church and convent bells, whilst shaven crowns would have been visible all over the place.

Through Stamford ran the great Roman

road that probably gave the town its name, as a paved or stone ford, where the road crossed the river; and this great road, which is known as Ermine Street, is still in use from north to south. An ordinary Lincolnshire road may be a trifle dull, but this Roman road, which towns and villages seem to avoid, has something almost awe-inspiring about its loneliness and desertion, as it runs in stern directness through the wide plain. There is an alternative route to Lincoln through Bourn, with its fine earthworks, the once castle of Leofric, lord of Bourn, whose son Hereward is known in song and story as the last and bravest of the Saxon heroes who held out against the Conqueror. And farther in is Aslackby, where the Templars, and later the Hospitallers, had a commandery, and with some relics of the characteristic round church in an old farmhouse. Falkingham lies to the left—a small town pleasantly situated on a hill, with the fosse still existing of an ancient castle, and Semperingham is close by, the parialr church of which is a relic of the old priory of mixed monks and nuns, after the Gilbertine order lately mentioned.

From points hereabout, the tall spire of Grantham may be seen, with the woods of Balton—a fine Jacobean seat. Eight miles south of Grantham lies Colsterworth, the birthplace of Sir Isaac Newton. His father was lord of the manor, and Newton was educated at dame schools at Skillington and Stoke, in the immediate neighbourhood, till he was twelve years old, when he was sent to Grantham grammar-school. In 1665 he retired to his own estate at Colsterworth (to which he had succeeded on his father's death) on account of the plague that was then raging, and in the orchard here, it is said, fell the fated apple that revolutionised the solar system—at least our ideas of it. Sir Isaac never married, and the manor was sold by his heir. The house is still standing, and ought, one would think, to be preserved to all time as a national memorial.

A BOARDING-HOUSE ROMANCE.

A STORY IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

THE first week of the Rolandsecks' stay at the Pension Sommerrock Mr. Trevelyan never saw them excepting at meals, but that gave him an opportunity of occasionally conversing with them. He had discovered that the young countess spoke excellent

English, that she was well up in the literature of the language, and, what was more unusual, had decided views of her own upon it.

It had taken the American longer than he had expected to break the ice between himself and his new acquaintances, but by dint of dogged, though unobtrusive perseverance, he had got so far as to be sure of obtaining a hearing from Gräfin Gabrielle when he chose to speak, and sometimes he told himself that there was a look of mild enjoyment in her face, although she spoke so little.

He was not mistaken.

There was a charm for Gabrielle, if only that of novelty, in Trevelyan's conversation, which had cleverness and depth for all its lightness. The very contrast between their ways of thought had something of attraction for her. The American treated old subjects from very new points of view. Gabrielle was often startled by the light, easy view he held concerning old-fashioned institutions and ideas that she had been taught to regard as sacred. On the other hand, she was equally struck by the depth of his love and loyalty to institutions and ideas that were new to her, and for which she fancied she could never come to feel much sympathy.

She told her mother some of the American's odd views, and how humorously and plainly they were expressed. Gräfin Rolandseck had not disliked Mr. Trevelyan from the first, though she had not troubled herself to take any more notice of him than she took of strangers in general, but it amused her to think that a gentleman should have been innocently trying to entertain her daughter by ridiculing opinions that she herself strongly held. There was something new to her, too, in the bare fact of any person of education and breeding attempting to take a free and independent stand in a world so hedged-in by conventionalities. She thought she would not dislike a peep into such a world as Mr. Trevelyan's, just for the novelty of the thing.

At dinner that evening Gabrielle asked Mr. Trevelyan if he spoke French, as her mother regretted being unable to take part in an English conversation. Quite unconscious of the magnitude of the honour thus shown him, Mr. Trevelyan answered readily that he did speak French a little, and for the future mostly confined himself to that language when talking with the mother and daughter.

Gräfin Rolandseck said little herself, and even listened with a condescension that was embarrassing, but Gabrielle entered into the conversation with more spirit and interest than she had done before, and the American's quick brain responded to that delightful encouragement.

Ere long the austere dowager found herself disputing certain points with considerable warmth, yet unable to repress a smile at Mr. Trevelyan's way of putting things.

He was the first person she had met, who, holding opinions directly opposed to her own, and maintaining them with all firmness, had yet an attraction for her. No doubt he had his nationality to thank for the concession. It would have been impossible for her to have felt any liking for a German with such views, had he been never so witty or agreeable; but Mr. Trevelyan's audacity amused her, and she regarded it with the indulgence one shows a naughty but irresistible child.

Gabrielle felt secretly grateful to Trevelyan as she observed the beneficial influence a little chat with him had upon her mother.

For some time the gräfin's health had been causing her daughter a good deal of anxiety, for she suffered from a serious form of heart-disease which affected her spirits in proportion as it affected her general health. To rouse and amuse her was the most important business of Gabrielle's life at present, a task that Mr. Trevelyan unknowingly rendered easier and more successful.

At the end of the second week of their stay the gräfin and her daughter were the only two persons in the house who did not suspect that something deeper than mere civility underlay the American's courteous manner and matter-of-fact talk.

From a very early stage instinct rather than observation had told Gustel Sommerrock that Gabrielle von Rolandseck would prove a formidable rival. If Gustel thought no little of her own charms, it is due to say that she was inclined to take an equally exaggerated view of other people's where they pleased her, and, as Gräfin Gabrielle was the personification of all that was beautiful and distinguished in her eyes, she felt that nothing but bad taste—which she had proved the American to be free from—could prevent his being much struck with her.

Gabrielle treated Gustel with consider-

able kindness for her mother's sake, who in her younger days had lived for some years as housekeeper with the Rolandsecks. That kindness, however, was tinged with a certain condescension, of which, had she been aware of it, Gabrielle would have tried to divest her conduct. But oddly enough it was precisely that touch of condescension which possessed the greatest attraction for Gustel, who regarded it as only natural and proper in a being of an infinitely higher order than herself.

Gabrielle smiled upon her kindly, just as she talked agreeably with Mr. Trevelyan, but there was enough dignity in her manner towards both to prevent the least over-estimation of her sentiments. Little did she dream that she had raised a tempest in each breast which was ready to burst forth on the slightest provocation.

The rest of the visitors were for the most part out of patience with their former favourite, Mr. Trevelyan. They could not think what had come over him that he was never seen in the salon in an evening now, and rarely joined in any of their excursions by day. They would have concluded that he had been bored to death by Gustel Sommerrock, and therefore preferred solitude to her society, but for the fact that she, too, had almost deserted them.

In reality there was nothing mysterious about the way in which the two passed their evenings, or the motives that prompted them.

Gabrielle von Rolandseck had a pretty soprano voice, which her mother liked to hear in an evening. The girl was not loth to do so herself, so every night as soon as someone began to rattle upon the piano in the drawing-room below, Gabrielle took out her zither and sang. The sweet notes of the instrument blended very well with her voice, and she would go from one song to another till she was tired, when she always ended at her mother's request with a simple but beautiful setting of Heine's "Du bist wie eine Blume."

We have said that George Trevelyan and Gustel Sommerrock were both in love with Gabrielle. Her singing attracted them as irresistibly as light does moths. Gustel's little room happened to be over part of the Rolandsecks' sitting-room, so she would steal up there, open her window, and drink in every note. Mr. Trevelyan's despised "den" was on the same floor as

the Garden of Eden, and nearly opposite to it. When he stood close by the door he could catch every note almost as well as if he were in the room, and that was the position in which he passed one blissful hour every evening. "Du bist wie eine Blume" became part of his life, every thought and action seemed to be set to it.

Another week passed away, and, at the close of it, Mr. Trevelyan had the mortification of feeling that he had made no advance in Gabrielle's favour. She was still agreeable when circumstances threw them together, but with the polite indifference of ordinary social intercourse with a mere acquaintance. Trevelyan, whose fancy had by this time ripened into serious love, was rendered almost desperate by her coolness; but the self-command of his nation stood him in good stead, and kept him from betraying himself.

Every night, during long wakeful hours, he wished that flood or fire, or some other disaster, would kindly befall the peaceful pension, only in order to afford him an opportunity of risking his life to save the woman he loved. He was prepared to include the mother in his heroic feat in the present state of his feelings. Indeed, since the gräfin had condescended to patronise him slightly, he had got quite to like her—though he would have cut the acquaintance of any other woman in Europe, crowned head or otherwise, who should have ventured to assume Gräfin Rolandseck's bland superiority towards him.

One night he was really startled out of his sleep by a loud ringing and the sound of unusual moving about. He started up, sniffed the air for any trace of smoke, experienced a sense of disappointment on remarking none, but dressed hurriedly to be ready in case of emergency. He scarcely dared to hope that the sounds proceeded from Gräfin Rolandseck's apartments, but sure enough, five minutes later, he heard the door of her sitting-room open, and Gabrielle's—Gabrielle's voice call hurriedly, but in a subdued key, as if fearful of disturbing the other sleepers:

"Frau Sommerrock, are you there?"

"Don't leave me; ring the bell," said the gräfin in a faint voice.

Gabrielle went back into the room.

That was enough for Trevelyan, who had heard the little dialogue through his already opened door.

He struck a light, rushed downstairs to

the little sitting-room that he luckily knew did duty as Frau Sommerrock's bedroom at night, and began hammering heartlessly at the door.

Frau Sommerrock started up in alarm, wild visions of her little all being swallowed up in one fearful conflagration floating before her.

"Gräfin Rolandseck is very ill, madame, and her daughter cannot leave her. If you will kindly go to her at once, I will hold myself in readiness to fetch the doctor if necessary. Are you ready?"

A satirical laugh was Frau Sommerrock's only reply to this irritating question.

"Has anything else happened?" she asked.

"Anything else!" repeated Trevelyan scornfully. "Don't you think that enough?"

He was annoyed at his own warmth the next moment. It was incautious, to say the least, but it was just possible that it might have escaped Frau Sommerrock's attention in the excitement of the moment.

There was now nothing to do but return to his room, there to listen anxiously for any sounds from Gräfin Rolandseck's.

In a shorter time than he had expected, he heard Frau Sommerrock hurry along the passage and enter the room opposite. It was not many moments before she came out again and knocked at his door.

"Gräfin Rolandseck has one of her bad attacks, Herr Trevelyan, and I am afraid to leave Gräfin Gabrielle alone with her. You were so kind as to offer to go—"

"For the doctor. Schwarz, I suppose!" and he started down the passage at once.

"How kind of him!" thought Gabrielle, who had heard the conversation through the open door.

The physician found the case very serious. Gabrielle had known that it was so. She had been warned that any of these attacks might be the last.

This time, however, the powerful remedies that were resorted to were successful. In an hour Gräfin Rolandseck was out of danger, and the doctor took his leave.

"I congratulate you, young lady," he said on parting (they were in the sitting-room, out of earshot of the gräfin). "You have had a very narrow escape of losing your mother; you have only your expedition in calling in medical aid to thank for her life. If I had got here a quarter of an hour later, nothing could have saved her."

Gabrielle looked at him in awed silence.

From her own knowledge of her mother's disease, she had every reason to believe his words. Before Dr. Schwarz ceased speaking, it flashed upon her whom she had to thank for bringing the doctor so promptly to her aid, and for the first time she thought very kindly of George Trevelyan.

CHAPTER VII.

GRAFIN ROLANDSECK remained in a state of prostration for some days after the first severity of the attack had passed away. It had not failed to strike her that this attack was graver than the last—as, indeed, each one was—and that they recurred at more frequent intervals than formerly—considerations that pointed to one inevitable conclusion sooner or later. For herself, she would cheerfully have closed her eyes on life any time this twenty years, but for her daughter's sake she clung to it with tenacity.

Day after day Dr. Schwarz impressed upon Gabrielle the necessity of amusing and cheering her mother as the only means of averting these attacks, and day after day Gabrielle exerted herself to the utmost, assuming spirits she was far from enjoying, and doing everything that affection and ingenuity could suggest as likely to have a beneficial effect on her mother's low state; but, unknown to her, there was a strong influence at work counteracting her own—the influence of a mother's anxiety for her child's welfare when she should be left alone and unprotected in the world.

Gabrielle did not leave the gräfin's room for some days. After a time her unwearied efforts were rewarded by a decided improvement in the invalid, the first proof of which was her suddenly remarking her daughter's unusual pallor and general look of fatigue.

"You are looking quite ill, Gabrielle," she cried anxiously. "How strange I did not notice it before! My dear, you must take a good walk every day; you have been cooped up in this room too long."

"I cannot leave it till you are well again, mother; it would only make me anxious to have to leave you now. I should get no benefit from it."

The gräfin insisted as much as her weak state would allow, but Gabrielle was not to be persuaded.

"I cannot get my daughter to go out, though she needs a change so much," complained the gräfin to Frau Sommerrock, the next time she came into the room.

"She has been shut up here too much, as you say, Frau Gräfin. No wonder she has no energy left to take long walks. Suppose you send her downstairs to dinner every evening; even that little change would be something, and she would be at hand in case you wanted her."

The gräfin liked the suggestion, and succeeded in persuading her daughter to act in accordance with it.

When Gabrielle entered the dining-room that evening everybody looked at her with interest, and many said a word of welcome.

Perhaps Mr. Trevelyan was the least obtrusive in his congratulations and enquiries, but the pressure of his hand, his swift penetrating glance at her pale face, and the little silent attentions he showed her throughout the meal told her that perhaps of all present he felt the most genuine interest in her mother's illness and recovery.

Trevelyan was very silent all dinner-time, but it was one of the pleasantest hours of his life, nevertheless. The mere sight of her he loved and had not seen for so long, was a delight. Her subdued yet self-possessed manner gave her a new charm in his eyes, as did the slight traces of weariness in her fair face, to which they lent new dignity and depth. The simple morning-dress in which she appeared was not without significance for him, nor the quiet manner in which she slipped away from the table before the dessert appeared.

"I have to thank you for a great many kindnesses, Mr. Trevelyan," she had said when shaking hands with him; "but for your having brought the doctor so quickly on the night of my mother's illness, she would probably not have recovered."

"I am delighted to have been of the slightest use to the gräfin, but you must not believe exaggerated medical statements. Doctors have a way of taking very dark views of cases; it makes the merit of curing them seem greater."

"Unfortunately I know how little exaggeration there was in this case, and how much I owe to your assistance."

He smiled incredulously, but his heart beat with joy and surprise at the words all the same.

"Well, Gabrielle, now tell me about everybody," said Gräfin Rolandseck as in duty bound, when her daughter joined her; but there was so little interest in her tone that it was as well that her words were not audible in the drawing-room.

Gabrielle told her that so-and-so had

enquired very kindly after her, and sent such and such messages, which polite attentions the invalid received with cynical indifference.

"That is all! Sing a little, then, if you are not tired, dear."

Gabrielle was tired, and in no singing humour that night; she felt much more inclined for a silent half-hour with a favourite poet; but she complied instantly, and did not put away her zither until she had effectually soothed her mother's irritated nerves. Gräfin Rolandseck's expression, so anxious before, changed to one of repose; when she spoke her voice was no longer querulous.

"By the way, my child, do not get any more of those lovely flowers for me. You must have had to send a long way for them, and they must have been expensive, and I am well enough now to do without such luxuries. It was a pretty thought on your part, and gave me pleasure, though I was too ill to express it at the time."

"That reminds me," cried Gabrielle, "that I quite forgot to thank him for them at dinner. What would he think? I did not get them, mother, for there was not a flower to be had in the village. I suppose someone must have said I had been trying to get some and failed, and it made Mr. Trevelyan send them. I have no idea where he got them from."

"Mr. Trevelyan!" The tone was one of surprise and displeasure.

"He meant well, no doubt, but the action was very American. These people must advertise their wealth by some means or other, even if they have to force presents on perfect strangers to do it. Please thank the young man to-morrow, but be careful to impress upon him that I want no more of his flowers."

"I think you do him injustice, mother. Depend upon it he never thought that he was either acting ostentatiously, or taking a liberty in gratifying the desire of an invalid. He most likely acted impulsively before he had reflected upon the subject. Remember he is a foreigner. You often say that they, and especially the English and Americans, are not to be judged like us Germans."

AMONG THE COFFEE-PALACES.

WE are now at the time of year when day and work begin together, and the first blush of morning, throwing the outline of the window-frame upon the blind, is

the signal to the working-man to arise and go forth to his labour. As yet the great wilderness of houses gives no signs of life, the morning incense from thousands of household fires is as yet unburnt; the air is clear and crisp though chilly, and the quiet streets have an unkempt and debauched appearance in the cold light of morning; the roadways covered with a layer of liquid mud, which is all that is left of the whirl of wheels and the clattering of hoofs, and the sparkling of lights, and the general throng and bustle of the night before. And yet not quite all—for here at the corner by St. Martin's Church remains a solitary representative of the world that takes its pleasure by night, in the form of a hansom-cab, with wheels and panels encrusted with mud, with a tired horse drooping his head dejectedly, and a driver blinking and yawning in the coming daylight. The lions and the fountains have got Trafalgar Square all to themselves, and but for a solitary policeman in the distance the way to Westminster is all deserted; but the chimes of St. Martin ring out, and the lane that takes its name from the gilded knight who shared his cloak with a beggar, begins to echo with stray footsteps. At Cranbourn Street crossing the stream of people becomes more decided, with the rumble of carts and waggons, and here at the corner an early breakfast-stall has unlimbered its battery of shining cans, and displays its rounds of ammunition in the shape of rounds of bread-and-butter, or of comfortable chunks of cake. The blended aroma of the berry, the leaf, and the pod—it may be said that there is something in the fresh morning air, and the unaccustomed want of breakfast that disposes to figurative language—but anyhow the smell of the hot steaming cans with their tea, coffee, and cocoa, of the freshly baked cake, and the freshly cut loaves, has a pleasant and appetizing effect. Boys on the run for workshop or newspaper-office snatch a hasty breakfast on the wing; workmen with the factory-bell ringing in their ears, stop for a cup of something boiling hot.

You may picture the presiding genius of the breakfast-stall as some wizened old man or apple-cheeked old woman, whom a benevolent vestry has provided with a barrow and cans, and a suitable parochial standing—not without a view to saving the rates, that might otherwise be burdened with their support. But such a

picture would be as far out as are fancy portraits generally. Our actual stall-keeper is young, brisk, and alert, with a clean white apron, and a pouch into which coppers are rattling without cease. His currant-cakes fly to pieces under the knife, as pigs do at Chicago, but hardly so fast as they are demanded by eager urchins. Even the staidest and most prudent can't resist those toothsome morsels. "You don't get such grub as this at the Palace," says a boy. Perhaps he means not the queen's palace, but the coffee-palace. Well, we shall see.

The way to the coffee-palace lies towards St. Giles's, where St. Martin's Lane loses itself in the mazes of Seven Dials. Not so long ago it was easy to get lost in the Dials, with its bewildering openings, and there was a horrid kind of feeling that if the wrong one were taken it would end in some den of thieves or noisome blind alley; but now the place is quiet enough, the old spirit is fled, the Dials have been rubbed out one by one, and only two of them are left in evidence—if there ever were seven, by the way: seven real dials over as many actual public-houses. There is a sort of glamour over the place, as about the old stone circles that can never be accurately reckoned up, and so you may count over and over again in the Dials without being able to make sure whether there are six or seven or more streets which abut upon this forlorn enclosure. But, anyhow, among the butt-ends of streets, which make the place like the hub of a wheel, there is one that bears the name of The Sundial, and announces itself as a coffee-palace.

For one thing, the Dials are clean out of the way of the general movement of people to their work. The perplexing currents and whirlpools of men, with workmen's trains carrying them from east to west, and from north to south, and so on through all the points of the compass, and so different to the general inrush from every quarter to the City that begins as soon as the workmen's double shuffle has ceased; all this cross-country work leaves Seven Dials calm and unruffled. The people who earn good wages and go to work regularly do not live here; and of the people you meet it is difficult to say whether they are early risers or late stayers up. And then, while in other parts the wayfarers are all men, here in the Dials the softer sex seem more awake and alive than their mates.

Sitting at one of the marble-topped

tables in the coffee-palace are two sturdy but battered-looking females who are engaged with tea and bread-and-butter, talking earnestly the while, and discussing alternately prices of fish and marital shortcomings. A stray workman in another corner is poring over an illustrated paper, while two or three lean and sallow youths are lingering over their cocoa and slices. On one side is the bar with its burnished cans, and an array of eatables behind a wire fence—slices of currant-cake and bread-and-butter, portions of bread-and-marmalade, eggs, and rashers of bacon. Everything costs a penny except the bacon, which is twopence; and a small cup of tea can be had at a halfpenny. The coffee is really good, as it is drawn complete with milk and sugar from the boiler. There is a plentiful supply of salt in large cups on all the tables, and a customer unaware of the customs of the place, takes this for a provision of pounded sugar, and is about to turn a good supply into his cup, when he is good-naturedly stopped by one of the fair guests. The little incident causes some amount of pleasantry. "Salt in hees corfee," seemed to renew the joke for the benefit of each new comer. In point of fact a small pinch of salt is an improvement to coffee, but the effect of a whole cupful can only be imagined.

Among the new comers is a thin pale man, whose white cotton jumper seems to be a very poor protection against the chill morning air, a man too with a hollow cough and a catch in his breath that stops his speech every now and then. But a cheerful kind of man, as is evident from the pleasant nod and twinkle of the eye he bestows upon the present company as he puts his basket under the table—he is from Farringdon Market, with his basket full of water-cresses—and goes to the counter to purchase his breakfast. There are no fees to waiters here, you see, and the temptation to give any is avoided, by letting people wait upon themselves. Not that the most dexterous and impressive of head-waiters could make even a bare existence in these regions. A penny means half one's breakfast, and who would give half his breakfast for the pleasure of seeing the other half placed upon the table with a dexterous flourish?

Our friend, the cress-man, comes back with his tea and bread-and-butter, and sets to work wolfishly upon them. It is not every morning, he observes, that he treats himself to a meal like this. But

this morning cresses were plentiful, and money went farther than usual. The cresses were finer, too, and would make up better. His old woman and he made them up after he got home, and then they both started out to sell them. The old woman was better than he at the business, "on account of the voice, don't you see?" said the man, tapping his chest with his fingers. The cry, it appears, is half the battle in cresses. Of course trade wasn't what it had been, but, when people knew where to go, and had established a regular walk, there was a pretty steady wage to be made out of it. And there is not the risk about cresses that there is about many things, for they are not perishable articles.

This provokes a note of interrogation.

"Not perishable? Why, cresses surely wither and decay?"

"Not if you knows your business," replies the cress-man with a smile. "You damps 'em down over-night, what you have left of your stock, and mixes 'em with the next morning's bundles, and nobody knows the difference. Now, that ain't the case with winkles; people can smell 'em, whether they're fresh boiled or not."

And herrings, too, it is suggested, no doubt they are a little risky?

"Ah, you may believe that," replies the cress-man with a sigh. "You mightn't credit it, but not so long ago I began business with a whole sovereign as stock-money. And I took the advice of a pal, as lent me a barrow, and laid out all the money in herrings. I assure you I didn't sell five shillings' worth, and all the rest had to be chucked away. Ah, it pretty nigh broke me, did that business."

As to the causes that have brought the man in middle life, with his weak chest and chronic cough, into this damp and weary line of business, he is not at all reticent.

"I was a soldier to begin with," says our cheerful cress-man; "and often I wishes I was back again, with your regular meals, and never a thought about your night's lodging." But then the way back was not open to him. He had been discharged after six or seven years' service, from incurable rheumatism, and after drawing sixpence a day from a grateful country for a twelvemonth, he made a fresh start in the world, with his chronic rheumatism and weak chest to help him along; and of course married on the strength of his prospects. This last was perhaps the most successful of his operations, for the old woman is steady

and industrious, and can tramp about with the cresses when he is laid on his back. Altogether our friend takes rather a cheerful view of the situation, and having finished his tea and slice, he hobbles off with his basket. His place is taken by a sturdy-looking man, in a well-worn corduroy-suit, who, looking round at the company, discovers an acquaintance in one of the battered-looking women already mentioned.

"Hallo, missus!" he cries; "how's George?"

The woman thus addressed frowns, purses up her mouth, and looks stonily towards the ceiling. The man in corduroys, not to be rebuffed, removes to a seat opposite the woman, and begins with lowered voice:

"What! there ain't nothing wrong with George now."

"Oh, don't talk to me about George," said the stony-visaged woman; "the last I saw of George was when he sold the horse and cart away from me, and as much as thirty pounds' worth of goods as I got together with hard work."

The man gathered himself together, eager to hear the story of his friend's delinquencies. "Hallo, what's George been a doing now?" And then the woman, nothing loth, poured into sympathetic ears the full tale of George's delinquencies.

To be fully appreciated, the story of wicked George should be heard with all its accessories. The triangular room, with its two sides of glass, and the sordid buildings of the Dials looking in upon it, with telegraph-wires crossing the roofs, and here and there from some upper window a greasy unkempt head looking down upon the street; the strange congress of these sordid buildings, with a gleam of morning sunshine bringing out their worn and battered squalor—all seeming to peer curiously into the doings of the new and strange companion, the latest dial of them all, with its unaccustomed air of rigid temperance and sobriety. But to return to George. There might have been a difficulty in living with a stony-faced woman, who had evidently a full command of flowing and vituperative language; but even an uncomfortable home did not justify him in selling the horse and cart to start a new and less regular partnership. No further exploits in this line, however, will be permitted to Master George. The law will now protect his wife's property, and if he

comes again on a similar errand, he will find himself in the hands of a stout policeman. "And a woman who can make her thirty shillings in a morning," cries the titular Mrs. George, slapping her pocket proudly, "ain't going to put up with a worthless scamp like that." And her female friend and toady—all capable and successful women are gifted with such a companion—her lady friend, and George's friend, who is ready from this moment to renounce him, both applaud her sentiments. And with all this sympathy and appreciation the stony-faced woman relaxes so far as to whisper something confidentially on either side, and the whole party go out with sudden cheerfulness, not without ulterior views towards beverages that are unobtainable at The Sundial. And as the company is now reduced to a couple of guests, one of whom is a small boy, bent upon covering as large an extent of time as possible with his tea and bread-and-butter, we will turn out to see what is going on in other establishments of the same kind.

First, to cross Westminster Bridge, where there is a continuous stream of workmen, with here and there among the motley free and easy costumes, the black coat of some foreman or clerk of works—for it is only seven o'clock, and the great army of commercial clerks has not yet thrown out its skirmishing line. The beauty of the morning is a little faded, and a thin smoke haze hangs about the roof-tops. But the sun shines redly over St. Thomas's Hospital, throwing the shadows of its separate buildings on the river; the river low and turbid, rushing on in a troubled, anxious mood, taking little brightness from the sunshine, but showing still more gloomy in the shadow; where here and there a patch of steely brightness is due to the sunbeams finding their way right through the opposite windows of some airy corridor or ward—sunbeams that have touched on their way, who can say how much suffering and pain? Behind us the sun lights up every gilded pinnacle of the great palace of Westminster, but fails to make cheerful the wide sombre frontage that looks all the more dusky and sombre for the gleams of gold about it. The long white line of the Embankment is touched by the sunshine, and a hazy indistinguishable background of buildings and spires make up the picture, with the turbid river, and the wide mud banks on the Surrey side, with black barges stranded along the shore, and men

knee-deep in the slush, raking and turning it over.

Along the road there is no want of facilities for breakfast. Little coffee-houses seem especially to swarm in this neighbourhood, with the same tariff of prices as their more showy rivals, each with its own connection, who find, perhaps, a touch of homely comfort in a stout untidy dame, who can be addressed as "mother" without offence, or perhaps a sharp wizened little proprietor, who has a nickname for all his customers, and is primed with sly allusions to their private affairs. But there is a capital cocoa-bar, too, where cocoa seems to be the favourite beverage—a bar well frequented and clean, with an attractive show of eatables displayed upon the counter. Here, too, you may sever yourself by a stroke of the pen from the unthinking beer-drinking majority, by signing the pledge upon a form that is waiting for you in the bar. But there is not much virtue in taking the pledge in a morning. The trial is when dinner-time approaches, and the problem has to be faced of what is to be drunk with the not very appetising viands.

Opposite the bar is a coffee-tavern, which also seems well supported, with its choice of partitioned coffee-room seats, with the usual cramped accommodation for the legs, and open tables with comfortable chairs. It is now upon the stroke of eight, and the tavern is evidently expecting its regular customers from adjoining works. The long tables are laid with knives and forks, and presently a bell rings outside, and the street is alive with men, a certain proportion of whom make straight for the coffee-tavern. These are superior workmen, though, foremen and skilled mechanics, who can afford a rasher of bacon and a fried egg for breakfast. The rasher of bacon costs twopence, and, as it would cost as much in its raw state at the dealer's, it is difficult to see how the price could be less. But in other matters the tariff of the tavern approaches very nearly that of the general run of cheap restaurants. To dine here will cost sixpence or sevenpence for a plate of meat, and the accessories will bring up the cost of the dinner to tenpence, which, considering the price of meat and the cost of fuel, is so little above prime cost, that only skilful wholesale buying, and thorough economy in the kitchen, can make a profit.

But even at breakfast many of the customers of the coffee-tavern rely upon the home commissariat for their eatables, and

opening their bundles, tied up in handkerchiefs, disclose sturdy slices of bread-and-butter, which they eat to the accompaniment of the tavern coffee or tea. There is a great demand for newspapers, of which the supply is liberal, but even the outside sheets are bespoke as soon as taken in hand, and that most enthralling of all selfish luxuries, breakfast eaten with the morning's paper balanced in front of the nose, is appreciated evidently to its full extent by the British workman. But then all this business occupies only half an hour, from eight to half-past, and to see any more of the general breakfast arrangements at other places it is necessary to be expeditious.

A little way farther east is the Victoria, the once well-known "Vic" of the theatrical enthusiasts of the New Cut. Here the scene is rather striking, as the great coffee-hall is entered, for it is really a fine room of the kind, and recalls some of the big popular cafés or beer saloons of the Continent. Just now the place is well filled, and the clatter of cups and saucers and the rattle of plates give a cheerful feeling of life and movement. There is no general roar of voices as you might hear in similar establishments in other lands. People give their orders in a subdued murmur at the bar, and carry their victuals away to eat and drink in the most secluded corners they can find. Labourers, with their sturdy legs bound round below the knees, and extremely dirty boots; workmen in their smeared and shabby working clothes; all are munching away as if for dear life, while, as the clock shows the half-hour, there is a general move for the door, and the big draughty room is left to the occupation of the more leisurely hawker or coster, who is the master of his own time, with none to fine him for being late. At the same time the young man of the establishment makes preparations for a sweep up, which, if anything like a thorough one, will disturb more dust and rubbish than one would like to face thus early in the morning.

But to fetch the Elephant and Castle in our next tack, is to share in a wonderful sight that nowhere else is to be seen in like proportions. Just as in the river-mouth, when the tide is beginning to move, there are all sorts of perplexing cross-currents and eddies, but when once the tide is in full swing there is a general onrush and swirl upwards, in which all else is merged—so here the general daily

rush into London has fairly set in, and overpowers all the other traffic. The footways are occupied by an unbroken column, all marching towards town, and the fair sex are now represented—girls with neat boots are stepping out with the rest. The trams, too, are loaded with passengers inside and out, each with a board marked "full" occupying a conspicuous position, while there is not a seat to be had on any omnibus going towards the City. But all these people have breakfasted at home, and have nothing to do with coffee-palaces. Nor shall we be likely to meet any of this well-dressed crowd at their midday meal, since for that we intend to return to our first love, the coffee-palace of Seven Dials.

A steadfast gloom hangs about the Dials that is not without its attractions. In fair or foul weather the place has much the same kind of jaded, unkempt appearance. The fair promise of morning could hardly brighten it up; and now the indifferent performance of midday, in the way of drizzling showers, does not seem to make it more dreary. It soon becomes evident that in the way of dinner St. Giles goes very much upon the same lines as breakfast. Tea and slices are still going on, although a bill of fare upon the door gives promise of roast beef at fourpence and sixpence, and other things to correspond. There are great bowls of mustard, too, on the tables, which were not there before, as if to lead the thoughts of customers in the direction of beef. Perhaps our thoughts are already too much that way inclined, but the pecuniary resources are wanting. "We'll have something light for our luncheon to-day, William," cries a facetious customer in well-worn velveteens, who looks like a hanger-on of the fancy, whether of quadrupeds or bipeds; but he is the first gay and light-hearted person we have met. "Something light and genteel, William, meaning to dine at our club later on." And the facetious fancier sits down to his half cup of tea, with a crust that he draws from his pocket, and begins his meal with a light heart, not a bit envious of his neighbour, a female of any age, with cold boiled-looking eyes, uncertain expression, and battered features—resembling a bit of stone that has been water-worn and rounded among pebbles—not envious of her supply of gingerbread, which is the most substantial part of her repast. And that is a pleasant thing about the Dials too. There are no times or seasons when meals must

come up as a regular thing. All is conveniently vague. If you choose to miss both dinner and supper it will not be thought strange. But there is a little excitement in the place when a man comes in—he may be a drover from his appearance—and demands beef-steak pie. The smell of that pie is rather too appetising, and the other customers look at it a little wolfishly. There is a good portion of it, and the gravy looks rich, and the crust is thick and substantial-looking. The fancier, by way of showing he doesn't mind, begins to tell a story—a funny story it seems by the man's sparkling expression as he tells it, beginning abruptly: "She ast the way to the police-station. 'Straight forrad,' says he, and she walks in, and, lo an' behold, it was a public-house!"

The palace cat now made his appearance, attracted probably by the fumes of the steak-pie; just such a cat as you might expect to find in the neighbourhood, a fighting, swaggering cat evidently, that has battled its way over all the cats of the Dials, and has come to be respected accordingly. An ordinary tabby would soon come to an evil end in the Dials, and our palace cat, with its strong-boned legs and lithe, powerful frame, and with the marks of a hundred combats on its sides, seems specially adapted to the conditions of a Seven Dials existence. As our fancy friend exclaims admiringly: "What that cat don't know ain't worth knowing."

The workman's dinner-hour comes and goes, and the clerk's dinner-hour has passed without bringing any great accession of custom to the palace. As before noticed this is hardly a neighbourhood where people dine, but customers are constantly coming in for the staple refreshment of the place, the "tea and alice" that form the chief diet of the poorer classes. As night comes on and work ceases there is still no great influx of customers. The mass of homeless poor who find a refuge for the night in common lodging-houses take their evening refreshment where they sleep; the rough sociability of the kitchens of such places is more attractive than the decorous atmosphere of the palace. And those who have homes to go to are not tempted to neglect them by the attractions of the coffee-palace. The latter has its own customers, however, for it supplies beds to single men, and attracts quiet men who do not care for the sulphurous atmosphere of the kitchen of the common lodging-house. Anyhow, the day ends quietly enough in the Dials, and

taverns and palaces close their doors at last, and leave the world outside to the homeless wanderer and the policeman.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXV. DEEPER STILL.

CAPTAIN EDGECUMB had had his talk out with Mrs. Ray, and the talk had been as perfectly satisfactory to both of them as such a discussion can ever be between the mother and the man. He had offered openly, promised magnificently, spoken manfully. He had given Mrs. Ray clearly to understand that he was no selfish idiot who would, in endeavouring to unite Jenifer with himself in their dearest interests in the future, attempt to detach her in the smallest degree from what had been her dearest interest in the past. He offered to identify himself with Jenifer in all that was needful, and to isolate himself whenever and wherever it would be expedient or discreet. In fact he rather overdid it, though he pleased Mrs. Ray well.

She on her side had been everything that was conciliatory, gracious, and hopeful. That Jenifer's happiness was her chief—indeed her one consideration—she made manifest to him from the commencement of the interview, and he had in reply said something pretty about the son-like feelings he was prepared to develop towards Mrs. Ray herself, from the moment her formal consent to his marriage with her daughter was given. He began asking her advice about the most desirable locality in which to take a house, and the best firm with whom to do it. As she knew as much about localities as she did of artistic firms, the advice she gave was of course duly valued.

But just as their amicable interview was drawing to a close, when he and she had become respectively as maternal and filial towards one another as was natural, Mrs. Ray sprang a mine unintentionally by saying:

"Why not think of a house at Richmond or near Richmond—one of those sweet places with gardens? Jenifer does so love a garden, and it would be such a pleasure to have her plants and flowers to attend to while you're away at your office."

"She won't have much time for that sort of thing when once she has appeared, if she's moderately lucky. What with studying and fulfilling engagements, it

would take too much out of her to be constantly running up to London, and of course her principal engagements will be in London. Just in the autumn or the off-season she may sing a little in the country. But her career will have to be followed up in London, you see; so in London, for her sake, we must live."

Mrs. Ray was too much aghast to make any reply, and Captain Edgcomb, in supreme ignorance of her consternation, went on:

"I'm naturally very anxious on the subject—have you any idea when she contemplates coming out? Our future arrangements must be regulated in a great measure by that important event. I'm afraid she'll insist on my being patient and waiting for the wedding to come off after it."

"I am getting old and obtuse. I can't have understood you aright," Mrs. Ray was saying, when Jenifer and Mr. Boldero came in; the former looking anything but elate at the sight of her lover, while the family solicitor and friend seemed more bewildered and depressed than he had ever looked before in all Mrs. Ray's experience of him.

Fortunately for them all, Captain Edgcomb took such a hopeful view of his own superiority that it did not occur to him to feel even alightly vexed, much less aggrieved or annoyed, at Mr. Boldero's appearance, even though he appeared with Jenifer. Boldero was the family solicitor. Boldero in course of time, when Jenifer and he, Captain Edgcomb, were married, and Jenifer was making a few hundreds a week by her singing, would probably be his solicitor too. On the whole, as he knew Jenifer would remain undemonstrative towards him even in solitude, he felt rather well than ill pleased that Boldero's presence on this first day of their engagement should give her a fair excuse for being so.

Still, for all Captain Edgcomb's complacent view and treatment of the situation, it was fraught with awkwardness for the other three, not one of whom could forget that Boldero had once applied for the place now successfully filled by the younger, more ardent, and impatient man. Nor could they forget either that though Mr. Boldero had withdrawn his application for the said place for the present, he had more than hinted that he should repeat it at a future and not far distant time.

And Jenifer remembered that when he had hinted this, she, in her indifference and in the absorbing interest her scheme of studying singing had for her, had

tacitly permitted him to feel that she would wait and keep free to entertain his application. Remembering this, she felt guilty of having acted unfairly towards him. And yet what could she have done? Captain Edgcomb's proposal had been made unexpectedly, at the very moment when she was feeling that her mother needed some more powerful protection against the rapacity of her other children than she, Jenifer, could be. It would have been to bring complications into, if not altogether to mar a plan that promised well for her mother, if she had deferred giving an answer until she had written to, and received an answer from, Mr. Boldero on the subject. Moreover, it would have been a difficult matter to set before him in plain English, and as Jenifer hated going in a roundabout way to work about anything, she could only have asked him straightforwardly: "What am I to do? Captain Edgcomb wants me to marry him soon, and will take great care of my mother. Had I better marry him now, or do you think it would be best for my mother that I should wait for you?"

No; on the face of it she could not have written such words as these. Yet no other form of words would have availed to put her dilemma and wishes clearly before him. She reviewed her own conduct, and criticised it impartially, while she was dressing for dinner, and honestly, she could not find herself to blame in anything but this—that she did not love Captain Edgcomb very much.

But then she loved no one else better. She liked him immensely, and no doubt would soon get used to the work of conducting a long conversation with him without the aid of "other people" or lawn-tennis. Besides, when they were married her mother would still be with her, to help her out in any little conversational stagnation trouble that might arise at the family breakfasts and dinners.

While she was taking comfort on this point, Mrs. Ray came in looking troubled.

"Captain Edgcomb spoke of you and of his hopes about you, Jenny dear, in a way that would have won me, even if I hadn't been predisposed to be won; but there's one thing that concerns me a little. He takes it for granted that you'll go on singing in public."

"Why, of course I shall," Jenifer cried. "I wouldn't give up that prospect, now it's drawing so near, for any man, however much I loved him."

I couldn't dream of giving it up; next to seeing you happy and comfortable, that will be the joy of my life."

"It mustn't be that, dear; you will have other nearer, dearer claims on you. My daughter mustn't be more artist than woman."

Then they spoke for a minute or two of the possibly awkward complication of Mr. Boldero's presence.

"Few men, looking forward to a quiet evening with the girl of his choice for the first time, would have greeted an intruder so amiably as Captain Edgcomb did Mr. Boldero," Mrs. Ray said admiringly.

"Did he? Well, do you know, mother, I couldn't help feeling when we came in as if Captain Edgcomb was the intruder. Perhaps that feeling will pass away."

"I hope so, I'm sure," Mrs. Ray murmured fervently.

Then they went down to dinner, and Jenifer had so many questions to ask about Moor Royal, and the region round it, that the time passed agreeably and quickly—for her.

A message had been sent by Mr. Boldero as soon as he entered the house to Mrs. Hatton, to the effect that he would call on her later in the evening. In reply, he had received a little note:

"DEAR JOHN,—Your visit will give me great pleasure. I have definite news to tell you at last. I suppose I ought to be overwhelmed with grief, but I am conscious of nothing but an overpowering sensation of peace when I tell you that I have had to-day authentic intelligence of my husband's death. You shall hear all to-night.—Yours always truly—"

She had written her note thus far when Ann, who stood by her, waiting for it, said sharply:

"Are you going to treat Mr. Boldero as the friend he is, and tell him all you think, dear missus, or are you only going to tell him what you told me after that man had been here to-day?"

"That is the latest—that is the only authentic intelligence I have to give him," Mrs. Hatton said, gently twisting her note up, unsigned as it was, in order that she might avert her head and avoid her old servant's gaze.

"Then if you believe it, ma'am, when shall I go out and order you widow's mourning?"

"Take that note, and don't—oh, pray don't torture me by going into ghastly details!"

"If what that man told you was true, you must wear widow's mourning, and someone must go out to order it for you," Ann said firmly. Then she took the note in to Mr. Boldero, and came back with the information that

"Captain Edgcomb is there, behaving as if he belonged there, as it's my belief he does; and Miss Jenifer's looking as if she liked talking to Mr. Boldero best."

"Ah!" Mrs. Hatton said impatiently, "I've other things to think about that are of more importance than Miss Jenifer's love-affairs."

It need only be told here that when Mr. Boldero's interview with his old friend Mrs. Hatton came to an end this evening, he left her with the firm conviction in his mind that she was justified in believing her husband to be dead.

"It's singular, though, that the man who is able to assure you of this fact should personally resemble your husband," he said reflectively, and Mrs. Hatton replied:

"It's more than singular, it's horrible! Can you remember much of Mr. Hatton?"

"To tell the truth, no," he said, fearing that though her husband had been a brute to her she would feel hurt with any one who after once seeing him had forgotten him.

"Perhaps, then, the likeness between Mr. Whittler, and my—and the late Mr. Hatton, would not strike you as it did me, even if you were to see him?"

She said these words in an almost inaudible voice, and he could not help being touched into thinking even better of her than he had ever thought before, by the evident emotion she felt in recalling her husband's memory, bad as he had been.

"You must remember that I saw so little of him, you mustn't think me either forgetful or careless when I confess to you that Mr. Hatton's personal appearance has passed from my memory altogether," he said kindly, and she had great difficulty in keeping back a gasping sigh of relief.

When he said good-night to her and went away, she placed herself in a low chair in the corner of the room that was most in shade, and rang the bell for Ann.

"Perhaps it will be well for you to see about getting those—those things for me to-morrow, Ann," she said. "Though he died long ago I must put on the signs of mourning for him now."

"And if I was you when I had put them on I would ask Mr. Whittler to come and see how you look in them. He ought to

have the satisfaction of knowing what store you set on his words."

"I never wish to see him again—never, never!" Mrs. Hatton sobbed, choosing to accept Ann's words as being spoken in sincerity rather than in sarcasm. Then she asked for her candle, and went away to bed, declining all offers of assistance from Ann.

That night she sobbed herself to sleep; but her tears were not for a dead husband!

In due time there came a box for Mrs. Hatton, with Josiah H. Whittler's compliments, for the first night of his appearance on the boards of an English theatre. Mrs. Hatton gave the box to Jenifer, and returned a note of thanks for it on paper with a deep black border. It was almost singular that when Mr. Josiah H. Whittler received this note, he almost whistled with amusement, and avowed to himself that the writer of it acted as well as he did himself.

As Jenifer happened to be seeing a good deal of Effie in these days, it came to pass that the group of four whom Mr. Whittler remarked with great interest in the box he had sent to Mrs. Hatton, were Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Ray, Jenifer, and Captain Edgecumb.

"That's the pretty girl I saw with her at Mrs. Campbell's collection," he thought, and he remembered that he had heard something about her intention of going on the boards—but what boards, whether musical or dramatic, he could not recall to mind. "I should like to have the training of her—with that face and figure, and my teaching, she'd do wonders," he told himself.

The reason of Jenifer's seeing a good deal of Effie in these days was as follows: The date of the concert which Miss Ray—assisted by Madame Voglio, Madame Mellini, etc.—was to give by kind permission of Mrs. Jervoise at the house of the latter, was finally fixed. Invitations by the score were issued, and in justice to Mrs. Jervoise and Effie, it must be said that they both worked with their most unceasing wills to secure a success.

Mrs. Jervoise spent a moderate fortune on tickets herself, and lavished them freely on the most fashionable people she knew.

Her spacious drawing-rooms were turned into a concert-room. Madame Voglio (who thought Jenifer's appearance premature, but who took the goods the gods gave her) was coaxed into consenting to accompany her pupil, the débutante, in two songs of her own (Madame Voglio's) composition. Madame Mellini, who was a world-renowned syren, the soul of good-nature, and had additionally around her the halo which is apt to be about the teachers of royalty, had consented to sing without any coaxing. Several promising professionals, late pupils of Madame Voglio's, gave their services. Mrs. Jervoise secured the presence of a lady, without whose presence everything in London that season was voted "a flat failure." Banks of flowers were to rise on either side of the guests from the moment they entered the house until they reached the concert-room. A banquet was to be given after the concert to all such of the performers, and as many of the inner circle of Mrs. Jervoise's most intimate friends as could be prevailed upon to stay. Everything, in short, that could have been done by enthusiastic, spasmodic partisanship had been done for Jenifer.

"She is to be a success, I've set my heart on it; and she will be a success, won't she?" Mrs. Jervoise would say to Madame Voglio, and madame would wave her plump white hands, and shake her head, and reply:

"Well, well, it will be a success in your house, but she should have waited, she should have waited——"

"Till when?" Mrs. Jervoise interposed sharply.

"Till I told her she had no need to study and wait any longer," Madame Voglio said, rearing her comically plain head and face up in a way that was more tragic than could have been effected by severe regular beauty; "but, perhaps, if she had waited—— Poor child, I cannot tell."

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER VI. FLIGHT.

LEERY seemed run to earth.

"It isn't the licking," said Bolus as he bitterly thought of the morrow; "but there's no end to this infernal thing."

"Oh, bosh!" said Leery, sitting on the table, swinging his legs freely, affecting an unconcern he didn't feel; "it'll not last long."

"I don't know what you call long," grumbled Cochin dismally. "He said he'd got through only the fifth of an inch to-day, and there's nineteen feet to these confounded Roman things."

"Five thousand years to an inch, he said; and he's only done one thousand out of five millions seven hundred thousand," piped a shrill-voiced youth named Peck, who was credited with a genius for figures.

Here was a vista of suffering!

"What rot!" exclaimed Leery contemptuously. "He must skip to the Romans. He hasn't got the things."

"He's got all those teeth, and he can call 'em any age he likes," said a saturnine Scotch youth, named Stirling, disconsolately.

"Except the horses' teeth; he can't change their age," interrupted Moffat, who was, of course, the wag.

But the joke was either not seen or not appreciated—the thing was past a joke.

"The long and the short of it is, we can't stand this thing longer, and we won't," said Bolus doggedly.

"Well, what will you do?" asked Leery.

"What will you do, you mean. It's your look-out, you know. Can't you bag

'em and burn 'em, or bury 'em, or send 'em back to Giggleswick?"

A grim joke.

"There'll be the devil to pay," objected Leery.

"You'll not have to pay it, you may swear. You always get off and let us in for it," with extreme bitterness.

"I tell you what, Bolus, you'll let yourself in for it in two minutes if you give me any more of your jaw," said Leery, leaping from the table and standing within demolishing distance of this exasperating little bantam.

Bolus would have retorted, and got licked for his pains, but for the intervention of Moffat.

"You be quiet, you little ass!" catching Bolus by the collar and thrusting him to the far side of him. "You'll get as much as you want to-morrow. Look here, Leery, there's no sense in it—can't you see yourself there's no sense in it? A fellow might stand it once in a way; but every half-holiday!"

"It was that infernal tawse" (tawse was the monstrous paper-knife). "If you hadn't gone and made a harpoon of it, and got a shilling each out of us, too!" said the Scotch youth sullenly.

"Come, we've had jaw enough," said Bolus. "It's about time it was stopped. If he won't bag the things," nodding towards Leery, "Kett must be got to throw 'em out, that's all."

There was no mistaking this threat; and, indeed, Bolus had already hinted at laying an information through Fet.

"Oh, I say, come; we'll have none of that," said a good-humoured, easy-going, phlegmatic youth named Hyslop, but known as "Porpoise." "No splitting; Leery will get us through, never fear."

The baited Leery, restored to good-

temper by this compliment to his resources, said in a conciliatory tone :

"I can shop the things safe enough, if that's all."

"But it's not all," growled the Scotch youth—a long-headed youth. "He'll stop the next holiday."

"I can do it without his suspecting us—if he's not put on to suspect us by spies and informers," returning Bolus's late nod.

"There, we've had talk enough about spying; it's only talk," said Porpoise. "No one's such an ass as to begin that game with Kett. Look here, boys, I vote we leave it to Leery."

Carried; and the house rose.

Leery did not feel the confidence he affected as to managing this business without Kett's suspecting the hand of the school in it. He revolved many plans in his mind that day; yet at night, when he went up to bed, he was still at sea. It happened, however, that one of the many battles, which were of frequent occurrence between the two dormitories, was planned for that night.

These dormitories were the mereat ribbons of rooms, long and slim, separated from each other by a short and slim passage—the scene of countless and terrific battles between the Bennites and the Voges.

The Bennites, the inhabitants of Archy's room, were so called from Benn, a hero of the old time before them, who had left a name at which the school grew pale.

The origin of the name Voges is not certain. The Bennites contended that it was originally "Hogs," the "V" being the digamma (in ancient Greek an aspirate); that thus Hogs became Voges, and that "Vogs" again was softened into "Voges." The Voges themselves, on the other hand, with, we must say, less plausibility, derived the word from "vogue" (fashion), so arrogating to themselves a higher social standing than their rivals.

Be this as it may, there was an immemorial feud between the two houses, which was put to the arbitrament of battle on many a stirring night. A law of honour compelled the use of one weapon only, but it was an effective weapon—the bolster supplied to each pillow, which, being filled two-thirds with bran, was good as a battle-axe, but as a thunderbolt was incomparable.

Now the Bennites, of whom were Archie, Leery, Cochin, and others, had the great good fortune of a general of genius on their side—Bolus—with the usual conse-

quence of perpetual discomfort. To-night, Bolus, either to vent the remains of his ill-temper, or to divert his thoughts from the morrow, resolved on the annihilation of the enemy. To this end he proposed an ambuscade to lie in wait on the staircase—which intersected the short passage—while he himself, accompanied only by his armour-bearer with a reserve bolster, would steal upon the foe, extinguish their candle by a discharge of his thunderbolt, and draw them on to pursue. At the narrow gate of his own city he would turn and face them, supported, like Horatius, by Lartius (Cochin) and Herminius (a youth named Sam Miggins), while the ambuscade were to rise and take the foe in their defenceless rear.

This plan was applauded by all but Leery, who, however, gave his side his moral support by going straight to bed. Bolus, having seen the main body of his forces properly disposed on the stairs, and Lartius and Herminius at the gate, set out with Archie—who though feeling very seedy, was pressed into the service as his armour-bearer—on his dim and perilous way. He crept like a panther along the passage, followed by Archie, holding all the breath he could spare; reached the unguarded gate of the enemy's city—left ajar as in profoundest peace; pushed it softly open with his left hand, while in his right was the poised thunderbolt. In another moment it dropped from his nerveless grasp, and he turned and fled as with the wings of the wind. He had heard his ambuscade rise behind him as one man, and scuttle back to their room, and he knew only too well it was Kett! Indeed, in the dark he shot bang against the principal in his precipitate retreat, and so staggered that gentleman that he recovered himself only in time to secure Archie. Him, trembling, he led back into the dormitory, sunk now in Arcadian peace. Most of the boys were in bed, lying, like alert soldiers, fast asleep, indeed, but in their clothes, ready to march at the first blast of the bugle. Bolus, we regret to say, was on his knees. He had not had time even to get to bed. Kett, having knocked Archie down with a single blow on the side of the head, glared round for other victims, but seeing Bolus buried in devotion, he had in common decency to wait till he rose. One minute passed, two, three—it seemed an hour, but Bolus clung yet to the horns of the altar, and the morning probably would have found him praying still if it

had found Kett still watching. Kett raised the siege. Turning suddenly and savagely on Archie, who stood as though paralysed, staring and blinking at him, he struck the child again, and muttering but one awful word, which in the breathless stillness the whole dormitory heard, and hearing, shuddered at—"To-morrow"—he left the room, locking the door behind him. They heard him then limp along the passage to the other dormitory, lock its door also, and stumble down the stairs, for he seemed to fall over something. Then the boys ventured to creep out of bed and undress swiftly, speaking in whispers; but before the last of them had got again into bed, Leery started up, moved by a sudden inspiration.

"By Jove! I have it, Cochin!"

"What?"

"I can shop the things to-night, and he'll never suspect us, as we're locked in."

"Bosh! with the windows barred!"

"There's the ventilator. I believe Zeb could squeeze through and unlock the door."

Poor Zeb quaked. The wretched child had gone through more and keener suffering in the last two months than many have to go through in a lifetime. The ventilator was not in the ceiling, but over the door, where it paid a double debt as a passage, not for air only, but for sound, through which Kett, when eavesdropping, could overhear what was going on in the dormitory.

"Zeb's had enough," said Cochin shortly.

"He's only to unlock the door, if he can get through. It's our one chance of shopping the things without Kett's suspecting us."

"Zeb's a brick—he'll do it," said Bolus, whose anxiety to have done with the museum for ever was intense.

"He's nothing to do," said Leery petulantly. "He's only to drop down, unlock the door, and get to bed again."

"What do you say, Pete?"

Pete was Cochin's pet-name for Archie. He knew that if Archie didn't attempt this thing he would be held up to universal odium, and, after all, there was really no risk in it.

"I'll try if you like, Cochin," in a resigned voice.

"But you're not going for the things now, with Kett on the prowl, Leery?" asked Cochin.

"No, but if Zeb turned the key now I needn't wake him up by-and-by."

This was reasonable, and considerate even.

"Well, Pete, you might try it, old man!"

"Yes, Cochin."

He hadn't much heart for the enterprise, you may be sure, but there was nothing he wouldn't attempt at the bidding of Cochin.

They feared to move a bed to the door, lest the noise might attract Kett, so a levy was made on all the mattresses, which were piled up for Leery to stand on with Archie upon his shoulders. Archie was thus raised to within reach of the ventilator, which he found he could just, and only just, squeeze through. Next moment he dropped down at the other side of the door and felt for the key.

It was gone! Kett had taken it out of the lock.

"He's taken the key!" exclaimed Archie in a faltering whisper through the keyhole.

There was a silence of consternation for a moment, broken by Leery.

"Fetch a sheet to haul him up by."

Cochin shot off for the sheet, but was met, on his return with it, by the rest hurrying back, each dragging his mattress, like ants with their pupæ, when their nest is disturbed.

"Kett!"

Poor Archie was caught like a rat in a trap, between two locked doors and the staircase, up which Kett was coming, candle in one hand, cane in the other.

The principal, on descending the stairs in the dark, stumbled over a bolster, which one of the ambuscade had dropped in the panic, and came down the rest of the flight by the run, his gouty foot seeming to tread on red-hot needles at each step. He managed to crawl into the library, and sat there for some minutes, biting his nails and grinning with impotent rage. Pain is said to quicken the faculties, and it was, perhaps, the lurid light of the fires of suffering which showed Kett in a moment, and as by an inspiration, that it was none other than the devout Bolus who nearly knocked him over in the passage. He wouldn't—he couldn't wait till to-morrow to ascertain this. He wouldn't wait even till he could put his gouty foot without torture to the ground. He waited only till he could hobble without absolutely intolerable torture; then, fetching a candle and a cane, he groaned his way up the stairs to make the dread inquisition.

Archie, as Kett approached, was so

terrified as to lose all sense of terror. A charitable stupefaction numbed every other sense but that of a kind of dull yet fascinated curiosity. It was as though he was watching and waiting for the dread death of another and lower creature—a hare in the jaws of a hound. And even this he seemed to watch in a kind of oppressive dream—in that kind of nightmare when we cannot stir foot or finger, or utter a cry. If Kett had asked him what he did, or how he got there, he couldn't have answered. But Kett was too inarticulate to say more than "You!—again!" Then followed what would be harrowing to describe.

Even Kett, when he had spent his fury on the child, was ashamed. With a hand that trembled so that he could hardly fit the key into the lock, he opened the door and then walked away.

"He's all wet!" said Cochin, as he raised Archie in his arms. "It's—it's blood!"

"Hush! he'll hear you."

"Hear me! He'll have to hear me, and others will have to hear me. He's—Leery, lift him up; I can't do it."

And poor Cochin leant against the door, sobbing with a mixed emotion of rage and pity.

"I can get up myself," said Archie. "Please don't, Cochin," picking himself up as if nothing had happened, and putting his hand soothingly on Cochin's arm. "I'm not much hurt—I'm not, indeed." And, indeed, at the moment he didn't feel as if he was.

Cochin answered only by putting his arm tenderly round the child, and half leading, half carrying him to bed.

"Strike a light, some of you, and bring the candle here," he said when he had somewhat recovered mastery over himself.

"Oh, don't, don't!" cried Archie in an agony of terror. "He'll come back."

"He! He daren't!" hissed Cochin through his clenched teeth. But Archie's terror was so wild, and almost delirious, that Cochin had to countermand his order.

"There, Pete, there—it's all right. He's not going to light it. There, lie down, young 'un," pressing his cheek, wet with a tear, against Archie's for a moment before he drew him gently back to the pillow. For his own part, Cochin was glad of the darkness, he was so unmanned—a mood much more discreditable to a boy than to a man. "Shut up, you fellows!" he said

gruffly, so reasserting his manliness. "Let him get to sleep if he can."

The fellows, who were whispering praises of Archie's supposed pluck, responded by a subdued "Good-night, Zeb," uttered in various tones of sympathy.

"Good-night, thank you," replied Archie, surprised by this universal sympathy.

In truth he didn't deserve the praise he got for pluck or even for fortitude, for his punishment was so severe that he didn't feel it much at first. For, of course, a light mental or physical shock is felt more at first than a severe one. Nature is a merciful though exacting creditor in these matters, and spreads the payment of a heavier debt over a longer time; she makes us pay all, indeed, but she has patience with us till we can pay her all. Archie was paying but the first instalment to-night, and persuaded himself, and at last persuaded even Cochin, that he wasn't much hurt. But he was badly bruised and cut, and couldn't lie in any position without pain, which seemed to increase as the long night went on. He dozed a little now and then, but such sleep as he had was so light that pain showed through it as through a veil—dimmed, but perceptible—and, worse than pain, a nightmare terror, formless, nameless, horrible, lay in wait for him in sleep, like a wild beast hid in darkness—unseen, but felt to be near and coming nearer and about to spring. Then he woke with a start, which set all his bruises throbbing together. But even on waking his pain was nothing to his terror, only less horrible to him, in so far as it was less indefinite, than his nightmare. In truth, his terror of Kett almost amounted to madness. When he woke the formless horror of the nightmare was replaced by a vision of Kett's furious face glaring at him, look where he would, or shut his eyes as he would; and when this grisly spectre fled away on the wings of darkness at the dawn, it was replaced by the dread daylight certainty of being again face to face with the man in a few hours.

The last supreme terror grew with the growing light till it possessed him like delirium. He got up and began to dress. He couldn't get his night-shirt off without tearing open the wounds it was glued to, so it had to answer for a day-shirt. When he had huddled on the rest of his clothes in a frenzied hurry, and had run as though pursued to the door of the dormitory, he stopped suddenly, turned back, stole to Cochin's bed, took out his knife—his

joy and pride—fumbled among Cochin's clothes till he found his waistcoat, slipped the knife into the pocket, crept to the head of the bed, stooped and kissed his sleeping friend—he was but a child—and made once more for the door. His thinking of Cochin at all at this moment spoke more for his love and loyalty than the present or the kiss, for he was, as we say, as one possessed. He sped headlong down the stairs, along the corridor at its foot—which led through the house to the school premises—and up the play-room stairs to the box-room. He opened his box, took out a cap, and a pair of boots, and a little bundle of letters from his mother. Having put on the cap and boots, and pocketed the letters, he stole down, slowly and cautiously now (for he was no longer in his stocking-feet, and there was method in his madness), and crept into his old refuge under the stairs. In this hole there was a little window which he had often opened to hear and see better the boys at play. It opened like a little door by lifting a latch. He opened it, squeezed through, and dropped into the play-ground. Looking up for a moment to make sure that all the windows which looked out upon it were still blind, he ran across it, climbed the wall, dropped into the field beyond, and through it reached the road. It was a wild morning, and his cap blew off as he was crossing the last wall, but he never turned aside to follow it. He ran on full speed—whither he did not know, or think about, or care, so long as it was away from Kett.

A KAFFIR TOAD.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THE name of Wisden is grateful to very many of those who dwelt on the diamond-fields in my time. For, years before "the rush," a family so called had been settled at Annandale, half-way betwixt Hopetown and Dutoitspan. When twenty thousand diggers on one side clamorously bid for fruit and vegetables, whilst a brisk young township on the other demanded a greater allowance week by week, the farmer, a thoughtful man, divided his cares and responsibilities. He took his daughters into partnership, assigning them the dairy, poultry-yard, and garden, and, as the elders married, he brought from home new scions of his pleasant stock—girls every one. How many young ladies dwelt at Annandale about the time of my story I do not recollect, if I ever knew. Not less than

half-a-dozen certainly—all fair, young, quick of speech and smile, more or less pretty. Until supper-time, at five o'clock, they were supposed to be invisible to guests. One fitfully caught a glimpse of clean cotton skirts pinned back, slender white arms bare; one heard musical cries and girlish bursts of laughter, and snatches of song. Once I met the eldest, Grace, carrying a milk-pail and a scrubbing-brush. She was not at all embarrassed, but much too busy for chat.

The house stood behind and between two large dams, or pools, formed, not by digging, but by stopping an outflow of the natural drainage. Their banks stood fifteen feet high over against the front door, sadly blocking the outlook. In a country less wholesome, fever and ague would have made their home in Annandale. The approach led straight between these dams to a stoop, mantled with creepers, that ran along the house-front. Here, at morn and dewy eve, sat Grandfather Wisden, armed with a catapult. For shepherds and grooms, Totty servant-girls, drovers, diggers on the tramp, made rendezvous for gossip at the shallow end of the pools, where the patriarch bombarded them. To right of the building lay a garden, hedged with pomegranates, always in flower, as it seemed to us. Its walks were shaded with peach-trees; vines grew everywhere, and any quantity of grapes might be commandeered without the formality of asking. There was always sunshine and always shade at Annandale.

Appreciative visitors were never lacking at such short distance from the fields. All the hospitable Wisden asked was a note of introduction from some person of responsibility, which successful diggers obtained with ease. Never did we hear of a guest misbehaving, drunken or quarrelsome as he might be in camp. Nearly all agreed in respectful adoration of one or other of the young ladies.

Grace was reckoned prettiest and admitted cleverest of the bevy. Among her worshippers I must name Skinner, of the Colesberg Kopje—"Bang Skinner," we called him—and Hutchinson. The former was a loud-laughing, fresh-coloured, happy sort of fellow, generally liked of men, and a favourite declared of the gods. He knew nothing of diamonds when he came among us, and he never learned a morsel. It was not necessary. Two men worked a hole, nine feet by four, adjoining my claim.

The day after Bang's arrival at the Colesberg Kopje he fell in with them, and straightway bought their patch for nine hundred pounds, the sum remaining out of a thousand which his kinsfolk had raised—perhaps to get rid of him. After paying the registration-dues and the first month's licence, he had not a farthing left, and the sellers stood him breakfast. It was Saturday, when no digger works. To amuse himself, Bang borrowed a pick and pail. What he brought to bank at dusk he had no precise idea, but the diamond-koopers did not suspect his ignorance. At dinner that night, in glee rather than triumph, the fellow showed us a roll of bank-notes—just nine hundred pounds they represented! Forthwith he took position in the set that called a six-carat stone a "tizzy."

Hutchinson I had known at home, when he was a subaltern in a Lancer regiment. What follies or misfortunes drove him into our society I have forgotten, but he did not find luck there. After working like a mole on Bultfontein, his health was broken by those ills the unsuccessful digger cannot escape—filth, exposure, despair, unwholesome living. Hutchinson fell back on the deserted river-camps. Pleasant scenery they gave him, and this at first was medicine for a lad who came from the sweltering, lime-white, thirsty veldt. But the fare is harder; the work has its own attendant miseries, river-boil and rheumatism, more painful if less deadly than those of dry digging. When I left the fields, eighteen months later, Hutchinson had not seen a diamond of his own—but what hideous heaps belonging to other people!

So far as we disinterested ones could judge, Grace did not care for either in especial. Hutchinson had advantages, however, besides good looks and pleasant manner. He came from the neighbourhood of Wisden's birthplace, and he brought an introduction very different to those supplied by Cape Town bankers and Port Elizabeth wool-dealers. Grace remembered nothing of the old country, but perhaps she loved it none the less for that. The elder generation of the family were enthusiastic in welcome, and Hutchinson constantly rode over until I sold my horses, going home. Then he starved for a month to economise the money for a coach-ticket to Hopetown, and tramped to Annandale from the nearest point on the high road. Such eccentricity might not cause suspicion

once, but it could not be repeated; the man who walks fifteen miles across the veldt must be mad or in love—and miserably poor anyhow. After three blissful days, Wisden lent him a horse for the back journey. Some weeks later Hutchinson found a Boer who passed Annandale, and in his waggon got a lift, paying for it by making himself useful with a drove of sheep. Grace was absent, visiting a sister! After that disappointment—how hard nobody can tell who has not been in love, and penniless, and ill, and despairing—he gave up. What good, after all, to torment oneself for a pleasure that turned to pain in the enjoyment! Miss Wisden did not care for him.

To work single-handed on the river is mere tempting of the demon rheumatism. The bucket must be filled knee-deep in the stream, the cradle must be sluiced, and then, dripping from head to foot, the digger must seat himself at the sorting-board. But Hutchinson had no mate. A Kafir he kept, such a poverty-stricken wretch as his means could support for a little while longer. Very ugly and stupid was this poor fellow, distinguished from all young blacks I ever saw by the irregularity and badness of his teeth. I could not describe the unpleasant oddity of Stump's appearance when, opening his huge lips to laugh, he showed jaws gapped and discoloured. But Stump was attached to the master he had served two years, and Hutchinson valued his dumb friendship. Unlucky master and scarecrow man were not ill-matched, people said. Day after day, month after month, their record of failure dragged its miserable length along. The time was now hourly approaching when Hutchinson's last penny would be spent, and he must lie down to die. He would not return to the pitiless, feverish, dry diggings. Better to starve here in his ragged tent beneath the murmuring trees. To that point had the wasting of sickness brought him.

He sat at his table by the river brink, and sorted hopelessly. Stump brought a dripping-pail from the shallow, poured it clashing in the cradle, rocked and rocked, threw out successive trays, and emptied the residuum, wet and glistening, on his master's board. Lovely pebbles were there, of every hue saving the blurred white of the river diamond. Hutchinson worked mechanically, scraping from the margin of the heap, smoothing the shingle, and dropping it over the edge, between his

knees. Meanwhile eyes and thoughts wandered.

Gems are not found by such a method as this, but the chances of diamond-digging are endless. On a certain afternoon, as Hutchinson listlessly watched his boy throw out the trays, he saw something that made his heart leap. In the next pulse it sickened—for when did luck visit that claim? But he rose, found the object, stared gasping, hugged it and ran into a glint of sunshine. A diamond at last, of macle shape, weighing some twenty carats!

Stump showed his joy by dancing, whirling, and howling, with an awful frown upon his brow. When Hutchinson came to himself, he resolved to tramp to Pniel, whence a coach or a post-cart would carry him to Hopetown. Stump he left in charge of the ragged tent, the worthless clothes and tools, with a fortnight's store of mealies, and a shilling to buy offal for the weekly feast. Forthwith Hutchinson started.

Before emerging from the narrow fringe of trees that borders the Vaal river, he came upon a waggon of singular appearance. In place of tilt it had a roof and panelled walls, adorned with pictures of the most brilliant colouring. Wild beasts were there depicted alternately with black warriors and white beauties, alike arrayed in feathers and nothing else. These works of art had suffered shockingly from sunshine, and whirling sand, and thorns of the bush. By a little tent alongside a huge Boer sat smoking, and a bush-boy—dwarfed, naked, misshapen—restlessly pried about. Everything in the small camp declared the Kaffir trader returning homewards.

In ten minutes more Hutchinson saw the blazing veldt outspread, a grey expanse barred with stripes of white and yellow blossom in the near distance, fading out of sight. Where the horizon should be, stretched pools of mirage. Flat-topped hills hung above them, like stains in the pallid sky. No object in the scene stood out, excepting a man's own shadow. Smooth as a floor the waste appeared, though each of those shining bars marked the crest of a wave invisible. Now and again, though no wind blew, the sand lifted, whirled up to form a little dusky pillar, danced a few yards, and dropped. A melancholy land indeed to traverse in the glare of African summer!

For the comprehension of those who have neither digger's nor trader's experience, I

must tell what is a "macle" stone. This form of diamond, unusual but not rare, is in fact a double triangle, the one lying smoothly and exactly on the other, adhering firmly; a slight blow on the line of junction will make them fly apart. A large macle, unflawed, is commonly worth more than a single crystal of the same weight, since there is small waste in cutting it. Diggers do not like this form, however. Flat on top and bottom, a macle is much more easily concealed by a dishonest servant than is the plumper stone.

Four mounted Kaffirs overtook Hutchinson before he had gone far, and paused at his hail. They were Dutch-speaking Battapins, of Jantje's Kraal, rough as burly, but not ill-natured. For a shilling they gave him a mount on one of the led horses, and he reached Jardine's hotel by nine o'clock. Forty-eight hours afterwards his prize was sold to Schlessinger, of Hopetown, for two hundred pounds. He bought some clothes, hired a horse, and once more dismounted at Annandale.

The Wisden family were so delighted to see him, so shocked at his pallor and thinness, so anxious that he should remain till his strength was quite restored, that Hutchinson reproached himself for certain doubts and hesitations. Within five minutes of arrival he had made up his mind to tell Grace how he loved her. The young man was not a fool. He knew that two thousand pounds would hardly justify pretension to Miss Wisden's hand, and he had less than a tithe of that sum. But his luck had broken. If Grace would only hear him, and wait a few months, he would outshine Skinner in the display of gems which was often laid upon the table after supper.

That favourite of fortune had been staying a week at Annandale, but he left early on the second day after Hutchinson arrived. During that time no opportunity arose to speak with Grace, and another day passed by, happily, but anxiously. Next morning the young man went out before breakfast to shoot plovers; Wisden met him on the stoop returning, and took his arm.

"My dear boy," said he, "did you yourself find that macle stone you told us of?"

"Yes, in my own claim. Why?"

"I was sure you said so. Well, Schlessinger has brought a Dutchman who swears that he found it, the very same diamond, on Monday evening, and it was stolen from his tent that night."

"Confound his impudence! Where is he?"

"Keep your temper, my boy. These unfortunate mistakes will occur sometimes."

But it was too much that his single stroke of fortune should be suspected thus. Hutchinson went in raging. In the boer he recognised the owner of that ornamental waggon left behind at the river.

"What's all this, Schlessinger?" he asked roughly.

"I tell you flat, sir, Mr. de Ruyter is my old friend and client. He outspanned near your claim on Monday, with his pack of Kaffir produce. In evening time he washed some stuff, just for pleasure, and he found a macle. Mr. de Ruyter is a trader, not prudent. He showed the stone in camp, and so that night his tent was cut, and his belt commandeered. After a fuss Mr. de Ruyter comes to me at Hopetown, and tells me. Then I think it right to show him the diamond I bought from you. So here we are. That's all my say."

"I swear to him," the big Dutchman roared, "by his broke brads un' scrats."

"How dare you ask me for an explanation of this cock-and-bull story, Schlessinger? You know that nine macles in ten have their angles broken, and all are scratched in the river."

"That's as may be!" he replied with warmth. "Mr. de Ruyter says your boy was creeping round his tent."

"Ya! Mine bush-boy see thy dom Kaffir skellum!"

"Why didn't you bring him along if you suspect him?"

"Dom! Skellum not to catch. Look here, man, I take my diamond!"

"Find it and welcome. But if either of you says another word I'll knock your heads together."

Wisden gripped his young friend just in time.

"Make allowances," said he. "These gentlemen are honest, and one of them has been wronged. When did you find your stone?"

"I am ashamed to offer an explanation, sir. At what hour did you find yours, De Ruyter?"

"To sundown."

"And you lost it after going to bed, at nine o'clock, say. At ten o'clock, Mr. Wisden, I reached Jardine's hotel, in Pniel, as Jardine and twenty men in the bar will testify."

"I suppose you don't want a stronger alibi than that?" asked Wisden.

"Not at all!" said Schlessinger hastily; "I apologise, sir. As matter of form we will enquire. Good-morning, gentlemen. Where there's no ill-will there should be no grudge. Mr. Hutchinson, happy to do business with you at any time." He departed, dragging out Mr. de Ruyter, who wanted, with many oaths, to know why and how matters were thus settled. Arguing in high and low German the pair rode off.

"No worse than a droll incident so far as you are concerned," said Wisden. "But I should be almost afraid the Dutchman was not quite out."

"I won't suspect Stump, sir. He has stood by me like an honest man through hard times—terribly hard times. I should begin to fear for myself almost if Stump went wrong."

"Well, I didn't understand that the bush-boy had seen the theft. Still, those imps are born spies and detectives. I should look up Stump."

"We don't even know that De Ruyter ever had a diamond. The camps will roar from Gong Gong to New Rush when they hear of his broke brads and scrats."

They had wandered into the garden, and seated themselves upon a bench. White arms round his neck, a fresh face pressed to his, obstructed Wisden's reply.

"Good-morning, father; good-morning, Mr. Hutchinson. Did you intend those plovers for any one in particular? If so, it was injudicious to leave them about in such a hungry house as this."

"I laid them on the stoop for our general benefit," said he.

"Then you won't suspect me of stealing them? Oh yes, father, I have been listening at the window. Good girls don't listen, which is almost a pity sometimes. For I can tell you something, Mr. Hutchinson. Stump was here yesterday morning."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Oh yes; I saw him from my window while I dressed, talking to Mr. Skinner's groom. If you doubt me, ask father."

This was a little household saying which imputed that Wisden would always back his daughter Graca. He said now:

"She may be wrong, Hutchinson, but if it were my own case, I should believe her right until the contrary was proved."

"It's very strange, certainly. Stump has no business here, and that he should stop twenty-four hours without communicating with me, beats all explanation."

"I meant to tell you yesterday, but I

forgot," Grace continued; "Stump walked away from the dam with Sinclair, and I've not seen him since. But we'll ask the Totty girls."

She ran away, eager and graceful as Iris. The South African household is terribly observant within its purview. Grace soon came back with a whole series of reports. The toothless Kaffir was resting at the dam when the servant-girls turned out. Whilst they chatted with him, Sinclair arrived with his master's horses, and the men met like old acquaintances. An hour afterwards Stump was seen going towards Pniel alone.

After thinking over this odd story, Hutchinson appealed to Grace; Wisden had been called away. She replied:

"My opinion is, that in justice to all parties, you should find Stump."

"I will start to-morrow."

"I should start to-day."

"It is so hard to break up one's holiday. You cannot know how despairingly I have pictured this bright scene, and—and your bright face—hour by hour, week after week."

"But you will come back in three days," she answered, leading him towards the house, "with an easy mind, to stay as long as you please. Father and everyone will be sorry to see you go."

"You also?"

"As much as any of your friends."

"I want more than friendship from you, Grace. It was you I dreamed of, you who made the place so bright, you who make it brighter even than I fancied."

"What is the use of this, Mr. Hutchinson?" she asked, looking at him steadily, not severely.

"No use if it annoys you. If you say that, I will never speak of it again."

"I asked what is the use; if you had annoyed me I should have spoken differently. Working girls learn that it is no use to talk of things that can never be, even though one might like it. And I do not like to hear you speak in this tone, Mr. Hutchinson."

"Because it's no use? Oh, tell me that. Could you bear to hear it if things were otherwise?"

"You have no right to ask. But I will answer in perfect frankness and truth that I do not know. Don't misunderstand. If you were rich, I should have to think and observe, and to put questions to myself which there is no need for now, and which I have certainly not thought of."

"Because I am poor?" he said bitterly.

"Because you never used this tone before."

"But I do now."

"And now I say there is no need to think before replying." She resolutely walked into the house.

All through breakfast Hutchinson turned these words over, while the merry girls pretended to believe that conscience was preying on him. Grace had spoken sensibly from the point of view she chose. But if prudence were the first question, he had much better have addressed her father. So he did. Wisden listened in some distress, but greater astonishment. He gently hinted that the lover had no prospects; then, more strongly, that Grace's fortune was not small; at length, when Hutchinson persisted, that Skinner was the destined husband.

"I don't believe it! That is—— I beg your pardon, sir. Miss Wisden would not have answered as she did, if she meant to marry anyone at present."

"I like you, my boy," said the father grimly, "but confound your impudence! So you've been talking to Grace? Well, I can venture to stand by my daughter's words."

"They came to this, sir, as I understood, that if I were rich she might think of it."

"Very proper; but not put in those words, I think. No; I supposed not. Well, what Grace says, I stick to. You are a good young fellow, but you aren't rich; Skinner is a good young fellow, and he is rich; that's how the matter stands! Now, you can't alter that, can you? Then what's the good of talk that may end in a quarrel, which would deeply grieve us all?"

No good, if such were the feelings appealed to. Very wretched was Hutchinson as he rode away at noon.

IN THE GOLDEN GLOW.

Lo! broken up and melted is the sky
Into an ocean of immensity,
Where golden islands swim in golden light
Too vast and shining-clear for mortal sight;

And day is ebbing far; but, ere it goes,
All the deep passion of its splendour flows
About thy beauty in a rolling tide
Straight from heaven's gates, and thou art glorified.

Oh, that the burning sunset could but speak
Those burning thoughts for which all words are weak;
Could tell how my whole love to thee is given,
Quenchless and pure as very fire from heaven!

Ah! lift the wonders of that amber hair,
And turn on me thine eyes, oh, sweet and fair!
And let their pity meet the love in mine—
Pity and love akin, and both divine!

A BOARDING-HOUSE ROMANCE.

A STORY IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VIII.

IF Trevelyan had felt downcast at the small progress he had made in his love-affair thus far, even his American ideas of speed might have been satisfied with the rapid headway he made during the first week of Gräfin Rolandseck's convalescence.

Gabrielle came down to dinner every evening, and soon began to feel that her enjoyment was increased in no small measure by the unspoken welcome which always shone out of Mr. Trevelyan's eyes, and by the consciousness that he had a high opinion of her character and understanding.

The better she knew him the more she learned to appreciate his powers of mind, until by degrees her proud toleration of him as an American and a Radical had changed into respect for a mental superior, and Trevelyan's good opinion, which she would at first have thought worth no more than his bad one, had become a thing to be desired—an honour.

They had plenty of subjects of conversation in common now, for Trevelyan had assured her that her knowledge of English could not be considered complete until she had some acquaintance with American literature, and though secretly sceptical, common politeness forbade Gabrielle to refuse his offer of the loan of a volume of Emerson's Essays. In a few days Mr. Trevelyan had the gratification of hearing that she was so agreeably surprised by that author as to be anxious to read anything more of his that she could meet with.

A day soon came when, leaning upon her daughter's arm, Gräfin Rolandseck came among the company once more. It was not till then that Trevelyan realised how much ground he had gained with Gabrielle in her absence, but he realised something less agreeable at the same time—with what chilling haughtiness the old Gräfin treated him, and how her conduct seemed to affect Gabrielle to a certain degree. It was as though she had suddenly begun to fear that she had been a little too unreserved in her intercourse with the American. The change in her manner was very slight, but there was a change, though it escaped all eyes but Trevelyan's. Even Gustel did not remark it, who, in her character of a "woman scorned" and naturally sighing for revenge, would have scored a little triumph if she had done so.

It should be said that Gustel Sommerrock's feelings with regard to Mr. Trevelyan had lately undergone a violent revulsion; she believed that she now despised and hated him, and she attributed her being so averse to a marriage between him and Gräfin Gabrielle solely to her solicitude for that young lady's welfare.

When dinner was over, Gräfin Rolandseck was gracious enough to accept the offer of Mr. Trevelyan's arm upstairs. She relinquished it with a bow when they reached the top, and took her daughter's along the passage. She had not gone many steps before, hearing her name spoken, she looked round.

"It is only Gustel with a servant," explained Gabrielle, who recognised the voices.

But Gräfin Rolandseck had suddenly stopped in her walk, and turned towards her daughter with such surprise and indignation in her face that Gabrielle turned instinctively, wondering what could have happened of such a dreadful nature in so short a time.

Mr. Trevelyan was the only person behind them, he was hastening to his room. Their eyes met, and to her surprise the American looked oddly discomfited.

When they entered their own room, Gabrielle's first words were:

"How odd of Mr. Trevelyan, mother."

"Odd? Disgraceful, you mean! Of course we can have no idea whose the handkerchief may be, but to kiss it in that manner in a public passage is ill-bred and ridiculous to a degree. Pray whom may he be in love with—Gustel, or one of the maids?"

"What, mother! Kissing a handkerchief?" exclaimed Gabrielle with mingled incredulity and scorn, and with a secret unreasonable feeling of being personally slighted by such an act.

"Kissing a handkerchief, my dear. Perhaps you had better feel if you have yours about you," she added with a satirical smile.

"Mother!" cried Gabrielle indignantly. She put her hand into her pocket to prove the utter absurdity of the suggestion, but she took it out slowly with a very blank expression. She did not say anything.

Nor did Gräfin Rolandseck; she only curled her lip, and looked out of the window, deep mortification stamped upon her face. In a little time she turned and looked sympathisingly at her daughter.

"Never mind, my child; don't dwell upon the insult; such things will happen in travelling. You can buy everything but select society. The matter is not worth a second thought; we have simply to leave to-morrow or next day, and meantime we can keep to our rooms."

"Yes; since this has happened we had better go," said Gabrielle slowly.

"You might study the guide at once, dear. There are places in the Tyrol that you want to see. I will go anywhere you like, provided that we can make the journey by easy stages."

Gabrielle took up a Baedeker in obedience to her mother, but it was not of the Austrian Tyrol that she was thinking—she was thinking that trivial as that one action was in itself, perhaps Trevelyan really cared for her. On looking back she recalled things in his conduct that made her think he did, and struggle against the conviction as she might, it was breaking in upon her that he was a man for whom she could have learned to care in return, had her fate permitted it.

As it was, her mother was right, they must stay here no longer. Nevertheless, for the first time these sudden marching orders jarred upon her painfully; she feared that this would be no common change, but an uprooting of her heart.

George Trevelyan was pacing up and down his room in a state of bitter chagrin.

He was reflecting that the folly of a moment had in all probability ruined his whole future. He knew that he had betrayed himself in a manner that could not fail to tell very greatly to his disadvantage, even under circumstances much more favourable than his own. That look of Gräfin Rolandseck's had inspired him with some of the contempt for himself that it expressed on her part. What could have possessed him to act like such a fool? he asked himself in blank wonder. He spent the greater part of the night in vainly endeavouring to solve the problem, and when at last he threw himself on his bed it continued to haunt him in dreams.

It was so late when he entered the dining-room the next morning that everyone had already breakfasted, and the room was deserted until Frau Sommerrock came in to make his coffee.

"You will have your old room again very soon, Herr Trevelyan," she said pleasantly as she handed him his tea-cup, "Gräfin Rolandseck has just been telling

me that she is suddenly called away. She leaves to-morrow."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Trevelyan indifferently, but he fixed his eyes on Frau Sommerrock's face rather curiously. After a short silence he spoke again.

"I shall not be in for dinner this evening, madame. I mean to see that pretty bit of the lake you were speaking about yesterday."

"You could not have a better day for it, and I am sure you will enjoy the view; but we shall miss you very much at dinner, for we shall not have Gräfin Rolandseck and her daughter with us. They will be too busy with their packing to come down this evening."

Trevelyan, under the impression that he was expected to make some remark on receipt of this intelligence, was about to jerk out an "Oh!" when he reflected that it was not absolutely necessary to show that the news affected him particularly.

He rose from the table very soon, the two facts he had learned forming a substantial meal in themselves, and being too difficult of digestion to leave an appetite for anything else.

According to his custom he went out immediately.

"Not coming down to dinner to-night, and going away for good to-morrow!"

He said the words over and over until they ceased to convey a meaning to him. A sudden hatred of the haughty old Gräfin who had cast that annihilating glance at him yesterday, took possession of him. He thought over the weak points in her thin armour of rank sneeringly, and relieved his mind by striking arrows of satire into their centres. Doing so gave him a savage pleasure at the moment, but he soon reflected that it was a waste of energy to go into such a heat about an old lady whose good or bad opinion would have been a matter of profound indifference to him, but for the fact of her being Gabrielle's guardian, and as such having almost absolute power over her—and him.

There was the rub!

For one moment he was beaten back by the conviction that with this woman against him success would be impossible—simply impossible. But a little breathing time, and his energetic mind armed itself anew for the conflict.

He reflected deeply. At length he threw his head back as if shaking off something. His lips were set firmly, there was a suppressed fire in his eye, a more than usual firmness about his mouth.

In a nutshell the result of his reflection was this:

"Come what may, I will see her and tell her that I love her before she leaves this house. I will take No from no lips but hers, and not from hers unless I see that she does not care for me."

He walked back to the house, went up to his room, drew a chair close to the door, and seated himself upon it. The handle was in his hand, Gräfin Rolandseck's door could not open without his hearing it. When it did so he meant to open his own, and if Gabrielle were in the passage to speak to her; it was his only possible chance of seeing her alone.

He waited an hour without any result, then he heard the jingle of plates and glasses in the passage, and knew that luncheon was being carried in. As he had no idea of making a scene before the servants, he took up a book with the intention of allowing them a full hour by his watch for the meal, and its consequences in the way of domestic attendance.

Directly the hour was over—it had seemed like three ordinary ones—he became alert again, but so long a time elapsed without any sound issuing from the room opposite that if he had not been an American he would have begun to despair; as it was, he merely reminded himself that he must be now exactly so many hours nearer the supreme moment of meeting.

Half-past five.

No sound from the room opposite, but much hurrying along the passage on the part of people going to their rooms to dress for dinner.

"I have only been here five hours and a half," he murmured satirically, as he began to pace up and down the room for a change.

At last the dinner-gong sounded. The summons inspired him with such new hope that he once more put his hand on the handle, and even half-turned it to be ready to pounce upon his prey instantly when the right moment arrived.

He heard much rustling of dresses and descending of the stairs; a little interval of silence followed, only broken by one or two stragglers hurrying past.

Not another sound till some ten minutes later, when, positively, the door opposite was softly opened. There was a moment's pause before it was closed, and Trevelyan had the sense to keep quiet during that moment.

He now opened his as softly.

Yes! There she was, half-a-dozen steps in advance of him, in hat and gloves, walking quietly but quickly down the passage. In a moment he was at her side.

"Gräfin!"

She turned with the faintest possible start, and looked at him. Her calm questioning gaze betrayed neither surprise nor excitement.

"Mr. Trevelyan!"

Both had complete command over their features, neither complete command over their voices.

"Forgive me for my madness yesterday!"

"I beg your pardon—for what?"

"For loving you. I have not to apologise only for having taken an unwarrantable liberty, or for having made a fool of myself yesterday; my sin consists in thinking you the noblest and best of women, in—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Trev—"

"Had you never a dim suspicion that I loved you? It was only with great difficulty that I managed to keep silence for so long, but I wanted to gain the Frau Gräfin's confidence, and if possible, her friendship, before broaching the subject that was upon my mind night and day. You know what an unlucky chance betrayed me yesterday. If it offended you I entreat your forgiveness, Gabrielle. I was carried away by my feelings for one moment; for the first time I held something of yours—of your very own—in my hand. What wonder if I kissed it?"

"For what happened yesterday, Mr. Trevelyan—though it was unnecessary to allude to such a trifle—you have my full pardon. With regard to the rest I can only beg you to forget that you have spoken, as I will. It is idle to pursue the subject. You and I are mere chance acquaintances of a few weeks, and it is impossible that we should ever become more. Excuse my going, I have business in the town;" and she stepped forward.

Trevelyan stepped forward too.

"That is so. We are chance acquaintances. Nothing less than a very strange chance could have brought us two together from our different quarters of the globe. Is it not a still stranger chance that in spite of difference of nationality, difference of education, difference of thought, our hearts should respond to each other as they do? What is your theory of chance, Gabrielle? Tell it me. Do you agree with Pope that it is 'Direction that we cannot see'?"

"It would be vain to argue that part of the subject, Mr. Trevelyan, since it could not affect my decision in any way. You and I can never be more to each other than we have been; you only pain me uselessly by pursuing the subject. Pray take my answer and let me go. I am not speaking under excitement, or on the mere impulse of the moment; I shall not change my mind."

"You mean you dislike me? You could never learn to care for me? You are unspeakably dear to me, it will cost me a life's happiness and peace of mind to have to give you up, yet you will not think over the subject even out of compassion? You think me presumptuous, no doubt?"

"I—I would not say a word that could hurt your feelings, Mr. Trevelyan, and so far from considering you presumptuous, I regard your preference as an honour, but it is not the less an honour that I cannot accept."

"Gabrielle, consider! My heart, my whole future are at your feet, do not trample upon them. I was contented and happy until I saw you that first morning you came to this place. You never knew, but I saw you in a carriage as you were driving from the station, and I loved you from that moment. From that day the old calm, self-satisfied existence was over, there remained only two extremes for me—happiness beyond my wildest dreams, or misery equally great. I put my destiny into your hands at this moment, Gabrielle, and I will abide by your sentence—only be merciful. Give me a chance—at least, stay here, and let me see more of you on the old terms, or let me follow you where you are going. I will promise not to press my suit for two, four, six months if you like, and you shall be perfectly free to reject me if I cannot make you care for me just a little before then. Do this!"

She drew a long breath before she could answer. To have saved her life she could not have repressed that one sign as she saw the gates of paradise opening before her, and yet knew that she might never enter the golden land.

"Mr. Trevelyan, I cannot do even that; you and I must see each other no more."

There was a pause.

She would have left him, and he would hardly have tried to stop her this time, but she had not strength enough to move.

When Trevelyan spoke it was in a different tone, cold and measured.

"I could almost believe that I am greatly deceived in you, Gräfin Rolandseck. You condemn a man to despair too lightly for such a character as I take yours to be. You know enough of life to understand what it must mean to break the heart of a man of my age—a boy's may be mended, a man's can never be. Keep to your decision and you kill all that is best in me to-day. Coquettes and fools do such things every day, because they are too callous or too shallow to care what they are doing, but that you should act so does surprise me."

"Oh, say no more, say no more, Mr. Trevelyan! Each word stabs me to the heart, and it was sore enough before. Forgive me for all that I have brought upon you. Forgive me, and, if you can, forget me; if you cannot, hate me, if that will comfort you. Set me down as a heartless coquette, only do not—do not break your heart because of me, nor let a life full of such noble promise be blighted by my influence. If you want revenge, take it in the knowledge that you have wrung my heart—that I condemn myself to greater unhappiness than that to which I condemn you, when I repeat that I am powerless to alter my decision."

"You love someone else?"

"Oh no, no!"

The eager reproachful tone of the denial, the involuntary glance that met his own with the clearness and steadiness of truth itself, raised his sinking spirits, and set his heart pulsing madly with a sudden thrill of joy.

"Circumstances perhaps decree this course, not inclination alone?"

She nodded a mute assent.

"My difference of rank may possibly—"

"I am not so little as that. You are more than my equal in every respect, I have not seen so much of you without learning that."

"Then perhaps—"

But she was hurrying down the passage, and had already gained the staircase.

So the objection lay outside himself at any rate.

Trevelyan could breathe freely again. Some great difficulty evidently existed, but he determined that no difficulty, short of a husband already upon the scene, should prove insurmountable.

GUESSES.

Few things are more tempting, few things are more dangerous, than the study of etymology. Properly understood and applied, its rules often lead to important discoveries, throwing light upon not only the history of families and of places, but even of nations and religions. But the rules are sharp and edged tools, and one must be taught to handle them. This is not easily understood. There may be necessary preparation for the study of this or that science, it is said; but surely if I have lived all my days in a place, I am more likely to know the meaning of its name by the application of common-sense than is a student working in a distant library, who has never been within the county, and does not know whether the population is fifty or five hundred. Undoubtedly, local knowledge is often of great service to the word-hunter, but local knowledge and common-sense, if alone relied upon, are but feeble weapons. The probable derivation, or, at least, the apparent derivation, is almost always not the true derivation, and even knowledge of the history of language is not always sufficient to preserve accomplished philologists from falling into the trap. Thus, a living writer pointed lately to the name *Saltaire*. Here, he said, is evidence for the world that salt was once worked there. Nothing, of course, could be worse as a guess. *Saltaire* was designed, built, and named by Sir Titus Salt as a residence for his workpeople, and the name indicates at once the founder and the adjacent river.

The name "Windsor" has been a favourite sport of guessers. First, Mr. Fergusson has told us, it was supposed to indicate that the "wind is sore," since Windsor is somewhat exposed. Next, it was presumed that, from a cry of "Wind us o'er," from those anxious to cross a ferry, the place got its name. Again, reference was made to old writers, and the ancient name *Windelsora* was made to yield "winding shore." It is possible that the real derivation is simply *Windel's* (query, *Vandal's*) shore—i.e. a landing-place.

The English have, however, by no means a monopoly of guesses. Here is one from the stolid Fatherland. Everyone knows that when the knight *Tannhäuser* followed the *Lady Venus*, it was into the *Hörselberg* that she led him. Thuringian tradition says that from a cave in the *Hörselberg*

admittance was had to Purgatory, and that wild shrieks rang out over those still forests which lie around. The natural local derivation of *Hörsel*, therefore, was "Höre! die seele!"—"Hear! the souls!"

Sometimes the faulty derivation leads to odd modern name-forms. A part of Glasgow is now known as the *Dovehill*; when this name was first used we have not been able to ascertain, but it must have been within very recent years. It used to be called, and is still called by the working classes, "the *Doo-hill*." *Doo* is dove or pigeon, and no doubt the authorities thought to exercise *doo hill* into *Dove-hill* was a very satisfactory piece of work. Unfortunately neither the name nor the place ever had anything to do with doves. For the real explanation we have to go a long way back. *Joceline*, who wrote the life of *St. Kentigern*, speaks of the saint as sitting "super lapidem in supercilio montis vocabulo *Gwleth*." Tradition preserved the story by calling the elevation the *Dew-hill*, or, popularly, the *Doo-hill*. In the local derivation all trace is lost of the ancient tradition which gave the place the honour of being the seat of *Kentigern*.

The name *Glasgow* has itself severely suffered at the hands of etymologists. It has been made out to mean the dark valley, the gray smith, the eloquent voice, the blue water, the green field, the house of devotion—twenty derivations at least are known to us, all chiefly guesses of the wildest description. Perhaps the climax of absurdity is reached when an attempt is made to regard "Glas" as a contraction of "Gelass," itself supposed to be a contraction of *Gelassen*, giving the result that *Glasgow* means an old road or forsaken district; yet this derivation has been seriously maintained. The usual way in which local etymologists work, not alone in England, is this. They take a name as it stands in modern spelling; then they strive to compare with it any word or words in any known language which has a similar sound in pronunciation; if the result be not too preposterous the necessary legend to connect name and derivation has to be sought for. The word *Glasgow* remotely resembles two Gaelic words meaning "gray smith," and both *M'Ure*, the first historian of *Glasgow*, and *Principal McFarlan*, who wrote the notice of *Glasgow* for the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, gravely offer this derivation. But why gray smith? The answer is, "because some celebrated smith may have lived here in early times!" Another in-

genious guess, which it is difficult to regard seriously, is that the Glasgow coat-of-arms suggested to the French that the city should be called Ville d'escu and Ville de l'escu, "town of the shield." Glesgu, it should be explained, is the primitive name of Glasgow according to Joceline. To this etymologist it does not seem to have occurred that Glasgow had no arms when Kentigern built his wattled shed, that modern French was not spoken in the days of Joceline, and that there is no reason why the Cumbrians of the Clyde valley should have gone to a foreign language for the name of their own saint. The conclusion of the argument must be given, for it is pregnant with meaning for guessers elsewhere: "The 'de,' through similarity of sound, becoming 'a,' the phrase would be written 'Glescu,' and so on till it became 'Glasgow.'" This is a fair match for the story that Hellas correctly is "Hill-as," and means that you can't go a mile without coming to a hill; or that it is derived from the name of her, whose face

Launched a thousand ships,
And burned the topless towers of Ilium.

It would be out of place here to tell the difficulties that surround the derivation of Glasgow, but it may shortly be said that we agree with Professor Rhys, in regarding at least the present name, Glasgow, as indicating the name of Kentigern, by his folk-name, In Glas Chu, the Greyhound. Before the arrival of Kentigern, it is quite possible, as Mr. Macgeorge has supposed, that the present site of Glasgow was known as the Green Place, or the Dear Green Place.

Only those who have painfully studied local etymology can thoroughly appreciate a remark of Mr. Peile: "In any language—our own or that of others—until we know the history of a word, and till we know the variations of sound which distinguish that language from other languages, every explanation we give of the word is a guess, and much more likely to be a wrong guess than a right one." In Sussex, bronchitis is said to be called the "brown crisis," and typhus is sometimes known as "titus fever." These are obvious guesses, but they are not a whit more absurd than much which passes for place-name etymology.

No one can write upon this subject without feeling that he is on dangerous ground. If the engineer be not hoist by his own petard, he may easily fall into one of his own pits. There are snares for the unwary in all directions, and who can

be sure that he is always in the right path? It is perilous work to walk always with a lantern; there is but one consolation—how much worse would it be to walk in the dark!

The Americans in their determination to claim a distinct nationality have made sad havoc of the names of some of the immigrants, more especially of German immigrants. Guesswork of a strictly practical kind is here seen at work. Suppose a native of Bürgerthal, and known as Bürgerthaler, i.e. a dweller in Bürgerthal, goes to America, how is he to make his somewhat clumsy name sound more harmonious? By translation, is the specious answer. Examine Bürgerthaler; the ending suggests money—thaler; and this may be rendered, for the sake of familiarity, "dollar." Thus, as the learned author of Surnames as a Science has told us, Mühlthaler, becomes Muldollar, Bernthaler becomes Barndollar, and Käsenthaler becomes Cashdollar! On the whole the new names may have more significance in the land of the Almighty Dollar, but they have sacrificed all their meaning and comeliness.

Miss Burne, in her Shropshire Folklore, has noted some curious instances of guesswork. Haughmond Hill, near Shrewsbury, is pronounced Haymond, and by the uneducated, 'Aymon'. The following explanation of the name (assuming it to be 'Aymon'), is too good not to be quoted in full:

"The time as the battle was, down by theer, the queen was raiden awee fro' the battle—I suppose it 'ud be Queen Mary. And her'd gotten her horse's shoes turned backerts, as folks shouldna know the wee (way) as her'd gone. And she was gooin' up the hill, and theer coom a mon, and he says to her, 'Well, missis,' he says, 'and howz the battle gettin' on?' And she answered him nothin' but, 'Eh, mon!' her says, joost loike that, 'Eh, mon!' and niver said no moor, because her was frightened loike at him speakin' to her; and so the hill come to be called 'Aimun' 'Ill. It was an owd labourin' mon as tawd may. We wun three on us gooin' to Sosebry, and we said, 'What was that place?' So then he towd us. An awd labourin' mon he were, as looked as if he might ha' bin workin' theer all his loife."

Another version makes Queen Anne watch the battle in the plain below from a group of fir-trees on Haughmond Hill. When she thought victory for the king

was certain, she jumped up, clapped her hands, and cried :

"Amen !
The battle's won."

And so the hill was called 'Awmon' Hill.

The extraordinary exclamations of queens when viewing battles are themselves subject for an historical disquisition in Notes and Queries. Queen Mary's "Eh, mon!" and Queen Anne's "Amen," find a fit parallel in the cry of Mary Queen of Scots when she was told that in consequence of the position of her enemy's forces she could not get from Langside to Dunbarton, and impetuously laid her crucifix in her hand. "By the cross in my loof, I will be there to-night, in spite of yon traitors;" hence the name—Cross-myloof—of the village near Glasgow.

King James the Second is credited—we need scarcely say falsely—with giving the distinctive name to the three Strettons. In the first he enquired the name of the place. "Stretton," was the answer. "It's a very little Stretton," answered the gracious king; and so we have Little Stretton. When his majesty next stopped he enquired the name of the halting-place. Again "Stretton" was the answer. "Oh, I suppose that must be Church Stretton, as I see you have got a church here," said the king. Thus Church Stretton got its name. At the next village James was not unnaturally astonished to hear that it also was called Stretton. "Stretton! why they're all Strettons in this part of the country, I think!" So that's how All Stretton got its name. All Stretton is properly Old Stretton. The tale of King James is pure fiction.

Miss Burne seems to take a special pleasure in telling of these etymological flights. To her we also owe the story of the origin of the name China Hill, that of a steep lane from Newport to Edgmond and Tibberton. Its real name is Cheney Hill. Old inhabitants declare it was called Chainey Hill because it was so steep that the wheels of loaded waggons going down had to be chained. From Chainey a refined mind evolved China Hill. Selattyn, on the Welsh border, is said to be called from a local schoolmaster who said, "I sell Latin." Moreton Hampstead is supposed to indicate that "belated travellers returning from Exeter market to Tavistock were frequently obliged to take refuge at a town on the moor instead of home, i.e. Moreton Hampstead." After this we are not surprised to learn that Stanton Harcourt owes its name

to some king who called to his general, "Stand to 'em, Harcourt," or that the name Longfarmacus (that of a village in Berwickshire) is due to the fact that the Roman soldiers' canteen there was kept by one Macus. "When they were sent north the thirsty legionaries would naturally 'long for Macus' and his tap of Falernian—hence the name."

Most of us are familiar with the story of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins. She is said to have been the daughter of a great British prince named Nothus, whom she greatly embarrassed by refusing to wed the son of a king of ferocious mind. Ultimately, like Jephtha's daughter, she was allowed a respite. The king and her father were to select ten virgins, to accompany her on a maiden voyage of three years. Each of the eleven maidens was to be allowed a thousand damsels under her. After many adventures they were all massacred by the Huns, at Cologne, about A.D. 451. A certain number of bones are still preserved. The magnitude of the legend has given cause for many guesses, but the reason we refer to it here is that the key to the derivation of the name Maidenhead is supposed to be the legend of St. Ursula. It is said that the head of one of the eleven thousand was buried there, and hence the name. The ancient name is Mayden hithe, i.e. the wharf mid-way between Marlow and Windsor. So, too, Mr. Isaac Taylor points out that Kenilworth, although an ancient hunting-seat, has no connection with the kennels of dogs as is sometimes supposed, and is properly Killingworth. Cape Wrath is supposed to indicate the nature of the sea around it; it really commemorates the land, for its true form is Cape Hvarf, indicating a point where the land trends in a new direction.

Sailors are no respecters of the names of their ships, witness the Billy Ruffin, and we cannot be surprised to find that Anse des Cousins (the Bay of Mosquitoes) becomes in English Nancy Cousin's Bay. The wonder rather is that it is not known as Aunt and Cousin's Bay. Setubal becomes a saint—St. Ubes; and Soracate is also personified as St. Oreste.

We have now, perhaps, given enough examples to show how dangerously far wrong one may go who attempts etymology in what may be called, without offence, amateur fashion. As every budding actress thinks she can play Juliet, so every reading man thinks he can be the philologist of his

district. There is no reason why the humblest actress should not aspire to the leading part, but years of preparation, and a mind and body naturally fitted for weary tasks, are indispensable. There is no reason why Tom, Dick, or Harry should not settle the derivation of all the place-names for a dozen miles around his home, and settle them correctly too; but great care, some considerable study, and the caution of a Scotsman, are necessary for them all. Never prophecy unless you know, is a safe proverb; never explain a place-name until you have learnt all about it, is a companion rule for the philologist.

The late Dr. Routh is said to have given an enquiring student this answer, when he asked what to him would seem the most useful aid in life: "Verify your references." "And what next?" was the enquiry. "Verify your references," again was the reply. "And after that?" The oracle was immovable — "Verify your references." What a maxim, this, to be blazoned above every scholar's book-shelves! No one can afford to despise it, but to the student of place-names the teaching is particularly necessary. If you desire to find out the real meaning of a place-name, first endeavour to trace back, as far as you can, the name or names by which the place has been known in former times. Do not be content with a statement in a county history, that Leland says this or King says that, find out for yourself the earliest forms; take your local historian for a guide if you will, but "verify your references." It is hopeless to begin research with the present name of a place. Get the first form of the name, never mind how different the spelling may at first seem, and in nine cases out of ten this early form will give you the information which will just set you on the right track. Through the labyrinth there is a clue. Get hold of the clue, and you will see the light of day. By this we do not mean that when the first written form of name is found, the derivation will easily be got. It will be quite as useless to apply modern languages as a test to the old name as to the new. But in the course of your research you will probably have learnt something about the peoples who have dwelt in the district, and you will learn from the example of other district names whether it is in Gaelic, or Welsh, or Danish, or French you are to seek aid. We have said that the earliest written form of the word should be obtained, but we do not mean to imply that oral

tradition is to be despised. The pronunciation of people in country districts does not greatly vary from generation to generation. Often, too, an ancient name may be perpetuated only in common speech, while a modern or transformed ancient name holds place in print. The tradition which explains the popular name is generally as far wrong as it can well be, but there are few traditions in which there is not something of value.

We have spoken above chiefly of place-names in the country. In cities and towns, however, there are often many interesting relics hid in street-names. For explanation in this case, application may generally be made to the title-deeds of the landowner on whose ground the houses are built. This research will not always be successful, but some assistance will be obtained by indication of the names of those whose descendants should be able to assist in the word-hunting.

It seems hardly necessary, in conclusion, to claim that research into the origin of place-names is far from being trifling or unimportant. Apart from the service done by rooting up the weeds of erroneous conjecture, the student of place-names is undoubtedly engaged on work which tends to throw more light on the works and thoughts of our forefathers than do many pages of histories of battles and treaties.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXVI. "IN THE MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLORS."

AMONG the many distinguished people to whom Mrs. Jervoise sent a ticket for Miss Ray's concert, and a card of invitation for the banquet which was to succeed it, was Mr. Josiah H. Whittler, the novelty in dramatic celebrities. Without doubt, whatever his merits might have been, he had made his mark. His first engagement had been for six nights only. Before the fourth night came, four or five rival managers were bidding high for him. But he was ambitious. He told himself that a moderate wait on his part would only excite them to still higher bidding efforts. And he was right—they made them.

His success on the stage, his utter unlikeness to the reigning English actor, and the peculiar way in which he wore his hair, combined to make society very crazy about him. Mrs. Jervoise was almost as

glad to get him to her concert—she always called it hers in speaking of it, for she quite felt as if she had invented Jenifer—as she was to get the reigning beauty. She resolved that they two should form a group—a living picture—which should be seen by, and carried away in the minds of all present. Accordingly she arranged a couple of low-backed, but exceedingly comfortable, throne-like velvet chairs in the middle of the front row, and there she placed them.

In fact Mrs. Jervoise neglected nothing that could conduce to the success of Jenifer's concert, and to her own glory as a patroness.

The only suggestion Jenifer made about the arrangements was :

"I should like my mother to sit where she can see and hear best."

And this suggestion jarred with Mrs. Jervoise's intentions, for she had thought of putting the widow in the back row."

"Perhaps you had better settle that matter for yourself, if you don't feel inclined to trust Flora," Effie said cuttingly.

To which Jenifer replied quietly :

"Very well, I will ; my mother shall sit in the front row."

The day and the hour came, and after some of the unimportant pioneers had paved the way, Jenifer came on, and sang her best. The room was admirably suited to her voice ; she felt that she had an appreciative and attentive audience, and she sang as Madame Voglio had never heard her sing before.

The plaudits were loud and long, but there were a very large number of men in the room, considering it was a morning concert, and the majority of these applauded her quite as much for her high-bred distinguished air, as they did for her exquisite singing.

But in spite of the plaudits, in spite of the marked advance Jenifer had made on all her former efforts, Madame Voglio said in her soul :

"Poor child ! she has touched her highest."

But she was careful of the expression of her face.

Captain Edgcomb, who was dividing himself between Jenifer when she was "off," and his sister when Jenifer was "on," said to the latter after Jenifer's second song :

"This settles me. I shall take her to America as soon as we're married. They say Patti will touch a thousand a night before she has done."

"If I were you I'd keep the secretaryship, and remember that Jenifer is not Patti."

"You're neither encouraging to me nor complimentary to her," he said coldly.

"My dear Harry—rubbish ! She is singing deliciously to-day under the happiest conditions ; but she won't have an audience like this in St. James's Hall, if she ever gets there, and if she has it, they'll not respond there as they are responding here."

"I gave you credit for being larger minded, Belle," her brother said tolerantly. "The fact is, my dear girl, you've been so long accustomed to be the most widely known and semi-public member of our family, that you don't like the idea of being beaten on your own ground by a sister-in-law."

She laughed good-temperedly. "Think what you please, Harry dear, only stick to your secretaryship. When Jenifer gets the offer of a thousand a night it will be time enough for you to throw yourself out of employment and become dependent on her."

Amongst those who were warmest in their congratulations to Jenifer when the concert was over were the reigning beauty and the great American actor. The latter, though he was not much impressed either by the magnificence of Jenifer's voice or by her management of it, was impressed by what he termed her "magnificent physique." "If she only can be taught to act as well as she can sing, she'll be worth training," he told himself ; and he tickled Captain Edgcomb's ears by saying : "That's a great singer, sir, and she'll be a great actress, too, if she falls into proper hands. With good training she'll end on the opera-boards ; but she ought to be taken away from that old woman now, who can do no more for her voice and style, and put to study with an actor who would develop her latent histrionic powers ; if that's done, when I open my theatre in New York next year, I shall be making her a big offer."

Captain Edgcomb as he listened to this felt as if riches were being a snare to him already.

"I must take care that my dear girl does not overwork herself," he thought magnanimously. Who can tell whether he had the parable of the unwise owners of the goose with the golden eggs in his mind at the moment ?

Then he left Jenifer to be interviewed and flattered afresh, and began to take greater care of old Mrs. Ray.

"Our dear Jenifer will carry all before her from this day," he said as he settled Mrs. Ray down in the most comfortable place he could find for her. "A man has been already speaking to me about engaging her for a series of representations in America. Whittler, the new American actor, you know, is the man, and he says—in fact, from what he says—I mean he has put it before me, that it would be well she should begin studying acting under some competent actor at once."

Mrs. Ray's eyes had dilated in horror during his speech to such an extent that he found himself floundering towards the end of it.

"A series of representations in America! Well that she should commence studying under some competent actor at once! What are you scheming for my child—for your wife?" she faltered out painfully.

"Her fame and fortune," he said decisively.

Then he heaped chicken mayonnaise in Mrs. Ray's plate, and all the time he felt that he was winning his spurs in Jenifer's estimation by this devotion to her mother.

Meanwhile Jenifer had been got hold of by the lady without whom nothing was anything in these days.

The reigning beauty had a house and a husband. The former was in a delicious locality, and the latter was generally in a fog. No matter; they were both admirably managed.

"Everybody's coming to me on the fifteenth. Oh, that's to-morrow; so it is. Well, never mind the shortness of the invitation, you must come too. I'll send a carriage for you at ten, if you'll tell me where you are."

Jenifer drew back. This freely and really kindly accorded invitation stultified her. She did not even know the name of the lady who said Jenifer "must come" to her house. Of the fact that going to this lady's house would set the stamp of fashion on her for a season in the singing world she was deplorably ignorant.

"Thank you; I am not going into society at all just now," she said, holding herself a hair's-breadth farther from the beauty. "My mother and I came to town entirely for the sake of my professional studies. We do not go into society at all."

"But you must come to me to-morrow and sing. My card—oh! Mr. Whittler, find my card, or photograph, or something, Mrs. Jervoise is sure to have one, for Miss Ray. She must come to-morrow night,

you know, and she has been so out of it that she doesn't know my address."

Then Mr. Whittler found "a card," or "a photograph," or "a something" of Mrs. Hazelton—the "beautiful Mrs. Hazelton," whose beauty, bonnets, and bad manners, every woman, who aspired to be noticed at all, copied this year. Before he could give it to Miss Ray, Mrs. Hazelton had been annexed by some one on whom fortune smiled for the minute, and Jenifer asked, holding the card away from her:

"Why 'must' I go? I don't like her a bit, and her offer of sending a carriage for me was mere impertinence."

"You must never call anything 'mere impertinence' when you want to get it, young lady," Mr. Whittler counselled, and Jenifer, waxing wroth, said:

"But I don't want to get it; nothing will induce me to go. I am going to be a public-singer, not a singing-machine to be set going at the insolent will of any one."

"What is this?" Mrs. Jervoise asked, coming up with Captain Edgecumb at the moment, and Jenifer told them incisively. "Really, you are very difficult," Mrs. Jervoise said coldly. "I have launched you, Mrs. Hazelton could sail you splendidly if you pleased her. Not to go to her to-morrow will be to condemn yourself."

"Ah," Madame Voglio cried, bustling up at this juncture, "they are all wrong; all wrong in assailing you now to go here, there, and everywhere, my child. Come away from it, and hear me. Wait, till they have to implore you to come to them, till they are ready to pay down the handsome sum of money for the gratification of their wishes——"

"I think, as Mrs. Hazelton is kind enough to say she will send a carriage for Miss Ray to-morrow night, it will be well for Miss Ray to go," Captain Edgecumb interposed eagerly, but Madame Voglio snuffed him out with a—

"Young man, you know nothing at all about it;" and then convoyed Jenifer off to a safe corner to give her a word of advice.

"Let none of them tempt you to sing at their private houses; you will have your fair chance before the public—your only judge now—soon. You surprised me to-day, my child!"

"Shall I do?" Jenifer asked wistfully.

"Ah, you will always 'do'; but I would have you do so much, so much, so much more, perhaps, than you ever can accomplish; but you must go on working, studying, plodding for a long time yet. Meantime,

I do not allow you to sing at any private house, you understand? This is my rule with my professional pupils. I assume a responsibility when I undertake one; that responsibility I discharge to the best of my ability. I owe it to the public, whose suffrages you are about to seek, to do my very best with you before I present you to it. It would set the seal of fashion on an amateur were she to appear and have a success at Mrs. Hazelton's house; it would stamp you with failure, it would be an abortive attempt to prematurely storm popular opinion."

To all this Jenifer listened very readily. She had not the slightest desire to be "taken up" by Mrs. Hazelton, or to achieve a fictitious success, however brilliant, under that lady's auspices. But Captain Edgcomb, Mrs. Jervoise, and Effie all took a different view of Madame Voglio's advice, and of the motives which made her give it.

"She doesn't want anyone else to have a hand in making Jenifer a success but herself," Mrs. Jervoise said. "She wants all the credit, selfish old thing!"

"That she is not, certainly, with regard to me," Jenifer said resolutely, thinking of the many lessons which Madame Voglio gave her, for which she would take no payment.

"Here's a proof that she's selfish," Mrs. Jervoise answered. "When I was her pupil—and I suppose I may venture to say what the best judges say of me, that my singing is equal to nearly any concert-singer's out—Voglio never objected to my singing at private houses. I might have sung myself hoarse for all she cared, for, you see, she knew she would never make a nice little income in commissions on getting me engagements."

"I'm well contented to leave myself entirely in Madame Voglio's hands. I owe her too much already to disregard her advice."

"That's nonsense, Jenifer, when you hear what Flora tells you," Effie said authoritatively. "It would be too absurd to go on 'studying,' and 'learning,' and 'trying to perfect yourself,' and wasting all your time and opportunities of making money, just to please Madame Voglio."

"I really think I'm too tired to discuss the subject to-day," Jenifer said with an air of cutting discussion short. "Hubert, where is my mother? She must be quite worn out."

"I think I may be allowed to say that

it will be very unwise of you to surrender yourself absolutely into Madame Voglio's hands. We know what these people are when they have an interested motive at work. You—or rather, I—will have to look sharply after your interests, Jenifer."

Captain Edgcomb was the speaker, and the glance of open-eyed amazed scorn which Jenifer flung at him made him sorry for a moment that he had spoken.

"These people' are the ones among whom, I trust, my lines will be cast," she said; and Captain Edgcomb was conscious that he had made a mistake when he saw Mrs. Jervoise and Effie exchanging laughing looks.

"I really think Captain Edgcomb is right," Mrs. Jervoise remarked, recovering her gravity. "Dear old Voglio's all very well—fat, she looked to-day, didn't she!—but she takes care of herself first and of her professional pupils afterwards. If I were you, Jenifer, I'd think twice before I let slip the chance of going to Mrs. Hazelton's. It may be a long time before you have the opportunity of singing to Royalty again."

That night, when they were sitting in the drawing-room, Mrs. Ray half asleep, after coffee and the unwonted excitement of the day, and Jenifer, quiet and subdued by reason of the tumult in her mind, which did not dare to find vent, Captain Edgcomb, who had come back with them, began to urge upon Jenifer the advisability of an earlier marriage than had at first been contemplated.

"Let me come out in public first," she pleaded.

But he had Mr. Josiah H. Whittler's words ringing in his ears, and he longed to have the right to order her off to America, to be "run" into a fortune.

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DOROTHY, WIFE OF —.

By "RITA."

CHAPTER I.

Though you loved then—
Though I love now.

THE old church was set high on a hill, that sloped down to the valley below, in which a little village nestled.

The valley, indeed, was surrounded on all sides by hills, some towering and lofty, others small and insignificant, but all seeming to shelter the little green nook, with its winding river and low, level fields in a sort of loving and protecting fashion.

Here and there a wood broke the monotony of the scene, the dark foliage of firs standing out in rich relief against the paler tints of larch, and oak, and ivy. Above the sloping hills, the glowing hues of the sky spread themselves in a hundred gradations of colour, and the flush of sunset rested warm and bright on the old grey tower of the church, and the time-worn headstones that marked the quiet resting-places of the dead.

Quaint, restful, still—with that stillness that only the country gathers to itself in the hush of eventide—so the little churchyard lay in the spring sunset; and a man wandering listlessly through the yew-shaded paths, paused suddenly and lifted his hat, and standing there bareheaded in the fading light, looked upwards to the old tower as if some long thought held him in a spell of silence and abstraction.

The beautiful dusky glow faded slowly into the clear, pearly grey of twilight, before he seemed to remember where he was, or rouse himself from that absorbed contemplation. Then, with a start and a sigh, he replaced his hat and moved on again along the path, stopping here and there to read some quaint epitaph, or half-obliterated inscription.

Curious enough some of them were, bringing a faint smile to the worn handsome face of the reader. A face where smiles looked almost out of place, so stern was the expression of brow and lips.

The light was getting less distinct as he strolled on to the low boundary-wall and stood leaning there, while his eyes dwelt lingeringly on the dark range of hills that shut in the little sleepy village. The river wound in and out like a silver ribbon. There was no sign of life anywhere, nor any sound, except a faint bleat from some stray lamb, or the rustle of the young leaves as a faint wind touched the budding trees.

The peace and beauty seemed to soothe him, in that inexplicable way of which Nature alone holds the secret. His face grew less stern, the hard look seemed to leave it, and, though a sigh escaped his lips, it was more of relief than of pain.

Marston Dare had had a hard and troubled life for almost all the thirty years that it had numbered. But it never had seemed so hard as when the seal of a woman's treachery had set itself upon that toilsome and poverty-stricken existence, and

made him curse the fate that brought him face to face with her beauty and her worthlessness. And she was worthless, he told himself. But it is a hard thing to kill love, when once it takes root in these strong, steadfast natures, and Dare had not killed it yet, despite his struggles, his sufferings, and his broken faith.

Even work, that panacea for most troubles, had failed to drive away a memory he hated as well as loved. He had only taxed a willing brain to its utmost, and found physical strength incapable of answering to his demands. With fame and honours at his feet, he had been obliged to relinquish the efforts made to win them.

"Perfect rest and change of scene. Nothing else will do you any good," said the fashionable physician he had consulted.

And something within him—that same complicated mechanism whose nerves and forces he had overtaxed so ruthlessly—told him that the advice was true and the change and rest necessary.

Chance alone had brought him to this spot. He had fixed upon Shropshire for a change, and travelling on to where its boundaries almost touched the hills of Wales, found himself in a quaint little old-world nook, as beautiful in its way as many a tourist-haunted spot of guide-book celebrity. Standing there to-night, with the soft spring air fanning his brow, and the peace and beauty of the country all around, such a feeling of rest came to brain and heart as had long been strange to both.

He still leaned against the low brown wall, but his eyes had left the dusky hills, and came back to the old church-tower, and again from there roved to where those dim grey headstones had faced the sun and shadow of many centuries. Coming back from that long pause of quiet thought, he turned away as if to leave the churchyard. The moon had risen now, and the sky seemed full of clear and brilliant light, not cold or glittering, but filled with a soft transparence, against which the towering hills and dusky woods looked like dim, soft shapes.

One long quivering ray of silver fell through the branches of a giant oak, and, so falling, showed beneath the great wide boughs a single stone that gleamed marble-white among the shadows. Curiosity, impulse, idleness—what matters by what name we call those apparently reasonless motives which now and then prompt

our actions?—one or all of these made Marston Dare pause, and read the single line that lay graven black, and deep, and strangely distinct upon that smooth white surface.

Not much to read, indeed; but enough, so it seemed, to draw a look of puzzled wonder to his eyes; enough to demand a re-perusal of itself; enough to make him thoughtful again as he leant against the old oak boughs and gazed at that strange inscription:

"Dorothy, wife of —."

That was all, except a date.

No other record of the woman in whose memory it had been raised.

The stone looked almost new, but from its position was not likely to attract much observation. Marston Dare might have passed it again and again without noticing it, but that ray of moonlight seemed to bring it out in strong, almost startling distinctness. There seemed to the young man something almost ghastly in the clear white and gleaming black of that significant announcement—something that seemed to startle the peace and holiness of its surroundings by an air of mystery as weird as it was unaccountable.

Bending still closer, he perceived to his astonishment that there had been other words following those already quoted, but that these had been purposely effaced from the stone, and a black stroke painted in their place.

"What can be the meaning of it?" he asked himself, turning away at last. He resolved to ask at his inn for some information about this mysterious "Dorothy." It seemed to him that the grave was comparatively new, and surely something must be known of the woman whom it held.

He left the churchyard and went down the solitary straggling street which represented the village. It was innocent as yet of gaslight, but the rare clearness of the atmosphere compensated for that deficiency on the present occasion.

Just as he reached the inn the sound of wheels made him look round.

He saw a smart-looking trap dashing along, driven by a lady. Behind her sat a man in livery. As she passed the inn-door her glance fell on the solitary figure standing there. With an audible exclamation of amazement she checked the horse and drew up beside him.

"You here!" she exclaimed.

His face paled somewhat, but eye and

voice were sufficiently under command to answer her.

"As you see," he answered quietly. "I have come down to ruralise, by medical orders. And you?"

"I?" she murmured in some confusion. "Did you not know? I live here. At least, for the present. One of Sir Andrew's places is Tedsmere, four miles from this village."

"Indeed," he said quietly. "No, I did not know. How should I?"

Whatever his words reminded her of, the shamed blush on her cheek deepened, and her voice was anything but steady as she said faintly:

"Of course you could not. I forgot. Only when I saw you——"

He interrupted her almost fiercely:

"You surely do not suppose I should have come here had I known?"

"No; I dare say not. You—I mean I could hardly expect you would forgive."

"Forgive!" he cried passionately. Then, checking himself, with a glance at her groom: "I beg your pardon, Lady Lynne; I am detaining you, I fear."

"Not at all," she said hurriedly. "May I hope you will call and see me—us, I mean—as you are so near? It must be so dull for you here, and Sir Andrew could offer you some fishing——"

A bitter smile curved his lips.

"I like dulness, thank you," he said very quietly, "and I could not think of trespassing on Sir Andrew's time and attention, even if I liked fishing—which I don't."

Her eyes met his own, but their appeal read no response. She knew that her power was over, and the knowledge incensed her. It seemed so hard that he should refuse her anything—he who had once been abject as a slave at her mercy.

It always is hard for a woman to believe that her influence is a thing of the past—hard to credit that the more abject a man's subjection, the more complete also is his defection, when once his passion is spent or slain.

Marston Dare's had been so slain by the woman who now looked back into his stern cold eyes—slain utterly and for ever, even though its memory had power to sting him still:

Like a dreaming snake
Drowsily lifting itself fold by fold.

But there was almost hatred in his heart now, as he looked at her fair face and heard her voice speaking out that insult to his

own poverty, which lay in her changed position, and which had been gained by her own baseness and treachery.

The memory of that old delirious worship seemed to madden him as he stood there by her side, controlling voice and face to his will, for fear that one sign of weakness should yield her another triumph. He succeeded better than he imagined: so well, indeed, that his cold smile and scornful glance smote her with such pain as he never dreamt of—so well, that as her lips dropped conventional phrases, her heart ached as never it had ached before—so well, that even in the fulness of her triumph at this parade of wealth, she felt she would have given anything to feel his arms around her once again, only to know the old love held him hers as once she knew it had done.

His curt replies, his cool self-possession, roused a passion of anger and misery within her breast, all the more so because she knew her acting to be inferior to his own; because, try as she would for sign of relenting, or softening of voice or look, she met none.

She went on her way baffled and defeated, and all the glory of the sweet spring night seemed to thrill and pain her with its memories of that face she loved—that passion she had roused and fanned, and then had rejected.

"What a fool I was," she thought to herself, as she lashed the horse with a sudden impatient anger, that sent him flying along the steep and stony road; "what a fool! But the temptation was too strong. I could not have been a poor man's wife. And yet how paltry and insignificant everything looked to-night when I met his eyes, and read in them how he scorned me! Can his love have changed like that in twelve short months? Can he have forgotten, and I—not?"

The man of whom she thought sat by the window of the inn parlour, the lines of pain gathering once more around his eyes and on his brow.

"Rest—peace—have I dreamt of them for this to break the charm?" he muttered below his breath. "What weak, contemptible creatures we are! Bah! why do I think of her? Love was wasted on a woman like that, who cares for nothing save what ministers to her comfort and ambition. She thought to flaunt her honours before my eyes, did she? Nay, my lady, I have not yet sunk low enough

to accept your friendship—or that of the man to whom you sold yourself for the gold I lacked.”

Then he turned from the window as the landlady of the little inn entered with candles and the refreshments he had ordered.

Bringing back his disturbed thoughts by a great effort, he began to chat to the rosy-faced, pleasant-looking little widow who owned The Admiral Nelson.

He spoke of the church and his visit there; and then remembering the strange headstone which had so puzzled him, asked the woman if she knew anything of its history.

He was surprised to see her ruddy face grow pale and alarmed. She began to fidget restlessly with her apron.

“It’s a queer thing, sir,” she said, with a nervous glance at the door, “and we don’t like much to talk of it. There is a mystery, as you say, about that grave-stone. That name has been struck out by no mortal hands.”

“What!” laughed Marston Dare, looking up at her alarmed face. “Whose hands, then, performed the mysterious office?”

“That’s more nor anyone can tell you,” she answered solemnly; then, sinking her voice even more mysteriously: “Only, sir, folks do say that ’tis Mistress Dorothy’s ghost as walks still.”

“A ghost!” smiled her listener. “Better and better. You don’t mean to say you have a ghost here? Pray who was Mistress Dorothy?”

“That’s a long story, sir. I——”

“No matter,” he interrupted; “sit down and tell it me over a glass of your own good ale. I’m fond of hearing stories.”

With one more apprehensive glance over her shoulder, as if she feared the ghost would assert itself in person, Mrs. Pugh took the seat her guest proffered, and proceeded to tell her tale.

CHAPTER II.

A sense of mystery the spirit daunted.

“YOU see, sir,” began Mrs. Pugh, “the Hursts, of Hurst Hall, have been squires of Weirbrook for many and many a generation back. Perhaps you’ve seen the old Hall as you came through the village. No? Well, it’s a place one might miss as soon as see, it’s so shut in by woods. They were strange people, the Hursts, and not over much liked, specially the old squire and his son. It’s the son I’m going

to tell you about, he who married Mistress Dorothy. None of the Hursts, so folks say, ever seemed to care to live at the Hall, and yet ’tis a fine old place, and has cost a power o’ money in its time. Mr. Anthony was the only son of the old squire, but he and his father never seemed to agree well. You see Mr. Anthony was a bit wild, and had the true Hurst temper—violent and overbearing—and he and the old man used to quarrel terribly; so Mr. Anthony oftener than not stayed in London or travelled in foreign parts, when the old squire was at the Hall. Well, the old man died very sudden (all the Hursts mostly do die like that), and Mr. Anthony came back from wherever he was, for the funeral, and when it was all over and things were a bit settled, we thought he’d be leaving the place as usual, for he never made a secret of how he hated it, and how dull he thought it. But this time he did not seem in such a hurry to leave, and yet he had none of his fine friends down from London, nor seemed to do anything to make the time pass more lively. At last a story got whispered about the place as to how Mr. Anthony had found some attraction to keep him at Hurst. You must know, sir, that about five miles from the old Hall, on the other side of the Hurst property, is a queer old tumbledown-looking place called Weirhurst, the property of two old maiden ladies of the name of Clyffe. They had living with them at that time a niece, the child of their only brother, who had been killed in the Indian Mutiny. She was a beautiful young lady, and so sweet and good, and they just idolised her. Well, Mr. Anthony had met her somehow, in one of her walks or rides, and made friends with her, and then with the old ladies; and, to make a long story short, we heard he was to be married to Miss Dorothy. Of course every one thought it would be a fine thing for quite a penniless girl like she was, to be mistress of the Hall and lady of Hurst; but somehow it seemed we were all wrong. They were married in London quite privately, and the only time they came to the Hall was about a year after their wedding, and then they only stayed a month, and Mistress Dorothy went nowhere except to see the old ladies at Weirhurst; and one or two that saw her said she was sadly altered, and had quite lost her good looks. After that we saw and heard no more of her till she came back one dreary winter’s night—not

to the Hall, where by rights she should have come—but to her old home at Weirhurst. And there she died.”

Mrs. Pugh here refreshed herself with a glass of ale, and then proceeded, dropping her voice to a mysterious whisper :

“Folks do say Mr. Anthony just broke her heart; and since her death he’s been wilder and worse than ever. He came down to the funeral, and ’twas he had her buried in that quiet place, not in the vault of the Hursts. And now comes the strangest part of all. That stone for the grave came down from London, and was put up about a month after her death. ’Tis very simple, as you saw, sir; only a cross, and on it was written ‘Dorothy, wife of Anthony Hurst.’ The night after that was fixed was a very wild and stormy one. Next day some lad of the village who’d been up to the churchyard, came back saying that Mistress Dorothy’s stone had had the name struck out. We didn’t believe it at first; but first one and then another went to see, and true enough the stone was as it is now. There was a great stir and fuss about it, and the clergyman, he wrote to Mr. Anthony, but he had left London again and gone abroad. At last he sent word to let it alone, and so it has remained ever since.”

“And what is the general belief about the mystery?” enquired Marston Dare, as the story closed, and he looked half amusedly across at his companion’s grave face.

“The general belief is, sir, that no mortal hand have struck out that poor lady’s name,” she answered solemnly. “Perhaps there was some foul play about her death—perhaps her spirit can’t rest in peace; as his wife, perhaps—”

“My good woman,” interrupted Marston Dare with a laugh, “spirits or ghosts, or whatever you like to call them, can’t use tools, or do mason’s work. Nonsense! the mystery is connected with some flesh-and-blood apparition of a very material description. Only no one has had the pluck to watch and fathom it.”

Mrs. Pugh shook her head in respectful difference to her guest’s opinions. It was not likely they could change her own, which had been the growth of many years and steady prejudice, and that bovine obstinacy which seems indigenous to country-folk.

There was silence between them for a few moments. Then Marston Dare lifted his thoughtful face, and looked at her.

“What has become of the old ladies—

the aunts?” he asked. “Do they still live at Weirhurst?”

“One of them does,” she answered—“the youngest, Mistress Alice Clyffe. The eldest is dead. They were very stately, old-fashioned ladies, and always liked to be called Mistress Clyffe and Mistress Alice. ’Twas the same, too, with Miss Dorothy. Poor young lady! She was so fair, and so young, and so innocent—it seems cruel to think that she should have had such a fate. And only three-and-twenty when she died!”

“The best thing that could have happened to her, it seems to me,” said Dare gloomily.

Mrs. Pugh now rose from her chair, and stood twisting the corner of her apron in her plump white fingers.

“Is there anything more you would wish for, sir?” she enquired, intent once more upon her duties as a hostess.

“Nothing, thank you,” he said courteously. “I am much obliged for your story, though—it has interested me greatly.”

“You’re quite welcome, I’m sure, sir.”

She retreated to the door, held it open a moment, cast one hesitating glance at the tall grave figure standing by the table, then came back a step or two.

“You don’t believe it was a ghost, then, sir?” she said hesitatingly.

“I do not,” he answered quickly. “I should say it was the work of some mischievous, ill-natured person, or—”

“Or what, sir?” she asked eagerly.

“Or was done by the orders of Mistress Dorothy herself.”

Mrs. Pugh shook her head and sighed. Her experience of matrimony had taught her that it was never wise to argue with a man. The conviction in her own mind remained unshaken, despite her guest’s opinion; so she deemed it best to retreat and leave him to his own view of the subject, and with an elaborate curtsy she withdrew, leaving Marston Dare to the solitude of the best parlour and the comfort of a cigar.

He threw open the window and drew the most comfortable chair he could find up to it, and sat there watching the pale rings of smoke float out to the quiet night.

“Strange,” he thought to himself, “strange, to come to an out-of-the-world corner like this, and find myself beset by two disturbing reflections as soon as I arrive! I wonder why that story has taken such hold on me. It is not half so singular a one, after all, as many I have read, or

imagined for my books, and yet I can't forget it. Poor, pretty Mistress Dorothy! I wonder what type of woman she was? Something far different, no doubt, to my Lady Lynne. My Lady Lynne! To-day I wondered that I could have cared for her. Cared! It was not that—it was a slavish worship of her beauty that held me to her side. But the beauty cannot charm me now that I know the false soul beneath. Pshaw! she is not worth even a thought. I will go to bed, and sleep, and—forget!"

He threw away the burnt-out cigar, lit his candle, and went up to his room.

The long journey had fatigued him. The emotional excitement he had experienced, at sight of the woman who had been so dear to him once, now revenged itself on his physical weakness for its previous stern repression. A pale haggard face looked back to him from the glass on his toilet-table, and almost startled him in its unlikeness to what it had been a year ago.

"No wonder that I lost her love," he said bitterly. "What a very plain ungilded pill to offer her dainty ladyship. And yet, if she had loved me——"

He cut short the thought with a contemptuous laugh.

"Shall I dream to-night?" he muttered, as he blew out the candle, and took one last look at the sloping hills, above which the young moon sailed in tender beauty. From there his eyes turned to the church, standing dusk and solemn above the village street. He could see the dark yew-trees and the low red wall, and the great oak that sheltered that quiet corner with its mystery and its sorrows, crowned by the disfigured cross.

He dropped the blind abruptly. It seemed almost as if he saw before him the gleaming marble, and the black letters, and the long dark mark that blotted out the name of Anthony Hurst. His last thought, ere sleep sealed his tired eyes and brain, was of the woman whose history he had first traced in that brief record, "Dorothy, wife of ——"

CHAPTER III.

Veiled loves that shifted shapes and shafts, and gave
Laughing, strange gifts to hands that durst not
crave.

DAY after day drifted on, and the glory of the springtime lay on field and meadow, and wooed the tender buds and blossoms into life, and the dreamy delicious monotony of the days as they came and went,

seemed to lull Marston Dare into a restful content.

He was too true a lover of Nature not to be charmed with the surroundings whither chance had led him, and he grew to love this quiet nook, shut in by hills and dark with woods, and sweet with all the scents of springtime.

"Why should I not stay here for a time?" he thought to himself. "I can work as well here as in London."

The idea took root in his mind and pleased him. He thought he would see about putting it into execution. He would give up his rooms in town, he would——

A sudden thought arrested him. He remembered what Lady Lynne had said about one of her husband's country-seats being in the neighbourhood. They might meet—in all probability they would meet. What would she think? Naturally that it was for her sake he was remaining. He did not feel inclined to minister to her vanity, nor did he desire to renew the old intimacy, whose results had been so disastrous. Yet, on the other hand, why should he sacrifice himself for her sake? Why turn his back on a spot that had chained his fancy and soothed his restless nature, simply because there was a chance of meeting the woman who had almost broken his heart once?

That time seemed far away now—far away, as he looked at his changed face, and thought of his changed feelings.

He said to himself: "There is no fear now—I am cured." And he was right.

Acting upon that belief, and the growing attraction that this place had for him, he hesitated no longer. He gave up his London rooms and took two at a farmhouse he had discovered in one of his rambles.

It was a roomy picturesque old place; one part of the grounds sloped down to the river; and, as the farmer had a boat, he was able to make long excursions by water as well as by land. The place had another interest for him also. It almost touched the borders of Weirhurst, and through the thickly-grown trees he could catch a glimpse of the old house with its quaint, red-tiled roof and ivy-covered gables.

It interested him strangely, this spot, where that sad little romance had had its birth and death. His thoughts were for ever speculating on Mistress Dorothy. But the old house betrayed no signs of life, nor did he ever see a living creature in the grounds. It seemed given over to the

desolation of age and death. He questioned the old farmer and his wife about the inmates of Weirhurst, but learnt little more than the landlady of The Nelson had told him. The solitary old lady lived there still—seeing no one, going nowhere, and attended only by two old and faithful servants, who had lived there from the time of their youth. With this information he had to be content. He wondered sometimes that he was not content; that his always restless mind had fixed itself with strange pertinacity on the mystery of the tombstone, and, travelling from thence, dwelt with daily increasing interest on the gloomy old house with which that mystery was concerned. He could not account for the interest, but there it was.

Like many of those psychological problems which defy reason, yet seem to take stronger root in the mind by force of that very defiance, this problem puzzled and haunted Marston Dare. He never looked at the house, with the dense shadows of the woods covering it in so jealousy, but he thought also of that evening in the churchyard, and saw again that mutilated inscription. He never floated idly in his boat beneath the drooping willows that fringed the Weirhurst grounds, but he found himself wondering and wondering about the young sad life of the girl whose home had been there.

He grew a little intolerant at last of the persistence with which this fancy haunted him. He told himself it was a sign of weakness—of want of tone, of mental depression. He tried to shake it off by reading, by exercise, by return to his literary labours.

In vain.

Try as he might he could not forget the history he had heard, or prevent himself from haunting the grounds of Weirhurst.

He gave up the effort at last. He found it too hopeless to combat. He formed instead a new resolve. He would try and fathom the mystery of the tombstone for himself. He would discover why the dead wife had disowned the name of the living husband.

He formed the resolution suddenly and decidedly; he formed it, and with it came no terror of fear, no warning of what that decision might bring to him as he groped his way along the road that led to the mystery.

A week previously he had known nothing of the woman whose history he had determined to fathom—nothing of the

character, or story, or object, all of which had leaped into living reality before him—nothing of the shadowy presence which seemed to beckon him through a sea of fathomless mystery to some far-off shore, where he would find—what?

The first thing to be done, he told himself, was to get speech of one of the inmates of Weirhurst itself. From all he could ascertain there were three—the old maiden lady, who was its owner, and the two servants who attended on her.

Servants as a rule are easily managed. Bribery goes a long way as a persuasive to confidence.

Should he try bribery?

There seemed something mean in the idea as he looked at the stately, solitary old place. He dismissed the thought reluctantly. There was another course to be followed. He might go straight to the fountain-head. He might call on Miss Clyffe herself. True, he would require an excuse, but he had already framed several. From Miss Clyffe he might gain some clue to the mystery. She was old, and doubtless timid and easily persuaded.

At this juncture a sudden quail of conscience interposed. It looked to him somewhat ignoble to descend to treachery and subterfuge only for the purpose of satisfying his own idle curiosity. What concern of his was this mystery, or why should he seek to push his way into a family secret?

That was just the question he could not answer; it only brought him back to the starting-point from whence that curiosity sprang, only showed him through its unreasoning motives a strange set purpose he could not disguise or resist. In after years he could look back upon this time with a wonder almost fearful, and could see in these fancies and impressions a purpose resolute and defined. He could trace in that self-imposed task the finger of Fate, and see it pointing relentlessly on—on—to the shadowy future—on through doubt, fear, pain, joy, and treachery—on to that brighter and fairer day which spoke out the truth at last.

While Marston Dare was arguing in his own mind the various pretexts by which he could procure an introduction to Weirhurst, he was walking along a somewhat unfrequented road, and one which he had never yet travelled. In this new and absorbing interest which had taken possession of him, he had completely forgotten his chances of another rencontre with Lady

Lynne. It was brought suddenly before him, however, by the appearance of that very personage. She was driving a low basket-carriage, and checked her ponies immediately at sight of him.

Politeness compelled him to speak to her, and her interest and wonder in his prolonged stay roused some secret amusement in his mind.

"I am bent on a very unpleasant mission," she said presently. "Sir Andrew has learnt through some secret source that Weirhurst is in the market, and he wants to purchase it. He has commissioned me to call on the old lady who lives there, and make her a private offer. I don't like the task. I believe she is half-mad, or——"

The abrupt stop and the change in her voice were occasioned by the sudden alteration in Marston Dare's listless face and manner. He raised his head; his eyes grew bright and anxious; a sudden flush dyed his brow.

"You are going to—Weirhurst?" he said.

"Yes; is there anything very wonderful in that?" she answered slowly, and looking searchingly at him. "Do you know Miss Clyffe?"

"No," he said abruptly. "But—but I have a great desire to see Weirhurst. It is a—somewhat remarkable place, is it not?"

He was conscious of the lameness of his excuse even before her light laugh fell on his ear.

"Remarkable? Well, if dust, and cobwebs, and neglect are remarkable, it certainly can boast of possessing them. I never heard of any other claim to interest in the old ramshackle place."

"It is not everyone," said Marston Dare pointedly, "who finds interest in red bricks, and modern artifices of floriculture."

As Lynne Court was of the most modern fashion the shot told. The beautiful mistress blushed hotly, and looked indignation personified, but the calm imperturbable face beside her never changed. She began to wonder if she were mistaken—perhaps the shot had only been a random one.

"And so you are anxious to see Weirhurst?" she resumed.

Something in her glance, in her tone, told him his wish might be gratified by a word. Something also in that glance told of danger lurking in his consent, warned him from using as a tool the woman who

had once been queen and mistress of his heart.

To the warning he gave no heed; to the temptation of setting at rest his doubts—of making at least one step forward on the road marked out by his own will—he listened.

His eyes met hers, and saw them sink before his own, but now no throb of heart, no quickening of pulse, no thrill of joy, responded to that sign of tenderness.

"Yes, most anxious," he said quickly.

She moved a little on one side, and pointed to the vacant seat.

"Will you come with—me?" she said softly.

An instant's hesitation—a struggle with himself, but then the purpose he had resolved to follow set aside all scruples as it had set aside all attempts at reason.

"Yes, if you will allow me," he said calmly.

CHAPTER IV.

For the old love's love-sake dead and buried . . .

THEY drove along almost in silence. Lady Lynne was not in the least troubled with scruples. She did not care who saw her with this man, but she did care and would have given a great deal to know his motives for accompanying her.

And yet what motive could there be, she told herself—but one?

He could not forget her. Her power was unchanged, and a thrill of guilty triumph ran through her veins as she stole a lingering glance at the pale, grave face by her side.

He seemed somewhat absent. His eyes looked straight before him, in an absorbed, dreamy fashion, that might, or might not, be flattering to herself. She chose to think it was.

As they reached the gates of Weirhurst, and he sprang out to hold them open for her, she noted a change in his face that surprised her. For an instant he stood there half in, half out of the entrance, looking up the gloomy, grass-grown avenue as if debating some question with himself.

She checked the ponies, and looked back at him. "Are you not coming?" she asked in wonder.

Her voice seemed to rouse him. He let the gate fall back, and once more took his seat in the pony-carriage.

"How strange you looked," she said laughingly. "What were you debating with yourself all that time? The question of propriety?"

"Yes," he said with an odd little smile. "What else could it have been?"

"And you have decided in my favour?"

Her voice was very soft and low, but he caught only the sense of the words—his ears were deaf now to gradations of tone.

"In your favour," he echoed somewhat abruptly. "Oh yes, of course."

They were soon at the house, and she drew up the ponies abruptly. The place looked desolate in the extreme. The walks were neglected, the lawn had long been unown, and everywhere the dense growth of trees darkened and shut out all brightness or life, like a wall of silence.

As he rang the bell it sounded strangely harsh and loud. The summons was answered by an old white-haired woman. It seemed to Marston Dare that she looked more terrified than startled by the advent of visitors.

He asked her quietly if her mistress was at home.

"My mistress sees no one," she answered, glancing nervously from his face to the figure seated in the pony-carriage. "She is a great invalid."

"But this is a matter of importance," said Dare, staying Lady Lynne's words with a glance. "I think your mistress would make an exception in favour of this lady. Will you take in her card and see?"

He handed in the morsel of cardboard which Lady Lynne gave him.

"Say the call is connected with Weirhurst," he added.

The old woman took the card with evident reluctance, and leaving the door ajar, she went back into the house.

"Ugh! what a place. It is like a graveyard," said Lady Lynne with a shiver. "I am sorry I came. I dare say the old lady won't see me either. She is insolent or eccentric enough for anything."

Her companion was silent. His ears were strained, and his heart was beating with an anxiety that astonished himself. Would they be admitted?

Slowly and heavily the footsteps had retreated, slowly and heavily they echoed back, as if that same reluctance weighted them.

The door was opened a little wider. "My mistress will see the lady," said the woman grimly.

Marston Dare started. It was not the consent that surprised him, it was the heck to himself. He was evidently not expected to enter the mysterious mansion also. To all intents and purposes he was

as far off as ever from the object he had in view.

Lady Lynne, however, rose to the occasion in a manner that did her credit.

"Is there no one who can hold my ponies?" she said so haughtily, that the woman, mindful, perhaps, of better days, and what was due to rank and station, muttered a hasty apology, and summoned her husband.

A man, grey and ancient as herself, hobbled into sight, and stood at the ponies' heads. Then Lady Lynne made a sign to Dare to follow her, and they entered the gloomy old house. The hall was very dark, and the room opening out of it, and into which they were conducted, was just as dark, for the blinds were drawn as if to keep out the sunlight, and hangings and furniture were alike of the most sombre hue. Seated by the fireplace, with her back to the light, and shrouded, so it seemed, in nun-like draperies, was the figure of a woman.

It was some time before Marston Dare's eyes grew accustomed to the obscurity, but when they did, he only saw a pale face, framed in by bands of snowy hair, and surmounted by some arrangement of cloudy black lace that effectually disguised both head and features. The hands, that were folded on her lap, were covered with mittens, and his eyes, as they wandered from the shrouded face to the shrouded hands, noted that the fingers were beautifully white and slender, and that they clasped and unclasped each other nervously as she spoke.

She made no attempt to rise at their entrance, only bowed in stately and somewhat distant fashion, and glanced at the card in her hand as if awaiting explanation.

Lady Lynne looked somewhat embarrassed.

"Miss Clyffe, I presume?" she interrogated.

Another bow answered in the affirmative.

Lady Lynne resented the strange reception by assuming her haughtiest and most freezing manner. She stated the reason for her call in as few words as possible, and to Marston Dare her tone seemed almost insolent.

The old lady's eyes were concealed by spectacles; she never once raised them to her visitor's face; only the slender fingers clasped and unclasped themselves from time to time. Dare felt indignant at his

companion's manner—doubly indignant, because he feared that only stress of poverty was inducing the old lady to part with her home, and he felt instinctively that she was suffering pain and humiliation at this cool bargaining. He interposed now between Lady Lynne's explanation and the answer it required. He explained the matter in words more delicate, and infinitely more explicit. Miss Clyffe listened to him as she had done to her other visitor, only, as his voice ceased, she gave one quick glance at his face, and her own seemed warmed by a faint flush, it might have been of anger, or surprise, or indignation. Marston Dare could not tell.

"Your husband, I presume?" she said, turning her head in the direction of Lady Lynne.

The surprise of her words was not so great or so embarrassing to Marston Dare as the sound of her voice. It was a singular voice, very low, very sad, and her words dropped in a slow deliberate fashion that told of great self-restraint, or—

That other suggestion, flashing in swift startling fashion to Marston Dare's brain, held him almost breathless for an instant. In that instant Lady Lynne's crimson face had been averted—it was her voice that roused him.

"Oh no, only a friend staying in the village."

"You are staying in the village," said the old lady in the same deliberate manner. "You are a stranger here then?"

"Yes," he answered quickly, and trying in vain to meet her eyes.

"Do you stay long?" she asked again.

This curiosity as to himself, and the complete ignoring of Lady Lynne's explanation of her visit, struck Dare as being very strange.

But everything around and about Weirhurst was that. Why should he expect the mistress to be different from her surroundings?

"I am thinking of staying all the summer," he said quietly. "The place is beautiful, and it interests me."

"I should not have thought there was much to interest any stranger in Weirhurst or its neighbourhood," she said. Her voice was less deliberate. To Dare it seemed as if the low, even tones were shaken and unsteady. Yet what had he said to agitate her?

An impatient movement from Lady

Lynne recalled him to the object of their visit.

"Am I at liberty to inform Sir Andrew that you accept his offer?" she asked haughtily.

The old lady started as if her thoughts were far away from the subject.

"I—I scarcely know. I mean I must have time to consider," she said hesitatingly.

Lady Lynne looked at her with sublime contempt.

"We have no wish to hurry you," she said coolly, "only Sir Andrew thought that it might be more agreeable to settle the matter privately, and I scarcely fancy you will better his offer."

At the insolent words Marston Dare's eyes flashed with indignation. He felt he hated the one woman as much as he pitied the other. As he looked at that "other," he saw a scarlet flush leap from chin to brow, he saw the head draw itself up in sudden stately pride, and over the quiet face glowed a defiance beyond all words.

But sudden as was the change, sudden also was its suppression. With a quiet bow the mistress of Weirhurst laid her hand on the bell, and dismissed her visitors by two words—"Good-morning."

Marston Dare followed his companion to the door, more enraged and indignant than he had ever felt in his life. Whatever hopes he had cherished, whatever object he had set before him as he obeyed the impulse that had bid him accompany Lady Lynne, he knew that he had gained neither—that he left Weirhurst more dissatisfied, more bewildered than he had entered it.

In silence he took his seat and dropped a crown into the palm of the grey old servitor; in silence he listened to his companion's indignant complaints of incivility; in silence he opened the gates and saw the carriage pass through and on to the shady road beyond.

Then he raised his hat, and echoing only the two words that had spoken their recent dismissal, he turned on his heel and walked across a field that skirted the woods of Weirhurst, leaving his companion gazing after him in astonishment.

"He has gone crazy, surely," she exclaimed, watching with angry eyes the retreating figure. "The air of that place must have affected his brain."

Perhaps it had.

In any case he felt that her presence maddened him at that moment, and without excuse or warning he left her.

It was early noon when Marston Dare quitted Weirhurst; it was late evening when he once again found himself haunting its precincts. He had taken the little boat and rowed down to that part of the grounds which bordered on the river.

The air was very still; the sky held all the pale rose and primrose tints of fading sunset.

Under the drooping willow-boughs it was dark almost as night, and Dare ceased rowing, and fastening his boat to an overhanging branch, leant idly back, looking up through the thick plantation that hid the house.

Now that he could look calmly back on the events of the morning and weigh the impulse that had sent him to Weirhurst, his action looked somewhat irrational. What had he expected to gain? He could not tell. What had he gained? Simply nothing.

The little boat lay idly in the shadows, and the eyes of its occupant wandered as idly over the shining waters and turned from thence to the half-hidden path which the trees seemed doing their best to hide. Suddenly their glance was arrested by some movement beyond. Dare could not quite say what it was; it might have been the flutter of a garment. He at first had thought so, but it disappeared so rapidly that he could not be sure. His eyes, now intent and anxious, watched the path with a new interest. Again, and nearer now, came the same flutter among the shrouding leaves; dim as was the light, Dare could see a figure walking rapidly along—a woman's figure in draperies of flowing black; a figure with nothing of the decrepitude of age in its rapid movements, and yet one that bore some strange resemblance to that of the woman whom he had seen that morning in the old oak parlour at Weirhurst.

Startled and breathless Dare leant forward. The branches hid him from sight; the unconscious figure came on, unwitting that the solitude of this most solitary place held an intruder. On, still on, and Dare saw that his surmise had been correct. The form and figure were those of Mistress Clyffe. He saw the white hair, the shrouding laces; but he saw too with a thrill of something like fear, that while the woman in the parlour had borne every appearance of extreme age, this woman, who bore her likeness, had yet no resemblance to the feeble and decrepit figure he remembered. The walk, the

rapid movements, the gestures which dashed stormily aside every obstacle made by clinging creeper, or outstretched bough, were those of youth.

Youth! And yet from all accounts the mistress of Weirhurst must be full three-score years. The woman he had taken for the mistress of Weirhurst that morning had been so to all appearance. Who, then, was this?

Her rapid movements had brought her close to the river, before his startled senses had fully grasped the fact of her identity.

Keeping perfectly still he watched her with an intentness that took in every detail of her face and figure, and—disguise. Yes, disguise; for, with the rapidity of lightning, the truth rushed to his mind. There must be two inmates of Weirhurst, and one of these evidently concealed her existence and her name for some purpose of her own.

Had that concealment anything to do with the mystery of the tombstone? Had it—? He paused. The woman was still standing looking at the river. The sombre figure, the gleam of the white hair, had in them something weird and strange that repelled—chilled—and yet attracted him.

For an instant looking at the silent woman with her pale set face and downcast eyes, he thought of Mrs. Pugh's words: "No mortal hand struck out that name, 'twas Mistress Dorothy's ghost."

A little chill wind crept up, and along the banks, and rustled among the willow-boughs with an eerie, mournful sound. The chill seemed to steal into Marston Dare's veins. He shuddered and drew his hand across his eyes. When his hand dropped—when he looked again at the spot where the woman had stood, no one was there.

Too startled by that sudden disappearance to move or utter a sound, Marston Dare remained staring in a bewilderment that was almost ludicrous. As soon as he came to himself he released his boat, and with a few rapid strokes reached the place.

No one was there. No sign of human presence or of human life. No sound of retreating feet—nothing but the faint sigh of the wind, and the splash of the water against the bank.

"Am I dreaming—or mad?" he muttered to himself.

He could not shake off this strange feeling, that was not fear, and yet not fearless; he could not forget that sombre figure, that white, wild face looking down into the

dark waters. Sceptic as he was in all matters supernatural, there was something about this meeting that awed and puzzled him.

Rousing himself at last he took his way homewards. The mystery was deepening, but more than ever did he resolve to fathom it. The idea that had flashed into his mind as he saw that second woman with her likeness to the first, only deepened and strengthened the more he thought of it.

"I shall find it out if I stay here all my life," he muttered with the firmness of a baffled reason, and the doggedness of a sure resolve.

All his life!

Ah, one day how those words would haunt him, how their bitterness and impotence would mock the strength that now he thought so sure!

CHAPTER V.

Born out of hope toward what shall yet be done,
Ere hate or love remember or forget.

A FEW days passed on uneventfully.

Lady Lynne had apparently been forgiving enough to excuse Dare's rudeness at their last meeting, for she sent him an invitation to dinner, and he, from sheer want of a feasible excuse, accepted it. Besides, he wanted to hear if there had been any further negotiations respecting Weirhurst.

He therefore went to the red-brick, pretentious-looking structure which Lady Lynne had termed "one of Sir Andrew's places," and was regaled with a magnificence that amused, but failed to impress him at all favourably with the giver of the feast.

It was all show, and glitter, and hollowness, he felt. Sir Andrew was a short, stout, loud-voiced man, one of that new order of knights, who gain their honours from amazing wealth, or force of circumstance. He had a vast notion of the power of money, and but a poor opinion of people who devoted their brains to any other object than that of amassing it. However, there was little in common between himself and his guest.

When the long, stately meal was over, Lady Lynne played and sang to them in the great glittering drawing-room. Her guest listened abstractedly—her husband dozed in his chair. At last she left the piano and came over to one of the windows opening on the terrace.

"Would you like to come out?" she asked her guest.

He answered readily in the affirmative. She caught up some light fleecy shawl lying on one of the lounges, and throwing it over her head and shoulders, stepped out on to the terrace with him.

The night was balmy as summer. The moon gleamed like silver over the trees and smooth green leaves and quaint flower-beds. It was a time and season for sentiment had Marston Dare been disposed for it, but he was not. Every time he saw this woman he grew more and more disenchanted. He began to see, like most people, that sublime as love is, it is a very blindfolding passion after all.

Yet there is something pathetic about that very blindness. With what simplicity and faith we worship our clay idols, believing them to be the very purest gold. The wisest and best of us are helpless at such times, nor can argument or reason assure us of our own amazing folly.

In vain Lady Lynne laid traps for tender reminiscences—in vain her voice sank to its sweetest and most seductive tones. The man by her side was proof against all her wiles. He felt cold and untouched now, and marvelled at himself.

It was with some difficulty he approached the real object of his visit, for he had to bear with Lady Lynne's reproaches at his desertion of her on that morning, and invent excuses for it. He learnt at last, however, that nothing had yet been settled. Miss Clyffe was ill, and could not make up her mind as to whether she would part with it or not. He felt reassured by this information. Perhaps he showed his relief in some way, for Lady Lynne said laughingly:

"One would think there was some beautiful damsel immured in that dreary old habitation, you take such an interest in it."

On his way home he thought of those words, and thought, too, how strangely they fitted in with that dim suspicion floating in his mind.

He had insisted on walking, despite all offers of a conveyance on the part of his host and hostess.

The cool air refreshed him; the scents of the flowering hedgerows and fragrant meadows seemed strangely sweet.

One night Dare shut up his books and left the farm for a stroll. He had been working hard, and felt disinclined for bed. He looked at his watch; it was half-past eleven.

"I should have time to walk to the

village," he thought, and then wondered why he had thought it.

He walked on. Though he had said "the village," he knew it was not only to the village his mind led the way, and his feet were speeding. He knew even before the old grey church met his eyes, standing silent as the silent night, with its dark square tower outlined against the quiet sky. He had unlatched the gate and walked across the soft greensward ere ever he asked himself what purpose had led him here. The sloping path by which he entered faced the entrance to the church. From where he stood, half the churchyard only was in view. The other half—where lay that mysterious grave—was not visible unless he walked round the church. He stood for a moment, looking, as once before he had looked, at the quiet village, the sloping hills, the dark curve of the woods.

A cloud obscured the moon, and for a moment or two the whole place lay in shadow. It was at that moment that the clock in the tower struck the hour of midnight.

As the last stroke echoed dull and long over the stillness which reigned in that region of death, Marston Dare stepped out from the shadow, and skirting the church, found himself facing the spot he knew so well, and which held for him so strange an attraction.

The moon was still hidden, and the old oak boughs spread themselves in sheltering care over the marble cross. Between him and it lay a gravel path, and beyond that path, and bending over the grave, was—A shadow! No, not a shadow. At first he had thought so, as he had stopped, startled and dismayed. But he saw it was a woman's figure—a black, motionless form, with face turned from him—the figure of a woman, alone and unprotected, standing here at this lonely midnight hour beside this lonely grave.

Gifted with nerves as strong as most men possess, yet Dare felt a strange shuddering awe creep over him as he stood and watched her.

For the life of him he could not move a step forward. It seemed as if the very springs of his life were chilled by this fear—this expectance of something—he could not tell what. He only knew he stood there waiting—waiting for what seemed to him long hours of strange and chill dismay.

The woman had her back turned to him. His footsteps had made no sound on the

soft turf. She was quite unconscious that she was not alone. Suddenly a low half-stifled cry escaped her; she sank upon her knees beside the grave, and laid her head on the turf that covered it.

"Oh, my 'dear, my dear!" she wailed. "Oh, to be at rest with you—to be at rest with you!"

The cry faltered and sank low; but, distressing as it was, it came like an absolute relief to Marston Dare. It seemed to release him from that paralysis of thought and action, which had held him chained inertly by the ivied wall.

He crossed the space; he reached the grave; he neared the crouching figure, with its downcast head and sweeping sombre garments. But then he stopped, arrested less by that low faint cry of deadly terror than by sight of the face uplifted to him in its ghastly fear in the white gleaming moonlight.

He knew then what his suspicion had been. He knew then how far he had followed it. But he had never dreamed how base and unmanly a thing it would look, even in his own sight, till he saw the fear change to defiance in those dark startled eyes—till he found himself confronted by a woman like and yet unlike the woman he had thought to find.

"What do you want?" she asked abruptly.

The question was so unexpected, so unanswerable, that he only stood there looking at her in bewildered silence.

"I—I beg your pardon for disturbing you," he stammered at last. The sound of his voice gave him courage. "The churchyard is free to all, I believe," he added.

"At this time, at this hour," she muttered. "You—you came here with some purpose. You followed me."

"Why should you think I am a spy?" he asked gently.

He was looking at her in ever-increasing wonder—wonder at the beauty of the white wasted face, so young and yet so sorrowful; wonder at the dainty, slender stature, the great, frightened, sombre eyes. Who was she?

Her glance fell. Her fingers trembled as she clasped them together; her breath came and went in stormy pants that bespoke terrible agitation.

That fear appealed to all that was noblest and manliest in Marston Dare. He put aside his intense curiosity, he crushed his voice to a quietness and composure

that surprised even himself and insensibly quieted her.

"I regret that I have startled you," he said. "The night was so warm and fine it tempted me to take a stroll. This churchyard is a favourite place of mine. I came here. That is all my explanation."

"A singular taste to come to a churchyard at midnight," she said.

"Yet a taste you seem to share in common with myself."

Her eyes looked down at the grave at her feet.

"Someone I loved very dearly is buried there," she said simply.

Dare started visibly.

Did she mean—was it really Dorothy Clyffe who lay there under the sod? or was this neither the woman he had supposed, nor the ostensible mistress of Weirhurst?

Her eyes travelled back from the grave to his face, and rested there earnestly and long.

"You are quite a stranger here, I think you said?" she murmured dreamily.

He had not said it to her, so he supposed, but he did not deny the fact. He assented to it, and added something of the interest awakened in him by the inscription on the tombstone whose secret she shared.

As he mentioned it a scarlet flush burned in her face, making it young and beautiful as a girl's.

"You thought it strange," she echoed nervously, twisting and untwisting the fingers of her ungloved hands as she spoke. "Why should you?"

"It must appear singular, you will admit, that an inscription to a wife's memory should have her husband's name struck out, and that the mystery has never been solved," he answered.

A little bitter laugh left her lips. She gathered up her cloudy draperies, and turned as if to go.

"May I not see you on your way?" pleaded Dare eagerly. "The hour is very late and the roads lonely."

"I am not afraid of late hours or lonely roads," she said mournfully. "No one molests the—dead."

"The dead!" he echoed. And again that chill and tremor crept over his frame, and he thought of the mysterious figure he had seen by the river-bank.

His words seemed to shock her. She hesitated and looked back.

"Did I say that?" she asked timidly.

"I forgot. I am so much alone; I am not used to strangers. But you—oh, sir, you look kind! You look as if a woman might trust you. Don't force yourself on me; don't follow me; don't"—and she came near and laid her cold hands on his arm, "don't tell any one you have seen me. Promise that."

"I promise you," he answered slowly. "I promise you all the more readily because I have not the faintest idea myself whom—I—have—seen."

She drew a sudden quick breath of relief. Her eyes looked up to him gratefully, wonderingly, and was it regretfully!

He almost thought so.

"I—I think I can trust you," she said softly.

For all answer he laid his hand upon the marble cross by which they stood.

"I swear by this," he said solemnly, "by this memory of—Dorothy Clyffe—that I will never reveal what I have learnt to-night until she permits."

"Until—she—permits," faltered his companion. "Do you forget? Do you not know that Dorothy Clyffe is—"

"Hush!" he said solemnly. "What others believe has nothing to do with us from this night forth. I know, and so do you, that for some reason of her own she has died to the world, to her friends, to her husband."

A low wild cry cut short his words.

"You know—you know!" she gasped, and sank at his feet and hid her face in her shuddering hands—down, down upon the dewy turf that told to all the world—a lie!

CHAPTER VI.

As love might rule over death.

THE old church clock had struck the hour of midnight as Marston Dare stepped out from the shadows and stood beside the mysterious grave. The same clock struck the first hour of a new day as he left the churchyard with the woman, whom by that grave he had met.

He had entered that churchyard with no very definite purpose, and with an unreasonable curiosity burning in his veins; he left it with a life changed and set to one end. And yet he knew that to explain this change in himself would have been well-nigh impossible. Even to his own mind it looked quixotic, foolish, unnecessary, but the bias of the mind is an argument in itself, and one strong enough, as a rule, to overthrow all the rules of logic. He had

not been able to reason himself out of that resolve to fathom the mystery of the tombstone. He was not able to reason himself out of this determination to guard the secret and protect the life of the woman whose story had been told to him by her own lips, beside her own grave.

His own suspicions had been far enough from the reality; his own idea had been that Dorothy Clyffe was living at Weirhurst, under the protection of her aunt. But he had learnt from Dorothy Clyffe's own lips that she had simply changed places with the supposed mistress of Weirhurst. While Alice Dorothy Clyffe, the aunt, lay buried under the oak shadows, Dorothy Clyffe, the niece, had assumed her identity, and was living at the old house unsuspected and unknown save by the two old faithful servants who shared and preserved her secret.

And the reason?

Ah! That reason it was, with its strange history of shame and sorrow and despair, that had aroused in Marston Dare's breast an indignation so fierce, a chivalry so ardent, a pity so great, for this friendless, lonely woman.

He had looked at the worn face, with all its lovely youth stamped by sorrow and suffering. He had heard the broken voice, sweet as no woman's voice had ever seemed to him, breathing out its tale of wrong, its burden of dread, and he had been ready enough to acknowledge that her concealment and deception had been after all but an outcome of fear that had snatched at any excuse for safety. In her own words the story had reached his ears—in her own words it lives on these pages.

"Don't betray me," she had gasped when the terrible fear of his words had struck her almost senseless at his feet. "Oh, don't—don't betray me. I don't know who you are. I don't know how you came to know me, but promise me you won't give me up to him. I would sooner face death—nay, I would sooner force death than live through such days as those from which—this—saved me."

She pointed to the cross by which they stood, and great tears gathered in her eyes and fell one by one down the white wasted cheeks. Those tears unmanned Dare. He could not bear the sight of her weakness—her distress. He besought her to say no more, to believe that her secret was safe with him; but she checked her emotion, and wiped the tears from her eyes, and facing him there, with her hand

on the marble cross, told him the story of her ruined life.

"If you have heard of me at all," she said, "you have heard of my marriage—my grand marriage, but you could never have heard how in one year of that life I grew to envy the poorest, weariest creature begging her bread in the London streets, who was free. I married, believing myself in love, ready to give duty, honour, reverence, to the man I called husband. I found—oh, Heaven, pardon him!—I found myself tied to a drunkard, a roué, a man with a life of vice behind him which he unfolded triumphantly before my shrinking eyes—with neither self-respect, nor honour, nor conscience, and this man!—I, a girl of seventeen, reared in country innocence, and purity, and simplicity—this man I was bound to live with for life.

"I cannot tell you—I could not even tell myself now—what those two years of marriage were to me. I felt myself steeped in moral degradation. I grew to abhor myself as well as the man to whose brief passion I owed my position. In a month he had wearied of me—in a month I was no more to him than any of the poor victims whose hearts and lives he had ruined. I kept my misery to myself. My aunts believed me happy. It would have broken their tender hearts to know the truth. At last I think I was well-nigh mad. Mind and body were giving way beneath the strain. I was not a woman of the world, remember. I knew absolutely nothing of life and its sins and follies and recklessness—such life as was daily before my eyes. We were constantly travelling about, sometimes in Paris, sometimes in Vienna, sometimes in Rome, sometimes in London. It was in Rome, I think, that the knowledge of my real position burst upon me, that the baseness and treachery of Anthony Hurst was revealed. It was winter, and the city was very gay, and my husband was always away from home, and rarely if ever took me with him. Rumours reached me sometimes of some beautiful foreign woman with whom he was always seen, but I cared little for that; I dreaded his presence, and was almost thankful for any attraction that left me free from his brutality and insults. But one day, without word or warning, he left Rome and he left me.

"I think I went mad for a time. I know I dismissed my servants, and took what money there was left, and came alone,

unprotected, back to England, nor ever rested, day or night, till I found myself once more in my childhood's home. But that was changed too, and only one face and voice greeted me, instead of the two dear ones I had left. Aunt Marian had died, and Aunt Alice was so old and feeble that the shock of seeing me so changed threw her into a dangerous illness. But of that I knew nothing. From the time of my arrival at Weirhurst all is a blank for the space of two weeks. After that I seemed to wake quite suddenly, as one wakes after a very long sleep. It was dusk, I remember, and I lay with my eyes open for some time, trying dreamily to remember where I was. Then a strange sort of oppression seemed to weigh on me. I tried to move my limbs, but they seemed swathed in tight wrappings. A scent of flowers was heavy on the air. My bed—oh, shall I ever forget the horror of that moment!—my bed was so narrow and hard that I could not even turn. With a struggle I raised myself to a sitting position. Opposite me was a mirror, and as I met my own reflection there, I saw a ghastly face bound in strange white folds. I saw the scattered flowers upon my breast fall on the bare oak floor. I saw the face of a living woman looking at me from the coffin where a dead woman had been laid.

"I wonder now I did not die then, in the fear and shock of that discovery. I rose, how I cannot tell; I dragged my feeble limbs across the room. I tore off the hideous bands and folds around my head. I stood there, with my hair streaming wildly round me, and my scared white face looking at me with a horrible unlikeness to the face I knew as mine, and while I so stood the door opened, and on the threshold stood—my aunt.

"Heaven knows what my own fear had been, but what must have been hers! I heard one wild shriek pealing through the silent house, and I caught in my arms the strengthless, lifeless form of the only friend I had in the world.

"Need I say more? Can you guess now the sequel that leads to our meeting to-night; that explains why Dorothy Clyffe lives, yet is to all intents and purposes dead.

"The shock killed my aunt, but it was I who was supposed to be dead; I for whom the certificate had been made out; I who was laid at rest here. When I could

convince the old and terrified servants of my identity, of my being really alive, I heard of my strange illness; of my long insensibility that had been mistaken for death, and of my aunt's grief and despair. And then—then came into my mind the scheme which I have followed. I was believed to be dead. I knew my cruel husband could never molest me more. Do you wonder that I snatched at such a chance? I might live on here as Alice Clyffe, and no one would suspect me. I had simply to disguise myself and dress myself as my aunt; the old servants loved me too well ever to betray my secret, and as Alice Clyffe I have lived unknown and unsuspected up to this time."

Her voice ceased, her story was ended.

In the silence that followed she looked up at her companion's face with sad and pleading eyes.

"Say you are sorry for me; you will be my friend; you will not betray me," she implored, and held out her hands to him.

For all answer he took the small, cold, outstretched hands in his own, and touched them earnestly with his lips.

"I pity you with all my soul," he said. "Your friend, you said—may I be that?"

"If—if you will," she faltered.

"Thank you," he said simply, and placed the little hand on his arm, and went with her, slowly, reverently, through the quiet paths, while above their heads the morning star shone clear and bright, as the dawn broke over the dusky hills.

A new day was breaking—a new day that marked for Marston Dare a new interest in his hard and lonely life.

CHAPTER VII.

Sweet for a little, even to fear, and sweet,
Oh Love, to lay down fear at Love's fair feet.

MARSTON DARE left his companion at her own gates, but left her after a promise that she would receive him the next day if he called.

He went home then, and let himself into the farmhouse, and threw himself down on his bed in a state of bewilderment that defied all calm consideration.

What had he done? What had he learnt? How had the whole aspect of his life changed so utterly and suddenly?

He thought of that evening when he had wandered idly into the churchyard, when his eyes had rested on that strange inscription. He had not asked his strange companion why she had chosen to deface

the name it bore, but he could guess the reason well enough. Some morbid feeling—some impulsive horror of that printed lie must have seized her, and forced her in an indignant moment to strike out from sight of men the name she hated. Of the risk she ran, the curiosity such an action would excite, she never thought. The one man to whom alone belonged the right of replacing it had treated the matter with utter indifference. The defaced tombstone stood alone, bearing its silent witness to the tale of sorrow and despair that Marston Dare had learnt that night.

In his own mind he never for one instant blamed the woman who had acted thus. Chance had thrown in her way a prospect of release from her bondage. She had seized it, and no living soul ever suspected the truth.

It puzzled Marston Dare not a little why he, a stranger, should have been so interested in it—why he had been so bent on discovering the mystery; why he now felt so strong and tender an interest in this woman's fate, and bound himself to be her friend and protector if needed.

Perhaps that element of romance lurking in his soul which had fashioned him into a novelist and left him half a poet, was to blame. Perhaps the mystery and sadness of this story appealed to him more powerfully than it would have done to a man of more material nature. Perhaps this woman, with her wasted youth, her strange beauty, her tragic history, moved him with a sympathy too deep for words to explain, for thought or pen to reach. He could not explain it to himself, he only knew it was there. Had he been wise he would have known that no interest so powerful or so inexplicable could spring into life at a woman's presence, and there—end. He would have known that such an interest would but gain fresh strength with every day that came, with every night that died. He would have known that the vision of his own fancy and the ideal he had formed for himself in years long past, had sprung into life, a vivid reality. That this presence, mysterious, fateful, unfamiliar as it was, would yet haunt him henceforward, with that strange mingling of pain and sweetness that is all we know of earthly love.

It is the favoured privilege of the historian to skip over years as if their passage were of no account to the dramatis personæ who fill his pages; in like manner it is the privilege of the reader to skip over pages which

appear dry and uninteresting, though the writer may deem them essential.

Consider then that two years have passed since Marston Dare came to the little Shropshire village, and that in those two years he has lingered on in the same place, working hard as one who loves his work and reaps its benefits in fame and success—faithful still to that promise made in the old churchyard—the friend, adviser, and helper of the lonely woman who still lived on at Weirhurst.

He had counselled her not to risk selling the old house, as she had once determined to do. It would court notice; it would necessitate legal proceedings; her disguise might be penetrated; and she, leaning only too willingly on the strength and wits at her service, was guided by his wishes, and remained.

If people gossiped about the strange interest the new comer seemed to feel for the old lady at Weirhurst, or the many times during the course of the week in which he was seen entering or leaving the gates, the gossip never reached him or her.

Those two tranquil happy years were the sweetest her life had known, though they were leading that life on to a sorrow and an evil she never suspected.

There was one person who watched Marston Dare's proceedings, and learnt of his actions, with a jealous and spiteful wonder. The utter indifference displayed to herself had piqued Lady Lynne more than she liked to acknowledge, even to herself.

To find out the reason was a task to which she bent all her energies, and when a woman, and a jealous woman, is bent on such a task, she generally manages to accomplish it.

Her spies told her of Dare's constant visits to Weirhurst. Her own instincts told her that no man would be so zealous and devoted to an old, decrepit, half-mad woman, as she always termed Mistress Alice Clyffe. She determined to watch him, and find out who lived at Weirhurst besides its mistress.

With the fall of the summer dusk, Dare used always to go to the old house. He had become used to dropping in after his day's work was over—used to sitting in the dim oak parlour, or strolling about the quiet glades with this pale-faced, sweet-voiced woman, whom he, unconsciously, had grown to care for beyond and above all other cares and interests of his life. She was unconscious, too, of the feelings she

had awakened. Dear as this friendship was, it yet seemed to her nothing more, for the bondage of her miserable marriage held her in chains too sure for forgetfulness.

One summer night—a night so hot and windless that Dorothy had listened to Dare's persuasions, and come out into the grounds without the usual drapery of lace that veiled her hair and features—the two were strolling together, and directed their steps to the riverside.

It was on this night that Lady Lynne had entered the grounds unobserved, and followed them at a safe distance. Hidden behind the thick screen of bushes, she saw them pause by the shadowed waters where the willows fringed the banks. She heard Dare's voice, low and earnest, telling his companion of that other evening when he had seen her from his boat, and she heard the woman's voice, in its sweet, low accents, replying to him. Still, even then no suspicion of the real truth entered Lady Lynne's mind. She had heard of Dorothy Hurst, but had felt little interest in the tale, and now her idea still was that this was a companion of old Mistress Clyffe, and that Dare was making love to her.

She watched them for some time, and then retreated unobserved, her heart full of rage and bitterness against the woman she deemed her rival.

Her spite took a very foolish form. She wrote an anonymous letter to Mistress Alice Clyffe, informing her of the shameful behaviour of her "companion," who was trying to entrap a gentleman into an undue intimacy, which could bode no good to that bold young damsel.

This letter amazed and frightened Dorothy.

Already something of her long-guarded secret must be known, and this was the result.

She waited in grievous alarm for Dare's usual visit, and then showed him the letter.

He read it straight through without a word, and then—

Well, then, as he turned to her, his face betrayed him.

His secret leapt into life and knowledge, and above and beyond the poor pretence of friendship, each saw and read the truth.

It was a terrible moment—terrible in its pain, its weakness, its desolating fears, its hopeless picture of that long blank future whose every hour would be one of loneliness and dread.

"Heaven help me!" groaned Marston Dare. "In all my thought of you, I never thought of this! My friendship has done you more harm than good."

He crushed the letter in his hand.

"I ought to leave you, and at once," he muttered. "It is the only way I can allay that woman's suspicions."

"You know, then, who has done this!" she questioned eagerly.

A dusky shame-born flush crept over his face. His eyes sank before her own.

"Yes," he said.

There was a long, long silence. He could hear his heart beating stormily and fast; he knew only too well what anguish lay in the thought of that parting he had decreed. She had become so much to him, how could he tear himself from her presence? Was love always to meet him as a foe to combat?

For a brief space some secret and subtle tempting held him there by her side; for a brief space his eyes lingered on her face that of late had grown so beautiful in its serene peace and its new-born happiness. Then she looked up and met his eyes, and in another instant was sobbing on his breast.

"Don't go!" she cried. "Oh, don't go!"

He made no attempt to soothe her; he could not have spoken, so he felt, without adding to her shame, and the burden of misery she already bore.

Only when the sobs ceased, when spent and weak as a child she lay in his arms, did he venture to speak at last.

"My darling," he said sorrowfully. "Is it so much to you?"

His words recalled her to herself, and knowing what was right, she roused herself to meet this new trouble with something of his own brave fortitude.

"I was so friendless," she said sadly, "and I had hoped——"

Again her voice broke. The ordeal was too terrible.

What she had hoped—what she had looked forward to, were things innocent enough, and yet she dared not speak of them now.

Again silence fell upon them. She had sunk into a low chair, but he was still standing, and before them on the dark oak-floor lay the letter which had come to part them.

In the silence during which Dare was fighting out that inward battle which holds

honour for its watch-cry, there came across the still night air a strange dull sound. It was the bell of the old church, and it rang the death-knell of some ended life.

They both started at the sound. Perhaps its warning helped them to that sacrifice which right and duty demanded. Perhaps before the majesty and mystery of death even the anguish of such an hour as this looked less blank, less bitter.

Summoning up all his strength, Dare bent towards the slender figure, and touched the trembling hands.

"I can't bear to say good-bye," he whispered hoarsely. "It seems too hard, although the same world holds us both; but I must go now—it is better for both our sakes. I will write to you to-morrow. I will try to think what is best."

His voice broke. He saw the anguish in her tearless eyes, he saw the quiver of the sad young mouth. He caught her to his heart and kissed her with the passion of despair that spoke of an ended hope. Then he left her.

Again and again the death-bell pealed out on the summer air.

Why had he gone to the village? Why had his wild and reckless steps led him to the churchyard? Why did the sullen strokes of that tolling bell madden him as ever and again their echoes fell across the stillness? Marston Dare found himself asking these questions, yet never answering them, hurrying wildly on as if to stifle thought—where, he never looked nor cared.

Yes, he was once more in the old grey churchyard, and once more looking at the gleaming black and white of those fatal letters, and once more asking himself helplessly why he had meddled with Fate, since to mortals Fate is always so cruel and merciless a thing.

He heard steps on the gravel path, and looked round. It was the old sexton leaving the belfry-tower. He saw the quiet figure by the grave, and came forward, touching his hat.

"A sad thing, sir, and suddin," he said, as if taking for granted the stranger's knowledge of his news.

"What is it?" asked Dare mechanically. The springs of his life seemed frozen. Of what interest to him were life, or death, or burial?

"'Tis Sir Anthony Hurst, sir," said the old man. "The news came to-night. He fell over a mountain or glazier, or summat

of that sort, in Switzerland. Was picked up dead. They're sending the body home to be laid here."

The night seemed full of reeling shadows. The silver haze of moonlight turned black before Dare's dizzy eyes. He clutched at the marble cross for support.

The old man passed on unheeding. He had other people to tell the news to, and he was a personage of importance just then.

And Dare, alone and glad-hearted beyond all words, fell on his knees beside that fateful grave, and while tears of joy and thankfulness dimmed his eyes, cried out: "Thank God, she is mine now. Mine, without sin, without fear; never to be lonely or friendless any more."

And the clear, soft moonbeams fell through the old oak boughs, and showed him once again that name, "Dorothy, wife of —."

My readers, can you add the rest?

A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE.

By PAUL BLAKE.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN a young poet has written a song, he takes a keen pleasure in hearing it mentioned by his friends. Should he listen to one of them singing it, he is ready to accept the compliment as a flattering one. But it touches him more nearly, a great deal, if the singer is a stranger.

No wonder, then, that Ellis Field, as he wandered through a deserted portion of Regent's Park one summer afternoon, felt his heart thrill with unaccustomed delight, as he heard a fresh young voice singing softly the words:

Bright shone the sun, 'twas summer weather,
When first we roamed across the heather,
You and I.

The lines formed part of one of his own songs.

The singer was seated on the grass with her back towards Ellis. She did not hear his approach; he hesitated a moment, partly not to interrupt her, partly from the feeling that he would like to hear her sing the rest. Then half involuntarily he joined in the refrain in a low voice.

Not so low but that Carrie Miller turned quickly round, ceasing to sing at the same moment. Ellis found himself nearer to

her than he was aware. He felt in a sufficiently awkward position.

"I beg your pardon," he said, lifting his hat; "I did not mean to interrupt you."

The young lady smiled, there was not a trace of embarrassment visible on her countenance.

"I did not know it was arranged as a duet," she said.

"Yes; it has just been published in both forms."

"Is it? I have only a manuscript copy."

"Will you permit me——?"

Ellis stopped suddenly; he was on the point of asking permission to present her with a printed copy of the song, but it struck him that the terms of their acquaintance scarcely warranted him in making such a request. He wondered at his own audacity; he seemed to be already on intimate terms with this charming young lady. It was almost a shock to recollect that he was a stranger.

"I know what you are going to say," said Miss Miller; "yes, you may let me have a copy if you have one. Mr. Drysdale promised to send me some as soon as they were published. I suppose he has forgotten. It's charming music—isn't it?"

"Very," replied Ellis, more vexed than he cared to confess, that she had confined her eulogy to the music; he envied Drysdale.

"How do you like the words?" he asked.

"Very much; they are really pretty."

"Pretty" was not quite the word Ellis wished for; but, pronounced in a charming way by a pair of rosy lips, it went far to satisfy him.

Before this, Miss Miller had risen, and they were walking slowly together across the grass. She still seemed quite unconscious that there was anything in the slightest degree unusual in her conduct, and Ellis felt very charmed. He congratulated himself on the slight adventure. Whatever might be its upshot, he resolved to enjoy it for the present.

"By the way," continued his companion, "how do you happen to know it so well?" Ellis looked guilty.

"I know!" she exclaimed with a quick little laugh. "You wrote the words."

"How did you find that out?" he asked wonderingly.

"Instinct, I suppose. Do you think it was very clever of me?"

"Yes, very, and more than clever—it showed a sympathetic nature."

"Oh no; I'm not in the least poetical," was the reply; "at least, not often, and only when I'm alone, and I don't encourage myself then. I don't think life is very romantic; I find it intensely practical."

"Do you call this part of it romantic or practical?" Ellis asked with a smile.

"Romantic, I suppose, as far as it is either. But romance seems out of place in a London park. I hope I'm not taking you out of your way?" she ended rather suddenly.

"Oh no, not in the least. I have no engagement of any kind, and besides, we are walking towards my rooms. May I accompany you as far as our paths lie together?"

"Oh, yes, if you wish; I shall be glad of a companion."

In the mouths of most young ladies this speech would have appeared very forward. Ellis felt that it would have been sufficient to determine him to take another direction very soon. But, as Miss Miller said it, it had a totally opposite effect. There was nothing flattering in her tone; it was simply one of civility and candour.

They walked together for some distance, talking easily and naturally as if they had been acquainted for years.

On coming to a seat near Gloucester Gate, Miss Miller suggested they should rest a few moments.

"This is the last seat we shall pass," she said.

"Don't mention anything that suggests the end of our walk," said Ellis.

"Why not? It must come to an end soon, for I live only five minutes farther."

"It shall last till then, at any rate," was his reply, "if you will allow me to see you home."

"Oh yes, if you like. It is in Fairlight Terrace."

Ellis started slightly.

"We are neighbours in that case," he said; "I live at Number Eight."

It was Miss Miller's turn to be surprised.

"At Number Eight? that is where we live, too."

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "I have never seen you before to-day."

"No, I dare say not; we only moved there yesterday. We are on the top floor."

"I am on the ground-floor. May I ask who 'we' are?"

"My sister Florrie and I. She is only a child."

"As we are such near neighbours, I hope we may have the opportunity of meeting frequently," said Ellis, conscious that he was scarcely carrying out his principles on the subject of proper behaviour to unprotected young ladies. But then it was absurd to think of Miss Miller as unprotected. He had not been in her company a minute before he was quite certain that she was well able to take care of herself. He half wished he was equally sure of himself.

"We are sure to see each other sometimes," she remarked. "You are fond of music?"

"Passionately."

"Then you must come up and see us sometimes; we have a piano, and Florrie plays very well indeed for a child."

"And you?"

"I don't play much, I sing. I am studying at present."

Ellis thought he had discovered everything now. His companion must be a musical enthusiast come to London to study, and bold enough to live without a chaperon. Yet it seemed something more than bold to invite a bachelor to come to her rooms. He had not had much experience of Bohemian etiquette, but he could not help thinking that its rules must be considerably more lax than those of society to permit such a proceeding.

"I shall be most happy to hear you sing," he replied, "if——"

"If what?"

Ellis did not like to explain. He wished he had not hinted at the existence of any obstacle. The only way out of the difficulty was to be plain.

"I don't know whether you are aware that I am living by myself."

"I supposed so; what of it?" she asked.

"Is there any harm in your coming to see me?"

"Not the least in the world," he replied warmly. "I was only afraid that possibly you might think so."

Miss Miller gave one of her musical little laughs.

"I should not have asked you in that case," she said. "I'm afraid you don't quite understand me yet; you have not had much time, it is true. What do you think I am? I should like to know."

"I think you are a very charming young lady," was Ellis's somewhat gauche reply.

"Thank you, but I didn't mean that. I may as well tell you once for all that pretty speeches are thrown away on me."

"Ah, you hear them so often."

"Yes, and they mean so little."

Ellis was conscious of an annoyance; he did not like to hear her acquiesce so easily in his statement.

"Sometimes they mean something," he said. "Do you never try and distinguish between the true and false in compliments?"

"You are wandering from the point," she replied. "What do you think I am?"

"A young lady who has come to London to study singing."

"As a profession?"

"Possibly."

"You are partly right, but I must correct your statement in one point. I am not a lady."

Ellis was again conscious of a disappointment. He was obliged to confess that he had never known a young lady like Miss Miller, but he was quite willing to include her in the category, even if it necessitated an enlargement of his definition.

He waited for her to go on.

"I am the daughter of a very small boot-maker in the country. I was taught to curtsy to the parson's wife when I was small."

"Birth is not everything," sententially remarked Ellis.

"No, fortunately," was Miss Miller's reply as she gave another little laugh. "I was sent to a good school, and then became nursery-governess at Lord Leveston's; that was when I was fifteen. I was there three years, and I learned a great deal more than I taught. I made friends with the regular governess, who was a Parisian, and she taught me to speak French, and how to dress, and I used to watch the visitors and Lady Leveston till I knew how to behave as well as any of them. Then I had to leave, the children grew too old for me, so I went back to my home."

"That must have been a great change for you," said Ellis, scarcely knowing what to say.

"Much too great to please me. I couldn't stand it. Madame had told me I had a voice and ought to study, so I came to London four months ago."

"I'm sure I hope you will be successful," said Ellis earnestly; "you have great courage to come up to fight your way alone."

"I don't deserve much credit," was the reply; "it would have required much more courage to have stayed at home. Here we are at last."

They had walked together to Fairlight Terrace. Ellis opened the door with his latchkey.

"Will you come into my room, and let me give you a cup of tea?" he asked.

"No, thank you, not now; Florrie is waiting for me upstairs. Don't forget to come and see us soon."

"I am not likely to forget it," was his reply.

"Any afternoon will do. I am always out in the evening. Good-bye."

She held out her daintily-gloved little hand. Ellis pressed it, and a moment afterwards she disappeared up the stairs.

CHAPTER II.

INSTEAD of going into his room, Ellis opened the front door again, and went out. He usually had his dinner at a restaurant in the Euston Road when he happened to be in the neighbourhood; on this occasion he made his way there half-mechanically, not being in the mood to care about thinking where he should go.

The events of the last hour and a half had affected him more than he liked to acknowledge to himself. He was peculiarly susceptible in some points, though he did not pass amongst his friends for a man who cared much for ladies' society. He did not as a rule; the ordinary young lady had small attractions for him. But Miss Miller was very far from being an ordinary young lady, though that alone would not have been sufficient to have caused his present sensations.

"I mustn't be a fool," was the prevailing thought in his mind as he made his way along the far from attractive Hampstead Road; by which he meant that he must not fall in love. Rather a strange resolve for a poet.

After all, the poetic was only one side of his nature; although he had thrown up business, and taken literature as his calling, he was not able to nullify the effects of his education and training. Business has too powerful a hold over those devoted to it for some years, even against their will, to loose its grasp at once. Ellis determined when he became a Bohemian, that one of the sacrifices he must make was the acceptance of the impossibility of his marrying except after an indefinite number of years.

He had a private income of about one hundred and twenty pounds; this he found himself able to supplement to the extent of fifty pounds by his pen. On the modest total he did not find it difficult to exist; his tastes were not expensive, and as his action was the result of his own wishes, he did not complain of the loss of various luxuries to which he had always been accustomed.

"She's a charming girl," he thought as he sat waiting for his cut from the joint. "That is the word which best suits her. She is pretty and clever, and a dozen other things, but one is scarcely conscious of them when she is present; one only feels a general sort of satisfaction, dependent on nothing in particular, but on her presence generally."

He was not able to keep his thoughts entirely under control during his dinner; they continually reverted to the same subject. "I wonder what she lives on," he found himself thinking. "She can't have saved much, and it must cost something to study singing. There's her sister, too. Well, that is a subject I can't question her upon. Perhaps she'll tell me to-morrow."

He did not feel inclined after he finished his dinner to return to his room. He had some work to do, it is true, but he was not in the mood to finish it. He resolved to call on Drysdale, who had set his song to music. He remembered that Miss Miller knew him; perhaps he might find out from him something about her.

"Is Mr. Drysdale in?" he asked of a rather dirty servant who opened the door.

"I think he's just going out, sir."

Ellis ran up the stairs, and found his friend in the last stage of despairing haste.

"What do you want, my boy? Can't spare you a moment. Got anything to do to-night? No? Then come and see our opera at the Varieties. I'm conducting there. Where's my hat gone? Show them this card; they'll pass you into the circle or somewhere. Look me up at the stage-door between the acts."

Drysdale was gone before Ellis had time to thank him. On the whole he was rather glad that he had something definite to do. An hour or two spent in listening to pretty music might divert his thoughts a little. He strolled down to the theatre, arriving in the middle of the first act.

His seat was at the back of the circle, in deep shade; he made himself comfortable, and settled down to lazily enjoy himself.

Soon he found himself thinking how very much better it would be for the piece if they could get a girl like Carrie to play the leading part. The principal performer irritated him beyond measure; there was such obtrusive consciousness pervading her every movement.

The chorus entered, and he began comparing each individual with the actress who so irritated him. Yes, there was one there who would have been better suited in the title-rôle. It was Miss Miller.

Her image was so constantly in Ellis's mind that he experienced scarcely any surprise when he recognised her. However, he involuntarily shrank back still farther into the shade, afraid that she would see him, and imagine he had discovered she was an actress and had come with the intention of seeing her on the stage. If she had wished him to come she would have told him where she was playing.

He waited with impatience for the act to end. Directly it was over he went round to the stage-door, where Drysdale soon joined him.

"Pretty, isn't it?" said the conductor. "Wants backbone though—too Frenchy, and no more plot than a farce. How did you like it?"

"Tolerably well; the dresses are nice."

"Oh yes, it's very well put on."

"Who was that brown-haired girl in the chorus with the gold braid round her hat?" asked Ellis, feeling that he had rushed into the subject without much grace.

"Do you mean Miss Vincent?"

"I think her name's Miller. Vincent may be her stage name, though."

"I expect it's the same. She's the sort of girl who would catch the eye of you poetic chaps. She's a sort of mystery to me. She's a treasure in the chorus, I can tell you. She ought to be a principal, and will one day."

"Do you know why she sings in the chorus?" asked Ellis, feeling that he was going at least as far as delicacy would permit.

"I believe Lord Leveston gave her an introduction to the manager. Leveston is part owner of the theatre, you know. By Jove! I must hurry back. Come round again, if you care to, after the next act."

Ellis did not find himself in a much happier frame of mind for the information he had received. He sat out the next act impatiently. This time Drysdale did not make his appearance; he was detained in the theatre. Ellis returned to his seat and

watched the remaining act, not feeling much interest in those portions from which the chorus was absent.

He made up his mind that he would accept the situation. Since he was at the theatre and had seen Carrie, he would wait for her at the stage-door and see her home. She would think it very strange if she happened to discover he had been there and not fulfilled the ordinary duties of civility. Besides, he wanted to see her again.

It was a beautiful summer evening, and at Ellis's suggestion, they determined to walk home instead of taking the overcrowded last omnibus.

"I hope I shall have a carriage of my own some day," said Carrie, taking his proffered arm without hesitation or even thanks. They did not seem needed; the action was so natural.

"You are hopeful," was Ellis's uncomplimentary reply.

"Why not? I am a great deal better than that woman who spoils the principal part, and she gets twenty pounds a week. I only get thirty shillings. Isn't it a shame?"

"Yes, it is. But can't you get a better part?"

"I don't want one. I want to keep quite unknown for the present. I'm only singing in the chorus to get something to live on. I don't mean to work my way up the ladder gradually. I'm going to study for a little longer, and then make a grand rush for fame."

"But can you get the opportunity?" queried Ellis. "I've heard it isn't easy to make a name on the stage."

"Oh, Lord Leveston has promised to manage all that for me."

Ellis did not say anything, but he unconsciously relaxed his slight pressure of the little arm resting on his. As if in reply she continued:

"He's been very kind to me, and he would be a good deal kinder if I would let him. He wanted to pay for my studies, but I told him that all I wanted was a chance. I didn't want to depend on anything but my abilities, and then I should know if I was really worth anything or not."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Ellis warmly. "I think you have made a very brave and courageous resolve."

"I'm glad you think so," she replied, looking up at his face. "It's hard work sometimes."

"I wish I could make it easier for you," he murmured.

"You do? It was very kind of you to come and see me home to-night. I generally have to go alone. I don't mind it much, but I much prefer this."

"Yes, it is decidedly pleasanter than being alone," acquiesced Ellis. "It's often struck me what a pity it is that one is unable to take advantage of the numberless opportunities for doing kindnesses that lie around us; one scarcely thinks of their existence."

He was going on in a rambling half-unconscious way when he became aware that his companion was laughing her light musical laugh. He stopped.

"Do you often tell young ladies that you are doing them a kindness in escorting them home?" she enquired.

Ellis laughed too. "Just the opposite. I was applying the case to myself. I should have had a weary walk to-night had it not been for you."

"That's much nicer," said Carrie.

Ellis found the walk even pleasanter than he had anticipated. He determined to try an experiment; instead of taking the street that led straight towards Fairlight Terrace, he turned down one that would make their walk rather longer. He thought his experiment was successful; apparently she did not notice the manoeuvre. Emboldened by his success, he tried it once more.

"Once is enough," said Carrie quietly, turning in the proper direction.

"There is a precedent for repeating it."

"No, I must go back; that child persists in sitting up till I return."

"I don't think she is more anxious to have you near her than I am."

Ellis scarcely meant to say so much; yet he was somewhat relieved to hear Carrie laugh.

"It is time I returned. I'm quite sure of it now," she said.

He did not urge the matter further. They were nearly silent the remainder of the walk. When they entered the house the narrow hall was dark. Ellis struck a match and lit a bedroom-candle standing on the window-ledge.

"I suppose we must say good-night," he said.

"Don't say it if it is so sad," she replied half mockingly. "There, don't mind what I say," she continued quickly; "it is a sad word, and I don't want to make fun of you, but when you speak like that I am

obliged to laugh at you or I should feel the same as you do."

She unclasped her cloak and held out her hand. Ellis took it.

"What a magnificent rose," he said, looking at a large Marshal Niel fastened by her brooch.

"It was a present," said Carrie half defiantly.

"A very charming one," remarked Ellis as carelessly as he could.

He found to his surprise that he was still holding her hand.

"Good-night, once more," he said.

"Good-night."

She withdrew her hand, but instead of going upstairs she unfastened her brooch. Ellis watched her eagerly.

"Would you like to have it?" She held out the rose.

"May I?"

"Why not? Lord Leveston would not object if that is what you are thinking of. He told me to take it home to my sister."

Ellis drew the flower from her hand. It had some slips of maiden-hair fastened to its stem with wire; a small strip of buff tissue-paper bound the whole together.

"I shall keep this," he said earnestly, "as long as——"

"As you live, I suppose?"

"No; as long as you wish."

"It is the same thing," was Carrie's reply as she turned away.

Ellis stood silent, pressing the rose to his lips.

CHAPTER III.

THE afternoon of the next day, Ellis took advantage of his invitation and penetrated to the upper regions of the house. He knocked at the half-open door and was admitted by Carrie.

"This is very kind of you," she said cordially; "it is a long way up here."

"I did not find it so," was his reply.

"I wish I could think of nice things like that to say."

"You say them without thinking."

"There's another," Carrie exclaimed with a musical little laugh. "Florrie, come and shake hands with Mr. Field."

Florrie obeyed rather shyly, and Ellis found himself in the sufficiently unusual position of being an afternoon-caller on two chaperonless young ladies.

Carrie was if anything more self-possessed than usual. It had been Ellis's hope to be

able to take up his acquaintance with her from the point it had attained on the previous evening, but he soon was obliged to acknowledge that the hope was fallacious. He must begin all over again. Carrie's behaviour was free from the least touch of sentimentality, she was once again the cool collected young lady who had received his first advances so calmly.

"Come, Florrie, you must play us your last piece," said Carrie, just as Ellis was hoping that she was beginning to show a little feeling.

Florrie obeyed immediately, going to the piano in a manner that showed she was not accustomed to delay fulfilling her sister's wishes. Ellis listened as attentively as he could, though his eyes were fixed on Carrie, who was leaning over her little sister.

"We were both of us fools last night," thought Ellis rather bitterly, "and she means to make me feel it. It's all my fault; she behaved splendidly till I went too far. I ought to be ashamed of myself. Yet I don't know. Is there anything to be ashamed of in falling in love? I will not be the first to draw back, at any rate; if she encourages me, I will give the reins to my feelings, and chance the result."

But the encouragement did not come. Ellis was aware that he carried in his breast-pocket the rose she gave him, but had it not been there he would have scarcely been able to believe that the scene of the previous night had ever taken place. It was simply impossible to say a word bearing a tender interpretation to this friendly, charming young hostess. Ellis gave up trying, and talked the most ordinary small-talk.

"I had good news this morning," said Carrie, just as Ellis rose to go.

"I am very glad to hear it," he said.

"Yes. I saw Lady Leveston just now; they only went away ten minutes before you came—didn't you see them?"

"I only came in just before I came up," replied Ellis, bewildered. "You know Lady Leveston?"

"Of course I do; didn't I tell you I lived with them three years? I am quite a protégée of hers. The stage manager at our theatre is going to have a benefit, and I am to sing two songs in the second part—it's partly miscellaneous, you know. If I make a success——"

"You are sure to do that."

"I think so," she acknowledged candidly.

"In that case I shall be engaged by Stevenson for two years. You know Stevenson? he gets up all the good concert-tours."

Carrie tried hard not to let her exultation be visible, but could not entirely succeed. Ellis listened whilst she expatiated on the career which was opening before her.

"Stevenson heard me sing a week ago, but he did not say anything, and I thought he didn't care about my style. It seems he thinks I shall make a hit. Lady Leveston talked to him about it. Of course I shall sing under a fresh name. They will ask me to their house, I expect; they always have the new stars of every sort. Perhaps I may see you there some day."

There was a touch of tenderness at the end of her speech, as if she felt she had been too selfishly enlarging on her own happiness.

"I shall be a star of the fourteenth magnitude, you of the first," he replied, holding out his hand. "When do you make your appearance?"

"On the 15th, Tuesday week. You really must come."

"Yes, I will come. Good-bye."

"Good-afternoon. Don't let this be your last visit to us."

"You are very kind."

He was not able to say more. He did not think he should ever find himself in that little room again.

However, when a week had gone by, and he had seen nothing of Carrie except when by chance he met her in the little hall, he thought that civility demanded that he should not break off so suddenly the acquaintance begun even more so. He mounted the numerous stairs, and knocked at the well-remembered door. There was no response; both sisters were out.

He left his card sticking between the panel and frame of the shrunken door, and resolved that that should be the last time he would pay them a visit.

"I'm only boring her," he said to himself. "She cares for me about as much as she does for Drysdale, who is forty and bald as an egg. She would let the Levestons go if she were taken up by a duchess. It's time I went back to business. I was never meant for this sort of thing."

Two days afterwards he found a note on his table

"DEAR MR. FIELD,—We were very sorry we were out when you called. You will be glad to hear I am engaged by Mr. Stevenson for a year in any case. We leave here to-morrow, so I am afraid we may not meet again. Try and come on Tuesday. I'm sorry I can't offer you any tickets, as it is a benefit affair.—Yours very sincerely,
CARRIE MILLER."

Ellis read the note twice, then put his hand to his pocket and drew out his rose. He seemed for a moment as if about to throw it into the fireplace, but he did not. He replaced it carefully.

"She manages to live down the sentimental part of her nature pretty successfully," he muttered, as he thought of what she said at their first interview. "It took her a day to get over our bit of folly. I wonder how long it will take me?"

The stage-manager's benefit was a great success. The critics were there in force, for there was a new play to be performed, and rumours (due to the kindness of the Levestons) were thick about the capabilities of the new singer. There was no doubt of her triumph. She sang her first song admirably; her second superbly. A shower of bouquets testified to the delight of the audience, who would not be satisfied without an encore.

There was some little delay about the music, and the audience began to be slightly impatient. But when the song began they forgot everything in listening, and at its conclusion there was a storm of applause. The composer appeared leading on Carrie; it was Drysdale.

The shower of bouquets was ended, Carrie was making her last bow, when there was seen fluttering down from the gallery a single flower. The petals flew hither and thither as it fell, till when it reached the stage little was left of it but the stem, bound with buff tissue-paper and wire. Carrie saw it fall, she recognised it instantly, hesitated a moment, and then stooped to pick it up. But she did not glance towards the gallery.

"Withered and dead," thought Ellis as he stumbled down the dark stairs; "fit emblem of our short-lived romance."

Yet involuntarily the refrain of the song he had just heard recurred to his memory, and he smiled as he thought of the first time he had heard Carrie sing the words:

Bright shone the sun, 'twas summer weather,
When first we roamed across the heather,
You and I.

THE ROMANCE OF A LIGHTHOUSE.

A STORY OF STORIES.

By W. W. FENN.

It was as far back as June, 1843, and I was proposing to myself a wandering tour in Cornwall. Though London was already hot and dusty, I did not intend to go just then, but I was collecting all the information I could about that remote district, so far away as it was in those days from railroads and our present notions of civilisation.

Passing Arthur Pengarth's lodgings in Newman Street I recollected the old saying:

By Tre, Pol, and Pen,
You shall know the Cornishmen;

and thinking to myself that he might possibly put me up to a wrinkle or two, I turned in.

"Pen," as he was usually called, was an artist—a figure man, but he had an eye for landscape also, and seemed to invest it with something of the human interest of his rather fanciful pictures of historical and legendary romance. There was always a story in Pen's work. His quotations really had something to do with his subjects, and were not put in to merely catch the eye, and make a break in the Exhibition catalogues.

I found him looking at a water-colour drawing already screwed into a packing-case of more than usual solidity. It was a scene of singular beauty. Taken from the top of a cliff, the high horizon of blue-green sea ran almost entirely across the picture, melting away into the opalesque sky, with hardly a perceptible line of demarcation. Where it cut and touched the land at the nearer points, its vivid transparent intensity shamed the grass into looking brown, even in the spring-like tufts that showed themselves among the primroses that grew in profusion over the graves; for, characteristically enough, Pengarth's foreground was an ancient churchyard. One crumbling buttress of the weather-beaten church itself, moss-grown and lichen-clad, framed the picture to the right by its massive lines and solid texture, thus making the distance, if possible, more ethereal, and forming a contrast to the faraway lighthouse that rose like a ghost in the extreme horizon.

"What a lovely spot! Is that in Cornwall?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the artist; "it is over against a little fishing-village called Pol

Coed," and he cast a regretful farewell look on the picture, as he took up the lid of the packing-case, whereon I read the following address :

"Mr. Reuben Tregarvon, God's Providence, near London, Canada West."

"And who may Mr. Reuben Tregarvon be?" I enquired, "and how do you come to be sending him this, and what is your motto here?" I went on, stooping to examine a tablet on the frame more closely.

Then I read the words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" underneath which was also engraved, "Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"The frame was carved by the Rev. Stephen Allan, pastor of Pol Coed," broke in my friend; "and it is a wedding-present on his part to Mr. Reuben Tregarvon, about whom, by the way, there is a very startling story. I did the drawing, as my gift to the young fellow, and here is a sketch of him in propria personâ," he added, as moving the packing-case for the greater convenience of screwing the lid down, he brought into view from behind it a crayon sketch of a man's head.

Never had I seen so beautiful a face. To describe it would be as impossible as to convey the scent of primroses by words to one who had never seen the flower. Clear-cut, delicate features, dark silky beard and moustache that defined rather than hid the curves of lips too thin for the classical ideal of beauty, yet conveying an impression of indomitable strength. And such a pair of blue eyes! Out of the dark face they shone like the glimpse of a faraway sky, and they were so unexpected! for the type of face would have recalled what may be seen in the very early Byzantine manuscripts, had it not been for those glorious blue eyes.

"What a face! Is that your work also?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, it is; but by Jove! I must be off," cried Pen, looking at his watch; "it is half-past eleven now, and I have not a minute to lose. I must take this case to the Euston Square terminus before twelve, and start it off to Birmingham on its way to Liverpool myself. I say, old fellow, just finish screwing the lid down for me, while I change my coat. And don't run away, stay till I come back; I shall not be gone half an hour. There's a whole portfolio full of Cornish sketches in the corner; light a pipe and look at them,

they will tell you more about the land of the West, and the sort of scenery you will find there, than any words of mine will. Painters are not good talkers, they can better describe with their brush than their tongue. Here's the screw-driver, fire away!"

I took it from his hand, and finished the packing of the case for him, whilst he dived into a drawer for his gloves, which were, apparently, the last things he was likely to find in such a medley as its contents presented.

"Hullo!" he suddenly burst out, as he rummaged about with his hands, and produced a roll of MS., "here's the story of Reuben Tregarvon, that I mentioned just now; you might like to read it—I wrote it down for Tom—poor Tom, you remember him?" and his tone softened as he recalled the crippled brother, in memory of whom he was now wearing the black coat he had just put on. "We always said at home that Tom ought to write a novel, and I was to give him my experiences from time to time—so I sent him Reuben Tregarvon's story, as Mr. Allan told it to me. There it is, if you care to see it, only I must be off;" and throwing me the manuscript, he seized hold of the packing-case, which was now ready, and hurried out of the room.

Left alone, I first proceeded to examine the folio of sketches. If the rest of Cornwall were like Pol Coed, and its inhabitants resembled Reuben Tregarvon, it would be indeed a region worth visiting. I was longing to get all the information I could about it, therefore I settled myself in Pengarth's favourite chair (it deserved his regard), lighted a pipe, and went through his drawings carefully one by one. When I had finished looking at them I turned my attention to the manuscript, and soon became even more absorbed in it than I had been in the sketches. The artist hardly did himself justice when he said he was better in describing with his brush than by words—at least, so I thought; whether others will agree with me, it is not for me to suggest.

The wondrous blue eyes of the portrait seemed fixed on mine whenever I looked up from the page, and the roar of the neighbouring thoroughfare sounded like the distant waves of the western sea, whilst for half an hour I sat deeply interested in

THE STORY OF REUBEN TREGARVON.

After a walk of ten miles from Bodmin, I had at last arrived at the church on the

cliff, above the little village of Pol Coed, which was, I hoped, to afford me good sketching material. I had heard that the interior of this church was especially interesting. As I approached the door, it was evident that service was going on, and of an unusual kind, for the building was so crowded that part of the congregation were seated in the porch, and even on the grass mounds that covered the last resting-places of former inhabitants of the village.

On seeing a stranger, a woman whom I guessed to be a sort of pew-opener, advanced and enquired my business, "for," she added, "if it's with the rector, sir, you cannot see him till Reuben Tregarvon is married—him, you know, sir," she went on, "as was like to be hanged, but the rector said he never could believe it—and now he has married her, and they are going to Canada, where his brother has gone before him; and they will be a loss to Pol Coed, though some of them have had pretty rough tempers, for the Tregarvons have been a credit to the place since the time of Adam, and we are glad Reuben was not hanged for his father's sake, let alone that he is as honest a fellow as ever trod on shoe-leather. But here he comes, and his wife—God bless them!—and the rector too, sir, if you are wishing to speak with him."

What was the woman talking about? was she out of her mind? She did not look so; she spoke in the simple tone of one who stated facts that could not be contradicted, but it was impossible to connect the ignominious idea of hanging with the bridegroom's face. I have made a sketch of it, so I will not describe it here. Still, there was something curiously unbridal about the pair; perhaps it was that the girl's dress was plain even to roughness, with none of that pretty coquettishness about it which every woman displays on that one morning, at least, of her life. Hers was a sweet little face, with very short, curly hair, and appealing brown eyes. The two walked gravely to the corner of the churchyard nearest the cliff, and, not in wedding procession, down to the village, the little crowd meanwhile evidently respecting their desire for privacy. Only the rector followed them, leaving his surplice in the care of the woman who had spoken to me.

Again and again, as the crowd dispersed, did I hear the words "hanged," "hanging," "murder," ever repeated. I was determined to get another look at the face

whose beauty outweighed all possible interest in the church, curious as that appeared to be from the casual glimpse I got of it through the open doors. I went round so as to come, at a fitting distance, opposite to the group that so keenly interested me. The bride was bending over a grave to gather some of the late primroses. The bridegroom held the rector's hand in a long close grasp, and the spring breeze brought to my ear the words:

"Good-bye, God in heaven bless you. I little thought I should ever hear the marriage service from your lips a second time." The bride shuddered, and clung to her husband. The rector replied:

"Tregarvon, I would not have you forget God's goodness to you, but I would have you think and speak as little as possible of the details of the past. May God prosper you and your wife in your new home. Let me hear from you, but take my counsel and lock up in your heart the strange experiences you have passed through. A new home and a strange people will help you to this; here, the dealings of Providence with your soul would become a winter's tale to be told on every stormy evening. Good-bye, and may Heaven's blessing rest on you and yours." The man sank on his knees beside the grave and kissed the stone. "Have no fear for that," continued the rector; "whilst I am here I will take care of your father's grave."

The young wife meanwhile was gazing at the scene as if to imprint it for ever on her memory. The man rose, and taking her hand, turned in silence from the spot, and the pair took the now-deserted path towards the village.

The rector gazed after them; he was a young man, barely thirty, and his fair hair and complexion were in strong contrast to his almost Spanish-looking parishioners. I waited for a few moments, and then advancing and raising my hat, I said to him:

"Pray excuse me, sir, but can you tell me where I can find that man who has just left you? I am an artist," I added in explanation, "and I would give anything if he would sit to me for an hour or so, for I never saw so uncommon a type of face."

"Nor so uncommon a type of man, if you knew all," answered the rector good-naturedly.

"I gathered from the talk outside the church that there was something unusual," I remarked hesitatingly.

"You may well say so; it is the strangest affair. You see that lighthouse out yonder? Tregarvon's family have been keepers there ever since it was built. I do not wonder that he wants to get away from the neighbourhood; but it is a long story. I shall weary you with it, if I once begin."

"Indeed, if it is the story of the man you have just married, I should be most interested. I repeat, I never saw so remarkable a face. If it would not be trespassing on your time, I beg you will tell it me. Can you do so here, now? we might sit in the church-porch, perhaps."

"Certainly, by all means; it would be a very fitting place. The fact is," he added frankly, "my mind is so full of it, and I am so alone here, in this retired part of the world, that it would be really a relief to me to talk about it to a person of education. I should like to see how it strikes a stranger. I must write it out, I think, some day, but my eyes will not serve me for more work of that kind than is absolutely necessary. So, if you care to listen, before you begin to make the sketch of the landscape I see you are preparing for—I used to sketch once myself," he added with a sigh—"I will relate to you this rustic drama."

Gossiping in this fashion, we strolled away from the grave near the edge of the cliff, and sat down, according to my proposition, in the church-porch. The door was closed, and we had the place now all to ourselves. The silence and the beauty of the outlook across the broad expanse of ocean were very enticing, for it was one of those calm spring days which come so refreshingly after the long, dreary, boisterous bout of winter which we Englishmen have to endure. The sound of the sea upon the rock-girdled shore below us was reduced to a gentle murmur, whilst an odd young jackdaw or two, cawing quaintly at intervals in the grey tower above our heads, made the solitude, by gentle contrast as it were, only the more evident. Short of the ingle-nook on a winter's night, there could be no more fitting place in the world for one to listen to such a tale, nay, for the matter of that, seeing that the lighthouse, towards which we were looking, and the neighbouring village formed the actual background to the drama, it was certainly the very best place in which to hear about its incidents.

"You must know" began the clergy-

man, "that I came here just before Christmas last. I had been overworked, they said, in London, and my eyes began to fail, so the doctors fell back upon their usual stronghold, and decreed that I must have a rest and change in fresh country air. Just then, fortunately, a friend, a brother parson, had this living presented to him, and he, earnestly desiring London work, we effected an exchange, and I came here. Included in the parish is the lighthouse on that jagged group of rocks you see some six miles out yonder, and the thought of the life led by the guardians of such places round this storm-beaten coast, had always had a curious fascination in it for me.

"Strangely enough, the first sight I had of my people was connected with this far-off beacon. On walking up the village, after getting out of the chaise which brought me over from Bodmin, I met a small crowd escorting this man Tregarvon down the street, and his face struck me on the instant, as it has you, I perceive. Asking the cause of the excitement, I was told that his father, old Reuben Tregarvon, had been suddenly stricken with paralysis, and, as it was his turn that night, together with his son, young Reuben Tregarvon, to relieve the men in charge, the young man took the elder's place, providing a substitute for himself in the person of a lad, said to have come the day before from Falmouth.

"I took but little notice of this at the time. Afterwards I found that this boy had been picked up by old Tregarvon, and promised a permanent place as light-boy at the lighthouse, as old Tregarvon's sons were all outgrowing the place, and the old man's temper had such an evil reputation that no lad from Pol Coed could be persuaded to go with him to solitary confinement in the island pharos. But, on the very morning that old Tregarvon was due at the lighthouse, he was stricken down, and his son took his place.

"You may remember what an awful Christmas we had, and what fearful storms raged far into February. The watch at the light is changed every three weeks, but at the expiration of that time—that is, young Tregarvon's time, you understand—the weather was worse than ever. Storm succeeded storm, with scarce an interval of abatement, and any hope of communication with the light was abandoned as soon as conceived. Thus the three weeks became six, and the six nearly nine.

" 'Reuben and the boy will be starved,' said Michael Tregarvon, thinking of his brother. 'They have but six weeks' provisions there at the most; but to attempt to reach the light would be certain death.'

"Still, they were not starved yet, for there the beacon shone, as we could see, save on the very thickest nights; but as far as communication with it was concerned, it might have been on the other side of the world.

"At last, as all things come to an end, the storms came to an end, the wind suddenly dropped to a moderate breeze off the land, and the boat put off with food and the relief-men who were to replace Tregarvon and his young companion. The hours of watching and suspense that followed were passed by me in mingling with the knots of wild, excitable, half-fisher-folk, half-farmers, composing the small population of Pol Coed, who were gathered together near the landing-place, and I was amazed to find how quick and ready they were to imagine the very worst.

"Surrounded by some of the most vehement, I stood on the little pier when the boat came back. You may imagine the horror when it was seen that, beside her crew of four men, but one—only one—passenger was there—Reuben Tregarvon alone!

"A wild cry of anxiety rose from the crowd. Where was the boy? Had he died from exhaustion—from starvation? It seemed more than likely. Or was it possible that—?

"I do not know, sir," went on the rector after a pause at this point in his narrative, "whether you are acquainted with the character of the Cornish people. If you are not, and do not understand their imaginative superstitious natures and their wild, sometimes almost savage tendencies, you may not think it possible that such an idea as that which then succeeded could have arisen in their minds.

"As the boat neared the landing-place and the features of its occupants became visible, the expression on Tregarvon's handsome features seemed to suggest to the people's imaginations the accusation which they were about to hurl at him. At first by a whispered word, and then by louder exclamations, which gradually rose to a shout, they charged him with murder.

" 'He has murdered the boy,' they cried, 'for food—for the sake of his flesh. Down with him! down with him!'

"I thought of the reputation for violence

the Tregarvon family bore in the village, and how unpopular it had made some of its members. I shuddered lest the accusation should be true, and trembled lest the crowd should do wild justice on the criminal then and there before my eyes—they seemed quite capable of it. I beckoned to our solitary constable, who was standing amongst the crowd—a man formerly in the London police-force, and whose present post I had obtained for him—and got as near the landing-place as I could.

" 'Where is the boy?' I demanded as soon as the boat came within hailing distance. There was a ghastly pause for a moment, and the answer came back, 'Dead—drowned!'

" 'He has murdered him,' reiterated the assembled people.

" 'Stand back, all of you,' I shouted; 'it is by the laws of his country he must be judged, not by you. Constable, arrest Reuben Tregarvon on suspicion.'

"The constable was prompt, and saw as clearly as I did, that innocent or guilty, it was the best thing to do to save him from the wrath of his fellow-villagers. So, advancing to the stairs, as Reuben Tregarvon came up them, he laid his hand on his shoulder, and arrested him in the usual form. I, standing just above, had a full sight of the supposed culprit's face, as it was upturned. Haggard with famine and anxiety, to my intense surprise a look of the greatest relief passed over his features when he heard the constable's words. Instead of seeming appalled or resentful, he looked like a man who has heard the solution of a sore, pressing difficulty, like a man who saw his way out of some dire strait.

" 'It is well,' he said simply, and prepared to follow the constable up the narrow street. The multitude who, a few moments before, had been ripe to shed his blood, shrank away as he passed, and gathered round the boatmen, who, however willing, were unable to afford any more information than that already gleaned. They had found Tregarvon alone in the lighthouse. The boy was gone, and Tregarvon offered no explanation but those two words: 'He is dead! Drowned!'

"My first care on getting Tregarvon to the little room in the small house that served as a lock-up, was to provide him with food. It was evident that the man was dazed from famine. I cautioned him, and told him that anything he

might say would be used against him. He remained silent, save for one question: 'My father—how is he?'

"He is dead; he knew no one after you left," I replied.

"Thank Heaven!" said Tregarvon; "he will never know what he has done."

"I thought the words had misplaced themselves, as those of an overstrained mind are apt to do; but I remembered them afterwards, and then understood fully what had prompted them.

"The question at present was, How should I act? I was, myself, the only justice of the peace within miles. Much as I disapprove of the union of spiritual and legal functions, I had had no choice, for, with the exception of the Squire of Pol Coed House, there was no one approaching a gentleman or a man of education within a good ten miles.

"Meanwhile, food had been brought, and I heard with surprise the familiar words of thanksgiving, 'For what we are about to receive' repeated; and as soon as the much-needed nutriment was taken, Tregarvon lay down on the hard bench and composed himself to a sleep as tranquil as a baby's, but soon to be interrupted.

"A hoarse roar came up the street; the constable rushed to the outer door of the little house, and made it fast only just in time. The crowd demanded Tregarvon, and would, no doubt, have done summary justice on him had he fallen within their clutches.

"I never rightly learned what had actually stirred them up to this renewed outburst of indignation. I imagine, however, it was simply due to a fermentation of the horrible idea which had taken possession of them—a fermentation stimulated, no doubt, by the constantly-recurring comments of the most talkative amongst them. But, whatever was the cause of the tumult, it was evident we could not keep Tregarvon at so insecure a lock-up.

"Therefore, assisted by the constable, more versed in the ways of the law than myself, I, as a magistrate, went through the form, after a brief examination, in the prisoner's presence, of the boatmen who had fetched Tregarvon from the lighthouse, of committing him for trial on a charge of murder at the Bodmin assizes, then fortunately going on. Determining to lose no time when this was done, I announced to the people that it was my intention to take the prisoner over to Bodmin myself that afternoon. This appeared fully to

satisfy them, especially as I also insisted on the four boatmen going with me as the witnesses against him. A conveyance—the only one in the place, half-omnibus, half-van—was procured, and late that evening, to my great relief, I handed over my strange charge to the care of the Bodmin constabulary.

"On leaving Pol Coed, I should observe that, as we turned inland, Tregarvon took a long look at the sea, as one might look the last on a beloved face, but he never put off the impenetrable veil of silence in which he persistently wrapped himself. I slept in the town that night, or, rather, I took a bed at the principal inn; but the events of the day crowded in upon my mind with such never-ending and perplexing confusion that sleep was out of the question.

"I should here pause to say that, hastily as I may have seemed to act in judging, or even suspecting Tregarvon to be guilty of the accusation brought against him by the people, I had no choice. Had I not done as I did, and myself ordered his arrest and carried it through, his life would to a certainty have fallen a sacrifice to the wild lawlessness of the villagers. Their fierce wreckers' blood was up. I had not had them under my influence long enough to hold them in check, for, as I have hinted before, they are not an easy community to manage, and the mysterious and unaccountably strange bearing of Tregarvon himself was not easy to understand, even for me, and to them it must have appeared like a tacit admission of his guilt. I confess I did not know what to make of it.

The assize-list was not a heavy one, and to my satisfaction I found the next morning that Tregarvon could actually be put on his trial in the afternoon. He refused even to see a solicitor for the purpose of conducting his case, and whilst I was talking with him in the prison, he asked for pen, ink, and paper. 'Now,' I thought, 'he is going to write out some explanation or confession.' But no; it was only a short note to his brother Michael, and placing with it a small book which he took from his breast-pocket, he begged to know if it were possible for him to see his brother. Compliance with this request was rendered the more easy as Michael was known to have come over that morning for the purpose of an interview, and soon afterwards the brothers stood in presence of each other. Neither

spoke for a long while. At last Michael exclaimed passionately: 'Oh, Reuben, Reuben, what will come of this?'

"'Michael, I beg your pardon, it is hard upon you,' was the strange answer; 'but you always wished to go to Canada, you know, and you had better sail before—'

"'Before what?' thought I to myself.

"There was again a long silence—indeed, very little or nothing more was said on either hand; and when the painful scene terminated, I was left more puzzled than ever.

"Arraigned at length, Reuben Tregarvon stood in the dock before the assembled court, and to the formal question of whether he was guilty or not of the murder of Sidney Cathcart at the Pol Coed lighthouse came the startling answer, 'Guilty!'

"'Does the prisoner know what is the effect of pleading guilty to a charge of murder?' enquired the judge.

"'I do, my lord,' replied Tregarvon with a calmness that, even from him, surprised me.

"Until that moment I had not realised what might be the result of the trial. In spite of appearances I had never for a moment doubted that Tregarvon would somehow prove his innocence. The whole place swam before my eyes, and though I am partly conscious of the judge assuming the black cap, I heard nothing clearly till the concluding words: 'And may God have mercy upon your soul.' To which Tregarvon replied: 'Amen, God's will be done;' and I saw him look up as if the heavens had opened above him.

"The man who had just been sentenced to death as a murderer only recalled to my mind the Proto-martyr.

"'Hold up, sir!' whispered my faithful friend the constable, in my ear; 'here is a glass of water. I could not disturb the court to get you one before. It always upsets a man the first time he hears those words: "God have mercy!" Poor fellow, it's a pity it was not manslaughter.'

"The excitement and heat of the crowded court had so affected me in my then weak state of health, that in spite of the glass of water, I had to lie down for some hours before I could walk to the gaol again to see Tregarvon. When I arrived there, he was already in the condemned cell. He was kneeling by the pallet which served as a bed. His lips moved, he was engaged in prayer, and the words seemed to break from him involuntarily. Never shall I hear again such a rapture of repentance, of faith, of joy, even.

The door was locked on me; I had no choice but to listen. God had heard his prayer, he was murmuring, his expiation was to be on earth—the Almighty had ordained a merciful punishment before taking him home: home to a union with God, and a reunion with his dearly-loved. The most profound repentance breathed in every word; but there was no acknowledgment of the special crime for which he was to suffer. I drew back; I had no services to offer. I could not intrude between this soul and its Maker; this soul, condemned for a cruel and atrocious crime, owning the justice of the sentence. I could only wait and learn. Was it possible that such a man as this could be guilty of the criminality he took upon himself? I was more perplexed, shocked, and astounded than ever.

"During the ensuing days, his demeanour was unchanged. Obedient to all regulations, he seemed to accept everything as a matter of course. His brother came to bid him good-bye, and then learnt that the end had not been unforeseen by Tregarvon. His last act as a free man had been to endow his brother with his savings, to enable him to go to Canada with his family. Indeed, the only shadow of regret seemed to be the disgrace that would fall on others.

"There was no time to forward a petition to the Home Secretary, far-off as we are from London, even had Tregarvon permitted one to be sent. I waited for some—for any account of those terrible days in the lighthouse, but none came, urge him as I would to make a full confession of all, how it had fallen out, and what had tempted him.

"Once he said to me with a shudder:

"'It does not take long, does it?'

"The day drew on. I found the hilly ten miles between here and Bodmin only too short for mental communing. I went every day, for the rector of Bodmin was absent, and his temporary substitute willingly yielded to me the charge of my parishioner. The more I thought of the case, the more mysterious I felt it to be. I longed to penetrate the veil of silence. Each morning I felt sure that during that day Tregarvon would give some history of the death-struggle, of his motive—whether it had been in a momentary fit of passion, or whether he had yielded to the terrible temptation born of ravenous hunger. Each evening I returned unsatisfied as regarded any details, but more convinced that the

foul stain of murder could not cling to that man, even in the teeth of his own admission.

"I took him books, for when he had been made to assume the prison garb, he had taken two books from his pocket, and asked if he might keep them. They were a Bible, and a Thomas à Kempis. Guided by this indication, I supplied him with the works of the Mystical School, now in its new strength; and I was astonished at the avidity with which he devoured them.

"On the evening of the last day before that fixed for the execution, he and his brother together received the communion for the dying. Then he shook hands with Michael, and entreated him not to try to see him again; but he begged me to come to him by six o'clock on the following, the fatal morning.

"There was something in his manner that overawed us; his requests were as commands to all.

"His gaolers told me, when I arrived true to the appointed hour the next morning, that he had slept quite quietly with a smile on his face all night. He was dressed when I entered the cell, and he drew me to the farthest corner, while the warder, as he had evidently been requested to do, moved away from us as far as he could.

"'I asked you to come early, Mr. Allan,' Tregarvon said with some hesitation, 'because—because I want you to do me a great—a last favour—here—now, to read to me the marriage service this morning—before—before I die.'

"'The marriage service!' I gasped, overcome by surprise. 'It—it is—it is the—'

"'Yes, I know; you will read my funeral service later,' he said quietly. 'Mr. Allan, you have been very good to me. I am afraid this will try you.'

"'I will read you whatever you like,' I said, dominated as usual by the power of the man; and in that condemned cell, to one whose scaffold was already erected, and who was to die in two hours' time, I began reading the marriage service.

"He knelt down with that same strange rapt expression of face that had become almost habitual to him, until I came to the marriage vow, when he rose—as if more conscious of some unseen presence than of mine, and put out his hand, repeating the words after me.

"At this moment a hasty knock was heard at the door. 'Mr. Allan, Mr. Allan,' said the voice of the chief warder—then there

was a moment's pause broken at length by another voice—that of a woman, crying out, in an entreating tone: 'Let me in, let me in, for God's sake! I am Sidney—Sidney Cathcart; indeed, indeed I am!'

"Reuben Tregarvon turned deadly pale. 'It is her ghost,' he cried, and he made a step forward.

"Pushing the warder aside with irresistible force, a girl dashed into the room, and threw herself into Tregarvon's arms.

"'I am Sidney, I am alive,' she cried. 'Oh, Reuben, they picked me up at sea—hold me, I'm drowning,' and she fainted before Tregarvon could lay her on the narrow bed. Suddenly the truth broke in upon me, the mystery of his conduct was solved.

"He bent over her with loving words, as she returned to life, and to a bewildered consciousness of where she was. 'But they told me,' she said presently, still half bewildered, 'that you were—were to—be—' and she shuddered.

"'Ah, not now, not now,' cried Tregarvon, with a sudden touch of human feeling; 'oh, Mr. Allan, save me! I can tell all now!'

"'Is this really Sidney Cathcart, the supposed boy, who was with you in the lighthouse?' I asked.

"'Yes, indeed it is,' replied Tregarvon, 'and none other—and—one day during the heavy weather, we were out on the rocks—and—and—she was reproaching me, when her foot slipped. In an instant she was swept into deep water, and carried beyond my reach. I was about to plunge in after her when I suddenly remembered the light. I dared not run the risk, for, if I were drowned, there would be no one left to tend the lamp, and then who could say what disaster might not happen, what number of lives might not be sacrificed, if a storm-beaten vessel, with no light to warn her, should be driven on the rocks!'

"He broke down here, and dropped his head upon the girl's shoulder, as she stood clinging to him. Recovering his voice after a minute, he went on:

"'I thought God was very good to let me die, as perhaps I deserved, and thus expiate my sin to her; and perhaps, after long years, to join her in heaven. But now, oh, Mr. Allan, save me, I cannot die now!' and he strained the almost insensible form to his heart.

"Trying to rally my senses after this startling revelation of the truth, I exclaimed:

" 'You cannot be hanged for the murder of a boy—of a person who is still living!' The words sounded almost brutal in their commonplaceness.

"The warders had grasped the situation more rapidly than I had done, and had already sent a post-haste message to the sheriff, who soon appeared on the scene.

"Fortunately, Michael Tregarvon had lingered in the town, in hopes that his brother might relent, and see him again. He at once identified Sidney Cathcart, who, when requested by the sheriff to put on a lad's cap, looked so like a boy that no one present could be surprised that her sex had never been suspected. By degrees we gathered her story, told with shame and contrition, and afterwards verified by thoroughly reliable evidence.

"She had, she said, a very unhappy home. Her mother had married a second time, and the step-father was a bad man. Her twin-brother had gone to sea, and she was very lonely. Her step-father would not let her go to service, as she saved him the wages of a servant, but was not nearly so well treated as if she had been one.

"At last one day things came to a climax, and she determined to run away. Opening a drawer of her brother's to take with her some memento of her own father, she came upon the boy's thick winter suit, and the idea entered her head that she could easier get away if dressed in boy's clothes. 'And somehow it seemed as if Jim would be taking care of me,' she said in her child-like voice. She wished to go to Cornwall, for her grandmother had been a Cornish woman; but on reaching Falmouth and making enquiry, she had found all her relations dead. A threat of the poor-house had alarmed her, and she wandered along the coast until she came to Pol Coed. Here on the outskirts of the place, she chanced upon old Tregarvon, and had asked him if he knew of any work. He said a boy was wanted for the Pol Coed lighthouse, and offered to take him there on trial for three weeks, his turn for duty coming on that same night.

"Encouraged by the old man's evident respectability, she had been tempted by the high wages to accept the offer, and agreed to join him at the pier that evening at four o'clock. She went to the little inn, and having only twopence in her pocket, had not very wisely ordered a pint of ale, which, with the long walk, and keen sea-air, had thrown her into a heavy sleep, from which she only awoke in time to run down

hastily to the pier. Enquiring as she had been told to do for Reuben Tregarvon, she was hurried into a boat, and it had pushed off from the land before she discovered that accident had substituted for the grey-haired old man she had agreed with, his son.

"This, then, was the key to Tregarvon's bitter passionate repentance. Now the petition for pardon, the longing for atonement, were explained to me at least; none other knew of those communings with God and his own soul.

" 'But how were you rescued after you slipped off the rocks?' at last asked the sheriff.

" 'I do not know. We were together, and I slipped; the sea was very rough. He was just going to jump in, and then I saw him look at the lighthouse; he rushed into the building for a moment, and returning to the rocks, threw me a life-buoy. I clung to that, and the tide was going out, and I did not know any more till I found myself on board a French fishing-boat. I could not make the men understand me; they were very kind, and when we landed at Nantes they took me to the consul, who helped me to get back to England—to Falmouth—and I have walked all the way,' she concluded, with a not unnatural burst of tears.

"It was clear she really was the missing Sidney Cathcart. I heard no more, as I was summoned back to Tregarvon. The long strain, and its most unexpected termination, had produced the natural result.

"It seemed that the almost superhuman self-command had been retained until the clock had begun to strike eight. This now unmarked hour was the one on which his thoughts had been fixed for days, and by the time I reached the cell, violent delirium had set in, and the strength of three warders was tasked to hold the man who hitherto had obeyed their slightest word. His ravings betrayed the working of his mind more intimately than he would ever have permitted any sane words to do; for Reuben Tregarvon being of an intensely religious, highly-wrought nature, the sin against the poor helpless Sidney was the sin that to him so sorely needed repentance. The horrible doubt whether he had really done his duty in staying by the beacon, rather than in trying to rescue her, had rendered the remaining time he had to pass alone in the lighthouse a veritable

hell. Too religious to seek refuge in suicide, he hailed the idea of capital punishment as his only real relief; he courted death, and had looked forward to it, for by this means it was that he hoped to escape future retribution. 'A life for a life,' he kept on repeating. He had acted for the best; he had sinned, and he had repented, and God was coming to the rescue with his great gift of death. That it was an ignominious death—death by the hangman's hands—did not trouble him. It was the gate into the future, the answer to the enigma of life, that by a willing surrender here he might hope for pardon hereafter. He had dreaded a prolonged existence with the eternal question for ever ringing in his ears: 'Was I right? Might I have saved her?'

"Sidney never had any doubt. 'He could have done nothing else,' she said. 'If he had been lost the light would have gone out, and there might have been many lives lost in those storms. Oh, I hope it is not bad for him that I have lived! I will try and make him a good wife, though I am sure I never shall be good enough for him. If only he lives! If only he lives!' she cried again and again in the terribly anxious weeks that followed, when, for my own part, I dreaded life more than death, lest the brain should never recover the awful shock it had borne.

"The poor girl behaved beautifully all through those dreary days, developing from the silly heedless child, whose thoughtless escapade had nearly ended in so terrible a tragedy, into a thoughtful woman—devoted, watchful, and intelligent. It was mainly due to her nursing that Tregarvon recovered, which he did, slowly but completely, from that strange land of delirium where the hapless patient wandered so far away from his anxious watchers—where only phantoms are real.

"Again and again did he hold my hand and entreat me, as the executioner, not to let him suffer more than was needful, or he would thank me, believing me to be the warder.

"'He has youth and strength on his side,' said the doctor. And truly they asserted themselves as he slowly struggled back to health.

"In proportion as he revived Sidney shrank more and more into herself, looking each day more ill and depressed. I also noticed that she had several times sent letters to the post, and at length she took courage and opened her heart to me.

"'Would it not be much better for him,' she said, 'if I went away, and left him to marry another wife? For you see, sir, I have been brought up so differently. We did go to church on wet Sundays when we could not go out in the cart, but it was only because we had nothing else to do, and liked to look at the bonnets and the ladies' dresses. I wrote to mother as soon as I got time, because he never knew I had a mother. Somehow he seemed to think I could not have run away if she were living, and I did not like to tell him; but mother says she will never have me back again, but that I may go to a Home; and I would go there rather than do him any harm,' she continued, handing me a letter ill-written and badly spelt.

"I am sorry to think such a letter ever came from a woman's pen—from a mother to a daughter—it showed the hard, narrow selfishness of a woman without charity, and only used to accumulating petty gains. I have no doubt that much was dictated by the step-father, but the coward-fear of the world, the dread of disgrace, rather than love for the daughter, showed through it clearly. It did much to justify Sidney in my eyes.

"'Tell me what is right to do, sir,' she said. I confess I had had fears that she was morally far inferior to Tregarvon, and many doubts as to how the marriage would answer, but these simple words removed them. Sidney Cathcart had probably never in her life before asked 'what was right.' She was beginning by truthfulness, repentance, and self-sacrifice, and was feeling after the higher life.

"'You have done well, so far at least,' I said; 'for the rest I think you had better ask Tregarvon.'

"By the scene you have witnessed here at this church-porch," continued the clergyman, after another pause, "and yonder by the old man's grave this morning, you know what Reuben Tregarvon's answer was, but I happened to overhear his actual words. Coming into the condemned cell—for we had not been able to move him—indeed I suppose during the earlier part of his illness he was still a prisoner, and I cannot tell the exact date of the arrival of the young Queen's pardon, as it had come when no earthly voice, even the Queen's, could pierce his ear.

"Coming into the cell for the last time, I say—as he was to be removed that evening, I saw Sidney on her knees by the bed, too far for the beseeching hands to reach

her. I could guess the tenor of the faltering words which permitted no interruption till what she had set herself to say was ended. Tregarvon waited till she paused, and then with a great effort drew her close to him. He tried no argument, he denied none of her words; his only reply as he threw his arms around her was:

"My darling, my wife, I love you!"

Sidney never doubted any more. Weak, erring, imperfect as she was, Tregarvon loved her, and it was enough.

"Only one thing remains to be told. A few days after Tregarvon's conduct had become publicly known, a man in a rough pea-coat, and with the evident bearing of a sea-captain, called upon me, enquired after Reuben Tregarvon, and what his future plans were. I said I had no doubt he would accompany his brother to Canada.

"Then," said the captain, "my brother has just died, and left me a house and three hundred acres allotment-land out at a new place there, they call London. My ship, the Vesta, was one that weathered the storm, thanks to the Pol Coed beacon, in February last. If the man who kept the lamp alight likes to go and work my land on half-profits he may; for," added he, with a falter in his voice, "I had my wife on board (although it was all against rules) that voyage, and if we had struck on the reef, I should have had to save the passengers first, and we had only two boats, and one hundred and fifty souls on board! So Heaven bless Reuben Tregarvon! It was my wife's thought," he added: "there's the papers, just look, sir, and see that they are all right;" and he hurried from the room. Tregarvon is like many here, as I pointed out to you before, half farmer, half fisherman, and will, no doubt, succeed well."

"Thank you, indeed," I said, as Mr. Allan concluded his narrative, and we rose from our seat in the porch. "I never heard a stranger story; I am more set than ever on having Tregarvon's head."

"Well, your best chance is to go to Falmouth this evening. They lodge for one night at the little waterside inn, The May Flower, and you might get a sitting."

I did go to The May Flower, and prevailed on Tregarvon to give me an hour, bribing him with a promise of a sketch of his father's grave, but we neither of us referred to what the rector had been telling

me of the way in which his marriage had come about.

Here ended Pengarth's manuscript, and in a few minutes I heard my friend return. He had something of the Cornish gift of silence about him, for he asked no questions as to how the story had struck me. He merely went to the folio of sketches, and we were soon immersed in practical details of roads, inns, and conveyances. Only, when I was obliged to go, he said: "If you go straight to Pol Coed, I will get you to take this to the rector;" and he showed me a sketch of St. Stephen, with the features of Tregarvon, and the words under it were: "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall find it."

In a little over a month's time, I was at Pol Coed, and climbing the hill to the churchyard and the rectory. There before me lay the subject of Pengarth's water-colour drawing, not in the tender greyish tints of early spring, but in the flush and beauty of midsummer, verging upon early autumn. The corn rustled ripely, ready for the sickle; the poppies flamed; the cry of the sea-birds came mingled with the low monotone of the waves; the grasshoppers chirped. I breathed the pure air, and thanked Heaven for the mere gift of life in such a scene.

I took no warning from the dead beneath my feet. I only noticed the little village of Pol Coed, to think how charming it would be to spend one's days there. I did not observe that the blinds of the rectory were drawn down; in such heat it was nothing remarkable. But the door bell, when I rang it, sounded with a strange hollow sound, and the woman who answered it was weeping bitterly.

"He's dead, sir," she sobbed, in reply to my enquiries for the Rev. Stephen Allan; "he's dead of the fever; it has been raging down there these two months past," and she pointed to the smiling village under the cliff, "and he has been nursing and teaching every one, and there have been no new cases since he's been took; perhaps he is taken for all of them, sinners that we are never to have heeded his words before. No, sir, you must not go in; his last words were, when he was stricken for death, that no one was to come near him, living or dead, and we were to close the coffin at once, and he's to be buried this evening;" and she added, with a fresh outbreak of weeping, "we shall never see the like of him again."

Yes, the smiling village was a pest-hole of typhoid fever. Mr. Allan's vigorous measures and sanitary knowledge had stayed the plague, but the shepherd had laid down his life for his sheep.

The friend with whom he had made the exchange of livings came that evening to read the funeral service, amidst the sobs of the crowd of parishioners that encircled the grave.

Into his hands I gave Pengarth's sketch of St. Stephen, and he placed it in the church over the tablet "To the Memory of Stephen Allan, Clerk," where the gilt aureole and elaborate vestments are much admired by the congregation; but none have discovered in the saint the features of Reuben Tregarvon.

"It was sent there by the painting gentleman," is now always the explanation to visitors to Pol Coed church; "because you see, sir, as how the rector's first name was Stephen."

Truly, all callings have their possibilities of martyrdom!

THE OTHER SIDE.

By MARY SEYMOUR.

I.

THE bell of Wincombe parish church had stopped, the little building was full of its usual Sunday worshippers, and the Rev. Roland Halliwell had begun the exhortation in his most clerical tones when a sudden whirl and bustle disturbed the attention of both pastor and congregation. It is difficult to say which of their organs was most strongly affected: the clatter of high-heeled shoes, the rustle of silken gowns, the combined odours of patchouli and white-rose, and the various hues of many-coloured raiment all broke at once upon the astonished churchgoers, and were welcomed by the younger portion as heralding the arrival of the ladies staying at Hillside, and thus affording the excitement of guessing their ages and position.

The curate, startled by the sound of their entry, so different from the clatter of the children, or the shuffle of the old women, looked up for a moment, and then dropped his eyes upon his book with a feeling of indignation. Why did such people come in late and disturb the congregation? It would have been more respectful if they had

stayed away altogether; their way of dressing their hair was sufficient to destroy the effects of a year at least of careful Sunday-school teaching, and he was convinced that before a week was over all the most promising girls would have cut and curled their front locks and spent the greater part of their time in trimming hats in emulation of the elaborate head-gear of the new-comers.

There was nothing in their appearance to justify the young clergyman's wrath; both were pretty women under five-and-twenty, and both behaved during the service with extreme decorum, although one of them giggled a little in her pocket-handkerchief when a small boy inadvertently scattered four peppermint-drops and one halfpenny broadcast in the aisle. The accident did not disturb the rest of the congregation in the least, the younger members were engrossed in a struggle to keep their places in the Psalms, whilst the elder ones were in that condition of passive receptivity to which a quarter of an hour's attendance at church reduces the average rustic mind. They used neither hymn nor prayer book, they joined neither in responses nor singing, but they solemnly rose up and sat down at the proper places with their eyes fixed upon some point in the chancel without betraying either interest or weariness by the movement of a muscle. The sermon permitting them to remain physically quiescent for a time was acknowledged by them to be soothing, but the curate's eloquence was not so much admired as the vicar's. This latter's unsparring denunciations of modern free thought and of the dangers of cultivating an intellectual cynicism were very pleasing to his hearers, both as proving his earnestness and their own superiority. His four-syllable words and involved sentences were far more popular than the somewhat ostentatiously simple addresses of the curate.

"What a solemn young parson he is," said one of the two girls who had startled him into indignation; "I would give something to see if he could laugh."

Church was over, and they had left the village behind them, and were climbing up the hill which led to their lonely little cottage; the sun was shining with July heat, the dust was blowing along the unfrequented road, and neither of the ladies was feeling particularly edified by the morning's experience.

"I think" went on the one who had

first spoken, "we were a couple of donkeys to come to such a quiet place; we might have had no end of fun if we had gone with the others."

"And spent no end of money," put in the other, who was the younger of the two. "You know very well, Nelly, we shall live for just a quarter of the money we should have spent at a big hotel."

"And a fine saving it will be," retorted Nelly with a good-humoured laugh, "if we die of dulness, and have to pay that solemn young parson to bury us. He will give me the blues if he does."

"Don't let him have the chance, then. I don't mean to give it him, I can tell you."

The villagers of Wincombe were a little divided in opinion as to the social position of the two visitors at Mrs. Thornton's—the number and variety of their dresses, the unpractical nature of their boots, and their views about the hours and character of their meals, seemed to prove them to be great ladies; but the supporters of this theory had to acknowledge that money was not too plentiful or friends too numerous at Hillside. Finally, Mrs. West, of The Castle of Comfort, soon decided the question in a few words.

"Real ladies! Bless you, no. Where's their livery footman?"

Roland Halliwell had felt no doubt as to their social position from the moment they had rustled into church.

"Very respectable people, doubtless," he mused to himself as he strode over the hills on the Wednesday after he had first seen them. "But I wish they had gone anywhere else. Grace Martin and Mary Dykes are not the only girls who will take to high-heels and tight-lacing as a consequence of their visit. Their influence will be most pernicious."

He sighed heavily. He had just been solemnly interviewed by the village school-mistress on the subject of the misdeeds of Grace and Mary, and he held, besides, the fashionably strong views on the sanitary aspects of dress.

His meditations were interrupted by a woman's voice, and a cry of "Do stop!" made him turn abruptly round. One of the very persons then occupying his thoughts was running and shouting—could she be running and shouting after him?—down the slope behind him. He stopped stiffly, indignant protest at the impertinence expressed in attitude and look.

"Oh, how fast you do go, and why did you not hear me?" began the young woman, quite regardless of his severe air of

reproof, which she considered to be the usual professional badge of his class, and by no means understood to be intended as a rebuke for her own misdeeds. "I thought I should never catch you up."

Roland grew stiffer than before, and then lifting his hat asked if he could be of any use.

"Of any use? Of course you can. Do you think I should have run up hill and down dale for the fun of trying to catch you?" Anyone less wrathful than Roland must have smiled at the association of two such incongruous ideas as himself in this mood of icy repression and fun, but he did not smile for a moment, and his companion went on: "Nelly—that is my friend—has put the heel of her boot through a hole in the plank over the stream. She cannot get the heel out, but she has taken the boot off, or rather"—with a burst of laughter, the motive for which lay deeper than he knew—"she has taken her foot out of the boot, and there it sticks—the boot, I mean!"

Roland listened to the speaker without allowing himself to betray a gleam of intelligence; a slightly mocking look arose in her eyes as she went on.

"If you have a knife and will dig it out for her, I shall be much obliged; otherwise, she must hop home."

Roland was doubly disgusted at her flippancy. He felt in his pocket, drew out a tolerably substantial pen-knife, and announced his readiness to follow her, in a tone of rigid courtesy. The two walked side by side without speaking a word, Maggie Lyndhurst secretly enjoying the situation, and rehearsing a reproduction on some future occasion of the curate's manner and walk. The enjoyment was limited to herself. Mr. Halliwell was not at all pleased with the situation or with the young lady, and was very thankful when he saw an immediate prospect of relieving himself from both.

"All right, Nelly," cried his companion, "I have found someone."

If Roland had felt his dignity insulted by the individual nature of the first appeal, he did not find it soothed by this classification of himself as "someone." The sight of a young lady, seated on a grassy bank by a stream, and ruefully regarding her boot securely fastened by its heel to a hole in the plank over the river, was a sufficiently comical spectacle to have overcome any feelings but those of injured dignity, but it did not tempt him to smile; on the contrary, his consciousness of the growing

absurdity of the situation froze him into greater stiffness of demeanour.

The removal of the little boot, firmly fixed by its French heel, was a matter of some difficulty, but he accomplished it after a few minutes, and restored it to its owner with a bow. The thing was a useless little absurdity, pretty in spite of its defiance of all natural laws, because, like its wearer, it showed traces of such exquisite finish and daintiness. She was older than her companion, Roland saw at a glance, and the striking contrast nature had formed between her pale complexion and dark eyebrows seemed to have been helped out by the aid of art.

"Thank you very much," she said, looking up at him with a pair of dark eyes full of drollery and mischief. "I am awfully sorry to have given you so much trouble. I am afraid you may have spoilt your knife."

"Not at all; can I be of any further use?" with what Nelly afterwards characterised as the politeness of a Polar-bear.

"I think not, thank you. Can he, Maggie?"

"No; unless," and the wickeder and prettier of his tormentors actually laughed again; then added with a pretty appearance of hesitation, "unless you can lend us a button-hook."

The gentleman hardly regretted that he did not possess such a thing, he only stated the fact, and then wishing them good-morning, strode over the hills again at a rate which showed that he did not intend to be again overtaken.

The girls waited until he was out of sight, but never stopped to think whether he was out of hearing, before they gave way to a fit of uncontrolled laughter.

II.

It was the noon of an oppressive August day, Mrs. Thornton's two lodgers were sitting at the open window of one of the upper rooms, and trying to fancy that they could feel a little breeze coming up from the west.

"I wish we were down by the sea-shore," said the younger a little petulantly. "Nelly, feel how hot my head is; do you think there is going to be a storm?"

"Can't say, my dear, but I am sorry your head aches. I am afraid it has been running about after my packing; you are such a dear good-natured little thing, it does seem a shame to ask you to do any-

thing more, but no one can trim a bonnet as you can, and if you wouldn't mind——"

The other moved her head restlessly to and fro in her armchair, but seemed relieved at the notion of employment.

"Give me the shape and the lace then; only remember you are to make them all believe it comes from Paris. I should enjoy taking in that sly Louie."

Nelly agreed to the condition, and the work began. The heat and oppression were forgotten, even the headache seemed of little importance as the artist proceeded with her work; but when it was finished the poor little girl drew her hand across her eyes and said:

"I am sure there is going to be a storm, the lightning hurts my eyes before it comes."

"There is a funny light in the sky," said the other, who was trying on her bonnet, and looking in the glass. "I look a perfect fright," here she arranged one or two straying curls upon her forehead, with an expression which showed how deeply she appreciated the importance of her operations, "and you don't look much better, Maggie. I tell you what," suddenly wheeling round and facing her friend, "I shall stop at the doctor's as I drive through the village, and ask him to come and see you. I wish I wasn't going to leave you, but I am afraid I must, I am due at Liverpool to-morrow."

"Never mind," said Maggie Lyndhurst bravely, though the tears unaccountably rose to her eyes; "I shall be all right to-morrow, dear."

"I am sure I hope you will, we both look perfectly awful. After all, I need not have been afraid of sunburn. I almost wish," with a sigh over her neglected opportunities, "I had gone out once or twice without a veil; I hate a pasty face."

She was still looking in the glass, or Maggie might have felt the remark a personal one; for her own face was white and drawn, and her eyes were heavy with weariness.

"Good-bye, my dear, I shall send the doctor, and mind you write and say how you are," and Nelly kissed her friend effusively as the two parted.

Maggie promised to write, but it was many a long day before the little actress could put pen to paper, or let any one know how weary were her sleepless nights and restless days.

"I say, Halliwell," said Dr. Brown,

pulling up his horse abruptly one day as he passed the curate, "I do wish you'd go up to Hillside and see that poor little thing who is ill there. She has been laid up with low fever for a fortnight, and has no one to speak to but Mrs. Thornton. She is a patient little thing, but I fancy she is frightened out of her wits about herself. I suspect you can do more good than I can."

The Rev. Roland's face assumed a somewhat set expression.

"If you think I can be of any use, I will certainly go."

"You will be useful enough," said the doctor dryly, "if you will help her to be a little more reasonable;" and then as he drove on he muttered: "What airs that solemn young prig does give himself! Well, there is one comfort, he is the more likely to make a woman believe in him."

Roland might be a prig, but nothing save a strong sense of duty could have induced him to face the mocking eyes and generally impertinent demeanour of the young actress.

Mr. Prendergast, the vicar, was away, and likely to be away for some weeks; it was obviously the curate's duty in his absence to attend to the sick and suffering whatever might be his personal feeling towards the individual.

He arranged his sentences in solemn order, and arrayed himself in a triple armour of stiffness and conventionality, but he found all his fine schemes set at nought when he was admitted into the little sitting-room, where she lay upon the sofa.

Whiter than her dressing-gown, with all her soft fair hair brushed back from her pale face, with large dark circles round her blue eyes heavy with unshed tears, it was absurd, useless, cruel to approach her with the stiff greeting which he had composed as a happy mixture of courtesy and defiance.

He came up to her instead, and took her hand very kindly, all his better nature as well as his professional instincts aroused at the sight of suffering.

"I am sorry to hear that you have been ill, but I hope you are getting better now."

There was no answer for a minute, and then, to his surprise and horror, she turned her head aside, and burst into an uncontrolled fit of weeping. Long hours of sickness and terror had left her at the mercy of each passing impulse, never held under the strict control of high-breeding.

Roland walked to the window, walked back again, and patted the sofa-cushion as a kind of compromise between coldness and familiarity.

His repeated appeals, "Don't cry, don't cry, please don't," were not very successful; but at last her fit of weeping wore itself out, and she lifted her head from the sofa-cushion where she had buried it, to say, through her sobs:

"I am very sorry, indeed I am; but I have been so ill, and so frightened."

"You must not be frightened though; you are getting better now."

She looked at him with enquiring eyes; he could not resist the mute appeal for help and comfort, and the last faint shadow of resentment vanished from his soul.

He sat down beside her and began to speak to her in the low clear tones which had made him more popular in the cottage than the pulpit, and she listened with a sense of rest and consolation in the presence and sympathy of a human being who was so obviously better able than herself to comprehend and face the terrible realities of life, sickness, and death with which her mind had lately been filled.

"Will you tell me one thing?" she asked, as he rose to go, and she timidly laid her white hand on his black coat-sleeve, as if she derived some strength from the contact. "Please tell me the truth."

"I will tell you nothing but the truth, certainly."

"Am I going to die?"

She whispered the words in a low awestruck tone as if she were afraid of them, but she never moved her watchful eyes from his face. She felt as if the question of life or death hung upon his answer; the confusion of the offices of priest and prophet is characteristic of an elementary stage of intellectual development.

"Certainly not, at least not now in this illness; you are getting steadily better."

"But I am quite sure Dr. Brown sent you to me! I know he did because he thought I was dying."

She was on the very verge of tears again, but stopped as Roland answered her quietly:

"You talk as if I were an undertaker; I assure you I am not."

The tears changed to a smile, and then youth triumphed over the severity of his professional demeanour, and her terror of the unknown and awe of him, and the two laughed in a pleasant duet.

"I will send you some books, then," he said, as he bade her good-bye. "And you must not think too much about yourself, but read, and get strong quickly."

"Thank you," she faltered, not daring to protest against the books, but foreseeing the arrival of a large supply of tracts. "I suppose you could not come and see me again? You see," with hesitating entreaty, "there is no one but Mrs. Thornton to speak to, for I am quite a stranger to every one in the village."

Roland's mind was an ill-regulated one in spite of his Oxford training, or else why should he suddenly connect this poor little actress with a certain man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves? The ladies of Wincombe would have smiled at his comparison of them with the priest and Levite of old, for, after all, as his vicar always said, "One must never forget the danger of any attempt at the practical application in everyday life of the theoretic teaching of abstract truth."

III.

If Maggie Lyndhurst had begun her acquaintance with Mr. Halliwell by betraying a discourteous want of respect for himself and his office, she made up for it subsequently by cherishing an almost superstitious degree of veneration for both.

Admiration, good fellowship, friendship, she had received in plenty during the course of her twenty-two years; but she had never before known anything like the constant companionship of a man both by nature and training her intellectual superior. Had she been in her usual health and spirits, she would have probably resented the slightly condescending air of kindness with which he treated her; but then, had she been her usual self, full of fun, defiance, and impudence, he certainly would not have climbed up to Hillside every other day to bring her fresh books, and to chat to her for half an hour.

She was lonely and depressed, his visits cheered the weary hours of convalescence; she was ignorant and frightened, he taught, counselled, and consoled her. It was not strange if she began to count up the hours between his visits, and to watch for the first sight of his tall black figure striding over the moors towards the cottage.

She recalled with shame the mimic scene she had enacted to Nelly, in the

very room where she now sat longing for his coming.

What would he think of her if he knew that she had imitated his stiff demeanour and severely formal tones; he who had been so kind and friendly. She blushed a little at the bare idea, and, jumping up, rearranged the chairs and tables, though she was so weak that the lightest of them was a heavy weight to her tired arms; yet any fatigue was better than being reminded of that dreadful occasion by the unchanged appearance of the room, and the set arrangement of the furniture.

Then she resumed her seat in the arm-chair, a little out of breath with her exertions, and began to watch again for his coming.

"Such a religious man. A clergyman, too!" she thought to herself naively; "and yet so good-natured and kind. There he is, with a heap more books. I do hope he will stop a long time."

The conversation between these two, who could not be supposed to have very much in common, never flagged or grew tiresome; but it was generally Roland who talked, and Maggie who listened. They discussed the books he lent her, which were not at all of the nature of tracts, but concerning which he naturally had more defined opinions than she, and often touched upon more solemn subjects suggested by her reading or her half-childish terror of illness or death.

It was very satisfactory, he felt, to see that she was really growing to understand such matters, and shaking off her somewhat heathenish views of serious things. He was really thankful that he had taken Dr. Brown's hint and visited her. Who knew but that this illness might become a source of benefit to her during her whole future life.

But their talk was not limited to such grave matters only. Roland professed the many-sided interests which are supposed to be the badge of a higher culture, and was quite ready to descend to a lower level of conversation than the one which Maggie thought natural to him.

The two actually discovered that they must have been within a mile of one another on the occasion of one University boat-race, and this striking coincidence afforded both of them a considerable amount of pleasure. Of theatrical matters, and of her own life, Maggie spoke very little; she had an instinctive feeling that the ground was dangerous to enter upon,

and yet she might have told him every detail of her past without arousing in his mind any other feelings than those of surprise and admiration. Surprise at the amount of hard work necessary in the pursuit of a profession generally associated in the public mind with the wearing of smart clothes and the lavish frittering of a too easily earned salary, and admiration at the courage and endurance the lonely little woman had shown in facing the fatigues and disappointments of her life.

Maggie recovered her health slowly, but steadily, and Dr. Brown and Mrs. Thornton each attributed her returning colour and her renewed appetite to successful medical treatment and the delicious air of Hillside respectively.

The patient was grateful to both, and was not too careful to enquire the cause. One day, about a fortnight after his first visit, Roland found her busily employed in trimming a hat, her cheeks rosy, and her fair hair restored to its former curly arrangement on her forehead.

Roland noted the fact with a grave disapproval quite disproportioned to the offence, but he sat down and began to talk as usual.

"What do you think of my hat?" Maggie asked with a simple confidence that every human being must be interested in so vital a question. "Ought the feather to go in on the right or left side? I have looked in the glass, and asked Mrs. Thornton ever so many times, but I can't make up my mind."

She put it on her head and looked at him with solemn eyes. No man could appreciate the full importance of the question, but it was certainly desirable to secure some advice superior to purblind Mrs. Thornton's.

Roland did not answer.

"You don't like it," she went on quickly; "I see you don't; and yet I made it all myself, and thought it very pretty."

"The hat is very well," with an almost unconscious accent on the noun.

Maggie sprang up and looked in the glass.

"Then my hair is out of curl. No, it isn't. What do you mean?"

"I can't think why you wear that thing, you look very much better without it," Roland made answer, apparently unconscious of the impertinence of his remark.

"Look better without it?" in accents of extreme incredulity. "Oh, I never heard such a thing; I should be a perfect fright."

But when Roland paid his next call, Maggie's curls had disappeared, and her pretty white forehead was again visible.

After all it was not worth while to take the trouble to curl one's hair, when people liked one better with it smooth.

IV.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Halliwell's visits to Hillside passed without notice or comment from the neighbours, and it is quite possible that he himself might have been startled into discontinuing them had it not been for the friendly interposition of the squire's wife. Lady Laura Greenhill was possessed in a high degree of two qualities, neither of them distinctly mischievous in themselves: a keen sense of her own powers of management, and an ardent desire to benefit her fellow-creatures. Taken singly, each of these attributes would have been merely amiable weaknesses, but when held in combination, the result was to make her ladyship the most meddlesome and mischievous woman within ten miles.

When she pulled up her ponies and called Mr. Halliwell to the side of her pony-carriage, he suspected an unpleasant interview, though her first words were amiable enough.

"Oh, Mr. Halliwell, I wanted to ask you when Mr. Prendergast is coming home; I feel so very anxious that he should return—for your sake."

"You are extremely kind, Lady Laura, but I have not been feeling the double work at all a heavy burden, I assure you."

"It was not the work I was thinking of, Mr. Halliwell, young men ought to work, but the visiting of that young person at Hillside; it would be much better if the vicar were here to do it."

Roland bowed stiffly.

"I do not mean to say that such persons ought never to receive spiritual comfort and advice;" but if Lady Laura did not mean to say this, her emphasis certainly left no doubt as to her feelings on the subject; "but you are quite young, and I think it only fair to warn you that people are really saying very ill-natured things about you."

Roland controlled his voice to say stiffly that he trusted he should never be turned aside from an obvious duty by any dread of slanderous tongues; and then deliberately set his face towards Hillside.

which he had resolved not to visit until the next day. Lady Laura frequently had occasion to congratulate herself on the success of her interference.

"I had a letter this morning," said Maggie to Mr. Halliwell one lovely morning in September, "a letter from Nelly—you remember her? She has had such a nice time, and I am going to see her next week for a little, before the theatre opens."

"You seem quite glad to be going away," said Roland gloomily. Why should he wish her to be sorry?

She looked up at him, her heart beat faster for a moment with pleasure as she recognised the reproach in his tones. Then she felt a sudden sadness seize her as she saw that he was displeased.

"Indeed I am not glad; you know—you know I am very sorry."

Her voice said more than her words, her look of pleading affection met his eyes, and then Maggie, startled by her own tone, and frightened at her self-betrayal, drooped her head upon the table and hid her face, rosy with sudden shame, in her right hand. When Roland saw two tears rolling down between the fingers, and falling unheeded upon the table, it was only natural that he should take the trembling left hand in his own and whisper some words of comfort. Then they were both silent for a time with that delicious sense of perfect bliss which no later happiness can equal, no subsequent misery can destroy.

It was Maggie who broke the silence; snatching up the first book which came to hand, she asked him nervously if he had ever seen her photographs, and turned over the leaves without seeing any of the pictures very distinctly. She talked fast and eagerly to hide her confusion, and Roland felt as if he were in a dream, looking at the theatrical celebrities, and hearing her remarks.

"And this," she said, pausing before a large cabinet-sized photograph, "is me."

There was a certain innocent triumph in her air; the dress had been considered such a success—she had been so much complimented upon it. She could not imagine the sudden cold horror which seized Roland at the sight of the picture, or the terrible awakening it brought about from the dreamy happiness of the last few minutes. He stared with desperate eyes at the pretty face and the quaint cap, at the smart doublet and hose, at the dainty boots.

"I was one of the four, all dressed alike as to cut, but different as to colour; pages,

one in yellow, one in pale-green, one in blue. I was in crimson-brown; I have a picture of us all somewhere."

She eagerly turned over the pages of the book, but she could not shut out the picture from Roland's mind. In the midst of his confusion and despair he recalled a letter he had received that morning from his most intimate friend, enclosing the likeness of the woman he was about to marry. He laughed aloud as he thought of the two pictures, but there was no laughter in his heart.

Somehow or other he got out of the room and out of the house; he had walked for miles before he was able to pursue any connected plan of thought, but when he flung himself upon the grass, exhausted with physical exertion, he knew that the struggle was over. He foresaw that he must suffer, but the suffering caused by the subordination of mere feeling to a higher law of self-sacrifice is full of consolation and promise.

It was when he was trying to embody this idea in a sermon that evening that his landlady brought him a note. He easily guessed from whom, and the severe manner of the bearer would have enlightened him, had he been dull of sense. It contained only a few words.

"DEAR MR. HALLIWELL,—I am so much better that I am going home to-morrow. Thank you very much for all your kindness and the books; I have left the last six you lent me with Mrs. Thornton. M. L.

"P.S.—I shall be acting at the Prince's next month."

Poor little Maggie! No well-brought-up and properly-chaperoned young lady could have been more conscious of the propriety of running home and leaving her lover to follow her when he pleased.

Roland read the note through twice, and then tore it into tiny fragments; when he had thrown these into his waste-paper basket, he resolutely returned to the writing of his sermon.

It is needless to say that the stage-door keeper at the Prince's was never scandalised by any enquiry from a clergyman after Miss Lyndhurst, or that Maggie watched each post without gaining anything but a heart sickness and despair which she had never before imagined that life could hold.

Roland has never heard of her since. He has carefully avoided any chance of

meeting her again, and he still shudders as he thinks of his narrow escape. If he were to hear that she has grown somewhat more reckless of public opinion, more incredulous of the reality of religion, more eager in her search after all forms of excitement, he would express regret but no surprise.

IN THE NICK OF TIME.

By MISS E. MULLEY.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN I first saw Torre Grange, some three years ago, the charm of a summer's day lay over it. As I looked on the pleasant old house with its cheerful face and caught sight of bright home-like rooms through its open doors and windows, I—fresh from the dust and turmoil of a city—drew an envious breath.

How calm and restful it all was! How shut out from the great world and all its troubles! As my eyes wandered over its smooth-shaven lawns, its gay flower-beds, as I saw it all bright in the morning sunshine, winter, with its grey skies, bare earth, and sunless days, its storms and desolation, seemed to my imagination so far away that I could not picture it as ever reigning here. In like manner sorrow and sickness, death and disappointment, seemed to me to belong to a world outside. Here surely, I told myself, nothing but sunshine, life, and happiness could find a place!

As I looked, a figure came out of the house, the figure of a little old lady with withered cheeks and bright sparkling eyes, a cap all white satin ribbons upon her head. She stood a moment listening, an eager smile upon her face.

Suddenly the bells from a tower that must have been close by broke out into a joyous peal. The old woman nodded her white-ribboned head over and over again as they came pealing out; then, catching sight of me for the first time, smiled and curtsied to me.

"Good-morning. You seem all sunshine and marriage-bells here," I said, advancing and smiling too.

"Yes," said the old lady, evidently pleased to be addressed; "the wedding is this morning, but not here—away up in London. Ah deary me, things have come right at last, and they'd need to!"

At her words my theory of a moment ago seemed swept away. The peaceful

sun-steeped place, then, knew its storms and winter after all! I could not relinquish my dream without a sigh. My new acquaintance looked at me inquisitively.

"You are a stranger. But be pleased to come inside and rest, and if you care, to hear all about it."

Of course I did. And here is the tale the old woman told me—not precisely as it fell from her lips, for it was to the principal actors themselves that I became afterwards indebted for the completeness of my story.

CHAPTER I. OUSTED.

ALTHOUGH Jonathan Hardstaff had been the owner of Torre Grange for the last twenty years of his life, and to the countryside he had become at once by right the squire, to Torretton, that claimed him by right of birth and bringing-up, and that could, moreover, talk pleasantly of his great-grandfather, if only in a legendary sort of way, the dingy red-brick house and office in the High Street stood long before the country seat, and Lawyer Hardstaff he remained to the end of the chapter. The end of the chapter came with an awful suddenness.

It was the house in the High Street, which had seen him almost daily all his life, where up to middle-age his life had indeed been wholly passed, which saw the last of him.

There were no leave-takings, no good-byes, no last wishes, no commands. The old man of many friends died alone in his easy-chair, and his lips were closed for ever.

They carried him from the dark silent house to the church close by, and then a whisper went through Torretton that all search had proved unavailing, and no sign nor token of a will had been discovered. The days went by, spring was at hand; the squire, or old Lawyer Hardstaff, as Torretton preferred to call him, had been some time dead and quietly resting by the side of the wife from whom twenty years of death and silence had separated him, under a slab in the centre aisle of the parish church for the last two months, and still no vestige of the sought-for document.

The Grange, the house and office in the High Street had all been ransacked; bureaux and desks, every available article, had alike been rifled, but in vain. Not that this affected public opinion in the least. Outsiders might choose to question

"the last will and testament of Jonathan Hardstaff, Esquire," having ever existed, but Torretton would listen to no such heretical surmises.

Not that this helped matters much, and as time went on, and brought no solution of the mystery, even the most eager in the affair were at last compelled to admit that there was nothing more to be done—nothing, that is, but for the next-of-kin to step in and take possession, which in due time he did.

Now this, as all Torretton boldly declared, was the very last thing in the world the old lawyer had ever intended, and calculated, if ever affairs mundane could penetrate where he had gone, not only to make the poor gentleman turn in his grave, but, furthermore, to lift up that slab in the centre aisle and step forth to set matters right for himself; for if there had been anyone for whom Jonathan Hardstaff had, while in the flesh, professed a hatred and a loathing, who had never been allowed even to enter his doors, it was his faraway cousin and only relative, George Whympier, the man who now stepped into his empty shoes—and very comfortable ones they were—sat master at the table he had never been allowed to approach, and—or so said rumour—drank long and deep of the wines their late owner would sooner have seen emptied into the streets than have given him.

As for poor Dick Charlton, the dead man's dearly-loved step-son and boldly-declared heir to it all, he went out from the home he had been taught to look upon as his own, come what might, heartbroken and almost penniless.

The usual course of school and college, followed by a run round the world, was all the preparation the young fellow had known for battling with it. He had been brought up to no business or profession; he had picked up something of farming, and at the Grange was his step-father's lieutenant and right-hand man, and it gave him interest and occupation enough. But that, like Othello's, now was gone, and poor homeless Dick felt that his ruin was indeed complete. To crown its bitterness, he had been on the eve of marriage when the blow fell, for, as I have said, the old lawyer's death had been sudden and unlooked-for.

The girl he loved only held him the dearer for his troubles, it is true, and clung faithfully to him in those days of bewildering

to hope and courage; but to poor, crushed, ruined Dick it seemed that even her love and faith could bring no comfort. The blow that had shattered his happiness and hers, that had robbed him of his home, and, as it seemed to him, had made his very life another's, had been too sudden for even his brave heart. By what mysterious chance it had all befallen him he knew not; he only knew that an awful wrong, never intended, had been done him, and that he was powerless as the dead to set it right.

CHAPTER II. "POOR DICK."

TIME wore on; the two months just spoken of lengthened themselves out to twelve, and the mystery of the missing will was a mystery still. It no longer formed the principal subject of Torretton gossip, it is true, but it was not forgotten, nor likely to be so long as Dick Charlton's name was remembered in the place, or the old house that had been his home sheltered the stranger who had ousted him. The man had a right there—though there were a few bold enough to question even that—but the world is apt to judge more by feeling than by reason, and the world—the little world of Torretton—could not forgive him. Not that he was much the worse for it, or troubled himself at all about either his neighbours or their opinions.

He had made the acquaintance of some of the least respectable characters in the place, and these, save for certain other kindred spirits, old friends, some of whom were always to be found staying in the house, were the only ones who crossed its threshold.

George Whympier had been one of the most eager in the search for the missing document; that, no one of those most set against him could deny.

"If it is to be found, find it," he had said with many oaths. "Don't let me have the confounded"—only he used a much stronger term—"thing turning up when I am comfortably settled down, and have got used to looking upon the place as my own, to say nothing of as much money as I can spend, and more wine than I can drink;" at which red-faced George would chuckle, and Torretton had to confess that he was right.

But what was not right, and what Torretton could not forgive, was that no offer was made to share the good fortune that had so unexpectedly fallen to his lot

with the unfortunate man who had so unexpectedly lost it.

"He must make over something to poor Dick," the onlookers declared, "something handsome it ought to be, considering what a hard case it is, and all he has got. If not that, he will surely give him something to begin the world with."

But no, no offer of help, small or great, ever reached Richard Charlton, and as "poor Dick" he went out into the world, to make his way in it as best he might. Kind hearts followed him, and good wishes in plenty; something more substantial, too, might have been his, but he could not bring himself to take that which he might never be able to pay back.

So Dick went forth into the great world free from debt, free from everything but the necessity of earning every crust he ate. He did his best, but there seemed so little to be done, so many to do it. Still he struggled bravely on through the weary months. But to what end? The crust to eat, the roof to shelter him had been his, and that was about all. He found himself no nearer success, no farther on the road to wife and home.

"I give it up!" he said one day at the twelvemonth's end, to the girl who was waiting patiently, and with the ever-springing hope of love and faith, for brighter days to dawn. "I give it up. There is no room for me here, Fan, my dear. I must try elsewhere. There is room and work, too, 'the other side.' What do you say, Fan? You won't be afraid to come to me when I have made a home there? It mayn't be just yet, and it won't be a palace, I dare say," poor Dick added, a little bitterly.

"It will be home, Dick, if you are there," said Fan, with a happy laugh—there were tears, too, in her eyes—"and I will wait for you, oh, any time, till I am old and grey, dear—and you don't want me!"

Then Dick laughed too, and kissed away the tears that Fan pretended were not there at all.

The two were sitting in the little school-room of Frances Langley's home in a highly respectable though decidedly unfashionable quarter of London.

A clerk in a Government office, with the magnificent salary consequent thereon, and a baker's dozen in the way of offspring—and such was John Langley, our Fan's father—scarcely looks, however genteelly he may be connected, to settling down in

the sacred precincts of Mayfair. Neither when one, and that, moreover, the head and front of the aforesaid "baker's dozen," proposes to reduce the number of mouths to be fed and backs to be clothed, and begin the world on her own account, is she likely, though tears may be shed, and loving hearts may long to keep her, to meet with much opposition.

So Richard Charlton and Frances Langley made the most of the stray half-hour they had managed to secure to themselves, and discussed their future and made their plans without any fear of being called upon materially to alter or change them by anyone outside.

"And so in a fortnight I shall be off," said Dick, rising, as the supper-bell sent out its summons for the second time. "I know something of farming if I don't know much of anything else, and that hundred pounds is still standing in my name in the Torreton Bank. I made up my mind not to touch a penny of it till I wanted it for some such thing as this. Oh, I shall do," Dick went on, "never fear; and perhaps by this time next year you may be coming out to me. I couldn't leave the farm, you know, Fan."

"Oh, Dick!" laughed Fan, "you are a second Martin Chuzzlewit or Mr. Micawber."

"Never mind," said Dick, who had talked himself out of the 'blues.' "You wait and see. Next week I am off to Torreton to say good-bye to old friends, and to break the bank by the withdrawal of my capital. And, then, farewell to the old country."

"And I," said Fan, "shall at once put myself in training for a squatter's—I believe that is the word—wife. There is a cow somewhere in this neighbourhood that lives in a cellar. I shall take lessons in milking."

CHAPTER III. A LAST LOOK.

RICHARD CHARLTON'S adieux in Torreton were all said; he had withdrawn his hundred pounds from the bank, and was making ready for the return journey, when he suddenly decided to do that which he had told himself all along that he would not do. But at the last his purpose failed him. He found that he could not bring himself to leave without a sight of the old place—a farewell look at the old home that, save in dreams, he should never see again.

He had been a couple of days in the place as it was, a few hours' delay in leaving

it could be of little consequence. There was a train which left for London about midnight. It was the early days of railways, and Torretton had only achieved a station and direct communication with the outer world since he left. He would take his hand-bag there and leave it till his return, three or four hours' later, in time to catch the "mail."

The December day had drawn to a close, and darkness fallen. Dick had said his last good-bye, deposited his bag at the station, and was well on the road to the Grange by the time the town clocks were striking six. In another hour he had reached the lodge-gates. But though he stepped manfully out, his stout heart was failing him. The familiar road, every tree and shrub distinct in the clear cold light of the now risen moon, was opening the old wounds with each step he took. The pain was so sharp he more than half regretted his changed purpose. But he went on.

"I must see the old house," he told himself, "at any cost. I wonder if Mrs. Miles is still there? I never thought to ask. I must see her too."

Presently he stood before it. How cold, silent, desolate the place looked to him. Not a stray gleam of light about it anywhere visible; not a sign of life about it. And yet it was home, or had been ever since he could well remember. He had known no other, and now he came to it like a thief in the night—the home that had been his, that should be still, that would be even now, he almost cried aloud, if only the dead could speak—if only the dead could speak!

Poor ousted Dick! a great ball climbed up into his throat and nearly choked him. He gave one more look at the dark desolate-looking place, and then found his way round to the back door and knocked. A young girl came at his summons, but she was a stranger to him.

"Is Mrs. Miles in?" said Dick, hazarding the question.

"Yes, sir; will you please to walk in?"

"No, thank you," Dick answered; "but if you will just ask her to come here to me one moment, I shall be obliged."

The girl hesitated.

"Say an old friend wants to see her," said Dick, and then the girl, carefully shutting the door upon him, left him standing there.

He had not long to wait. Presently the door was opened once more, and Mrs. Miles herself stood peering at him.

"Don't you know who I am, Mrs. Miles?" Dick asked.

At the first sound of his voice Mrs. Miles started.

"Lawks-a-mussy, if it isn't Master Richard! Oh, Master Dick, my dear, dear boy, come in!"

She had caught his two hands in hers, but although Dick returned her eager grasp warmly enough, he did not let her draw him a step nearer.

"No, no, old woman," he said gently, "I can't do that."

"Oh yes, you can, my dear," the old woman rejoined. "He isn't in, and won't be for the next hour, he's off to some races, thank goodness, and my room's my own, and I ask who I like there. You need not go a step further, but there, you're free and welcome, Master Dick, and there's a draff here fit to blow one's head off!"

Whereupon, seeing Master Dick still hesitated, Mrs. Miles gave vent to the most sepulchral of coughs, called up, I must confess, for the occasion. Hearing which Dick was compelled to relent, and forthwith followed the old housekeeper to her own quarters.

When Richard Charlton found himself once again in the familiar room, he felt as if he had never realised to the full his banishment from all his accustomed surroundings until now.

The flashing fire striking into odd corners, lightening up queer china-laden cupboards, falling on the well-known figure of the old housekeeper herself; the scene at once so homely and home-like, so laden with childish memories, appealed to him as perhaps other and more pretentious quarters of the old house might have failed to do. Old recollections crowded upon him—his wounds bled afresh.

It was some time before he could do more than answer in monosyllables all the questions with which his old friend plied him. But the history of the past twelve-months, Dick's plans for the future, did not take long in telling.

Mrs. Miles shook her head in the strongest disapproval; as the tale went on the curls of her rusty-brown front swung and danced.

"Good Lord, to think it should have come to this!" she cried. "Don't do it, Master Dick dear, don't do it! Never go away from the old place. Listen to what an old woman tells you—never go away."

She had left her chair by the fireside,

and was trotting up and down the room in her impatience and irritation.

"I think it is the old place that has gone away from me," said Dick grimly. "What can it matter where I am? It can never be mine again. If George Whympers died to-morrow it would not the more be mine."

"Only wait," said the old woman excitedly, coming up to where Dick sat, and laying her hand upon his arm. "If I did not think and believe you would have your own again, do you think I would have stayed on in the place with him? Not for all the George Whympers in the world! Listen to me, Master Dick," the woman's voice sank to a whisper, her lips almost touched the young man's ear. "That will is somewhere about, and he knows it."

Richard Charlton turned on her a white startled face, then he broke into a laugh.

"No need to look at me like that—no, nor to laugh either. I ain't out o' my senses just yet; but that there will's to be found, Master Dick, and he could find it. No, I don't know nothin' more, but I know that as well as I know my own corns, and I couldn't know nothin' better, and if he knew I only knowed that much he'd wring my neck like a sparrer's. But I can keep my eyes open and my mouth shut, Master Dick, if I can't do nothin' else."

"You can do something more for me, now," said Dick rising. "Nothing about the will, we must try and forget that; but there is something I left behind me, and that I have often wished for—it's nothing more valuable than my old tobacco-jar, but it's my own; my father gave it me with my first pipe, and I should like to take it with me wherever I may go, for the sake of old times. It used to stand on the mantelpiece in the little smoking-room."

"I know; but it isn't there now," said Mrs. Miles. "I know where it is though, it's on the top shelf in the cupboard in master's bedroom—not that he's any master o' mine—you shall have it in a jiffy, if so be he hasn't walked off with the key, for he's precious fond of locking things up, and with reason, I say, Master Dick."

Dick was not left long in doubt. Mrs. Miles was back in a twinkling, the jar triumphantly tucked under her left arm.

"The key was there," she said; "a sign my gentleman had been at the whisky before he went out."

"Well, we'll forgive him this once," Dick laughed; "and now, old woman, good-bye."

He stooped down and kissed the soft withered cheek.

"Is it good-bye—really good-bye, my dear?" she cried.

"Really good-bye," Dick echoed, his voice trembling.

"You will write; you will let me know where you are! And—and keep up your heart, my dear boy, keep up your heart." Mrs. Miles herself was crying like a baby.

"Yes, yes," said Dick hurriedly, "I promise," and breaking from her detaining arms, he passed quickly from the room and house, and in another minute was on his lonely way, his back for ever turned upon the place that should have been his home.

CHAPTER IV. MRS. MILES DREAMS.

MRS. MILES stood for a few moments at the open door watching the retreating figure of her young master until the shadows swallowed him up and he was lost to her. Then with a sigh she returned to the comfortable warmth of her "snuggery," as Dick was wont to call it, and drawing up her armchair to the fireside set herself to think.

There was nothing beyond the falling of a stray cinder to disturb the quiet, and drowsiness soon stole over her.

Deeper and more regular came her breathing; then the old woman slept. And then—or according to some—when she was on the point of re-awakening, Mrs. Miles dreamt.

Richard Charlton was still her companion, and the old tobacco-jar stood on the table between them. But they were not alone, her old master stood there too. She felt no surprise at seeing him, she only had the strange feeling that comes to most of us when we dream of the lately dead—a feeling that though he stood there, living, breathing, death had only lent him, as it were, and was even now ready and waiting to claim his own once more.

Presently the old man spoke; he was repeating her own words—her words to Dick little more than an hour ago:

"Don't go away," he was saying; "don't go away from the old place; open that jar instead. Open the jar, Dick."

"What is in it?" asked Dick. "It must be something more potent than tobacco to be of any use to me, sir!"

"Look and see," said the old man; "look and see," and rapped the table impatiently with the heavy brass candlestick that stood near.

At the sound Mrs. Miles awoke. She

was sitting bolt upright in her chair, and rubbing her eyes, and still the knocking went on. Then it dawned upon her that the hand was at her own door.

"Come in!" she cried, and in walked the master of the house. He was trembling all over, his face—usually deep enough in hue—was ashen white. Had he too been dreaming of the dead? the housekeeper asked herself. But he was evidently holding a great restraint over himself, and anxious to hide as much as possible the excitement under which he laboured. He had been drinking—that, too, was evident; but for that it is more than probable his saner judgment would not have permitted him to go there at all just then.

As it was, some shock, or what not, had partially sobered him, and he came towards the housekeeper steadily enough.

"Sit down, Mrs. Miles, sit down," he began. "No; I'll stand, thank you. The fact is, I came down here to speak to you, because—a—a—something is gone from my room, since I left it this morning, and I don't like things to go from my room—I don't choose things to go from my room, Mrs. Miles."

He looked at her with a look half fierce, half frightened. Mrs. Miles herself felt ill at ease. She knew in a moment what had happened; but she pulled herself together and nerved herself to face it.

"What is it, sir?" she said; "I will make enquiries."

Her hand was on the bell, but he stopped her with an oath. Then he recollected himself.

"No need to raise the house," he said quickly. "It is only a jar—my tobacco-jar, that has been taken from my cupboard. Who has been there, ma'am? that's what I want to know."

Something had got into Mrs. Miles's throat, and declined to be coughed out of it; when she managed to speak at last, her voice was very husky, her hands shook and rustled like dry leaves on her lap.

"Well, sir, I have been there."

"Yes, I dare say, Mrs. Miles; but you didn't take the jar, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, and I took the jar." It was not the old woman's hands alone that were shaking now; but she went on sturdily: "Mr. Richard has been here to-night—the jar was his, and I gave it him."

For the space of twenty seconds there was a horrible silence in the room; the housekeeper heard her own heart beating through it like a clock.

Then, with an awful oath, George Whympers sprang towards her. There was a choking sound, a crash that echoed through the empty passages beyond the room itself, and, with staring eyes and hands clutched wildly at his throat, the master of the Grange had fallen prone and lifeless at the old woman's feet.

CHAPTER V. THE DEAD SPEAK.

ONCE more the pair of lovers had the little schoolroom in the unfashionable square to themselves. It was their last meeting. Good-bye must be said to-night, last looks taken, last caresses given, for to-morrow would see them wide asunder—parted for how long?

Dick had brought the rescued tobacco-jar with him, and presented it, together with its history, to Fan.

"There," he said with a look of satisfaction, as he placed it on the mantelshelf before them, "it's just as I left it, tobacco and all. You keep it, Fan, till I come or send for you—my first pipe, with you to fill it, shall be from the old jar."

"Oh, Dick, dear Dick, will it be very long first, I wonder," and Fan stole a soft loving hand under Dick's strong arm.

They were standing side by side, her brown head nestling on Dick's shoulder. The young man looked tenderly down into the girl's wistful eyes.

"Long!" he cried cheerfully, "not a bit of it! Why, I shall work like any amount of niggers, and there will be no end of a place ready and waiting for you to come and look after it, before you have got your frocks and things ready."

"And you will send for me directly? You won't wait thinking the home isn't good enough, or grand enough, or anything of that sort? No matter how poor the place is, you will send for me, Dick?"

"Yes, yes," said Dick stoutly, "of course I will. How do you think I could live out there without you? And who knows what may happen," Dick went on glibly; "why, there is that old woman of mine down at the Grange, has quite made up her mind to see me back there again some day."

"What!" cried Fan eagerly, raising her head from Dick's stalwart shoulder.

"Well, you see, she has got an idea under that wonderful brown front of hers that the will is in existence somewhere, and that the king—meaning Dick Charlton, my dear—will come into his own again

some day. And what is more, she has made up her venerable mind that the present owner of the Grange, George Whympier, Esquire, to wit, has hidden it, and that she, Martha Miles, is going to find it—some day, as I have said."

Fan took her head from off Dick's shoulder altogether. Her eyes were sparkling, her pretty face was all aglow with excitement.

"And she is right, Dick; mark my words, Dick, she is right."

Dick shook his head.

"It is only an old woman's fancy, Fan," he said kindly. "We will try not to think any more about it, dear. Hark! how time is flying!" he cried as the old clock on the stairs gave out the hour with a solemn boom, "and we have still so much to say to one another."

Time was flying, indeed; it seemed but as if minutes had passed when again the clock's warning voice was heard.

"Ten!" cried Dick, "and I must be going. I start at daybreak, and I have still no end to do."

He was speaking cheerfully, even lightly, calling on all the man in him for her dear sake. The sparkle had fled from her eyes, the glow had died from her face, she stood looking at him white, tearless. He caught her in his arms, and held her there as if he could not let her go. Presently she gave a little trembling sob.

"Good-bye, dear, dear Dick," she cried softly, and broke from his embrace.

They had been standing close to the mantelshelf where the old jar stood; the door was at the side at Dick's left hand. He thought Fan was leaving him, running away from him, from the good-byes she could not speak, and put out his arms to stay her. And then—it was but the work of a moment—there was a fall, a crash, and the old tobacco-jar lay in fragments between them.

"Oh, Dick!" cried Fan, and was down on her knees upon the hearth-rug before Dick, dismayed, stupefied, had moved a limb.

"Get up, dear," he said at last, putting out a hand to raise her. "All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put it together again. It isn't worth troubling about; let me help you up."

But Fan didn't get up, nor in fact make any effort to do so. She did not even listen to what Dick was saying. She had picked up something from the ruins which was most certainly not tobacco, though plenty of that lay scattered about.

"What have you there?" Dick asked, finding she did not move; he bent over her as he spoke, and then he, big sturdy Dick, covered his face with his hands and broke into a great choking sob.

It was the missing will. It was brief enough, a sheet of ordinary paper held it all, but nothing more was needed.

Mrs. Miles was right after all, and the king had come into his own again! There were more loving embraces that wonderful night in the little school-room, followed by hand-shakings innumerable in the family sitting-room below, where supper cooled unnoticed; but there were no sobs to stifle, no farewells to speak, they were past and gone for ever, and a dozen lines in the old lawyer's familiar hand had done it all.

Tidings of what had happened at the Grange after his departure reached Richard Charlton the next day, but, beyond a thought of pity and forgiveness for the wretched man who had so wronged him, they could not affect him.

That George Whympier had found the missing will—where or how no one now could ever know—and failing courage to destroy it, had hidden it in the old tobacco-jar, the mere fact that the loss of the jar had so dismayed him was sufficient proof. That he had chosen it as a hiding-place not only likely to be safe from prying eyes, but where, if discovered, it could not possibly rise up in judgment against him, as it might have done elsewhere, no one doubted. Still less did any one care to sit in judgment on him. It might be that even he, poor sinner, would some day have found courage to restore to Dick his own, and set a great wrong right. Who could say?

And now how little more remains to tell. Richard Charlton went quickly down, and took possession of his own. It was winter then as we know; it was midsummer when Dick brought home his bride. The place lay steeped in the glory of a June sunshine when happy Mrs. Dick looked upon it for the first time. Trees and hedgerows wore their bravest mantles of greenery, as yet undimmed or scorched. Flower-beds gleamed, the very house itself looked smiling; all was brightness, warmth, and welcome.

As they alighted at the open doorway the church-bells rang out their loudest. Mrs. Miles, in a new and unblushing front of rich and youthful bronze, stood ready to receive them, proud, smiling. All she had

foretold had come to pass, and to crown it all was there not her dream! But that, alas! had most certainly not been received with all the wondering awe, not unmixed with admiration, which she had so fondly and without a doubt allowed herself to look for. It was the very top and pinnacle of her pride. What more could even a Joseph himself have accomplished in the way of a dream?

And yet, unkindest cut of all, Master Dick, in whose behalf she had so distinguished herself, actually from the first declined to see anything at all wonderful in the matter, and furthermore went so far as to declare that it was, under the circumstances, the most natural dream in the world, and that the only astonishing part of it was that he had not dreamt it himself.

"I think it is I who was the clever one, Dick," to this day, whenever the subject is mentioned, laughingly declares Fan. "To break a tobacco-jar may be nothing so very out of the way, but to break it just 'in the nick of time!' that was the talented proceeding!"

OUTGROWN IT.

By ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

"YOU must enjoy the change from overcrowded London streets to the free and open country immensely, Mrs. Nesbitt?"

Mrs. Nesbitt scowled at her interlocutor. He was a suave and amiable gentleman, the rector of the parish, and one of the kindest and most considerate of men. Yet here, to his dismay, he gathered from the expression of her face that he had ruffled the temper and aggrieved the spirit of his new parishioner at the outset of their intercourse.

"Why should you take it for granted that my sole acquaintance with the London streets was when they were overcrowded?"

"To me, a country born and bred man, they are invariably so," he replied courteously, and he was about to set the conversation moving into another channel, when she brusquely interrupted him.

"And as for your 'free and open country,' I have found it already a prying, narrow, inquisitorial, rigid, detestable place."

"I should grieve at such a charge being brought against my parish, were it not

that I feel, when I know you better, I can refute it."

"Perhaps you will never know me better; perhaps I may choose to keep you, as well as the rest of Horrafield, at arm's length."

Again she scowled defiantly at him, and he thought what a pity it was such a "personable woman" should possess such a diabolical temper.

"I will bide my time," he said pleasantly; "in the meantime will you allow me, as a representative resident in this prying, narrow, inquisitorial, rigid, and detestable place, to offer you, the latest comer to it, the best of my poor services? If I can be of use to you in any way pray command me."

The scowl was superseded by a smile that became her fair face much better.

"Do forgive me for laughing at you, but I can't help it. What can you possibly do for me that I haven't already done for myself? I've a roof to cover me—a servant to cook for me—enough money to buy the necessaries of life in Horrafield. In fact I've amply provided for all my possible wants."

"You may want sympathy and a friend one day; if you should do so——"

"I may send for you, I suppose you would add; that's the right conventional thing for you, as parson of the parish, to say to any stranger. Well, the kindest thing you can do for me is to let me alone. I came here for peace and quiet. Let me have them."

She was so openly anxious for him to be gone, that Mr. Lyne felt there was but one course open to him: He took it, and departed. As he closed the garden wicket, he looked back at the little cottage which Mrs. Nesbitt had recently taken and furnished. The windows were all closely draped with Madras muslin and soft Indian silks.

"What whim has brought a woman with the means of surrounding herself with such luxuries, to such an out-of-the-way corner of the world?" he asked himself. Then, still brooding over the subject, he took his way across the fields to dine with his cousin the squire, Clement Lyne, of The Hall.

Mr. Lyne had come into the property three years before this, but he had only taken up his abode at The Hall about two months before Mrs. Nesbitt came to puzzle his cousin the rector. The squire had been abroad a good deal, and in London a

little. Now he was coming down to live like a real country gentleman on his own estate, and there was a rumour that he would shortly be married.

He was a good-looking, agreeable man, and from the way in which he had begun ordering and arranging his household it was fairly assumed that he meant to live in a liberal style, and keep up the traditions of the Lynes of The Hall, who were valued exactly at the price of what they spent in the place.

His good looks were not of the order to cause any flutter in the female heart had he not been possessed of a good property. A short man, he was saved from being insignificant by his broad shoulders and erect, military bearing. His face was open and honest, and his eyes were a good grey—a colour through which a deceitful or untruthful soul rarely looks. But his nose was a decided snub with a marked want of bridge about it.

For the rest, he had a self-possessed pleasant manner, and dressed excellently. The neighbourhood was in doubt yet as to his sporting qualities, for he came to The Hall first in May. He rode a spirited horse quietly, which looked well, but still was not a sufficient guarantee of his being good after hounds. And he had a couple of favourite dogs, but as one was a big St. Bernard, and the other a little Dachshund, they gave no hint as to his sporting proclivities. So the neighbourhood had to wait till hunting and sporting began, to see what manner of man he was.

At The Hall all things remained in the same order as in the days of his predecessor. He made no additions to the furniture, and no alterations in the disposition of it. The same staff of servants who had served his uncle, the late squire, served him now in the same orderly way. The same quaint old-fashioned flowers and arrangements were maintained in the gardens. In fact, the only difference to be observed at The Hall was that the master was young instead of old.

Horrafield was not a remote village or townlet by any means. It was surrounded by waving cornfields, leafy woods, and rippling rivers it is true, and it was primitive in many of its habits and customs. As, for instance, it regarded its squire as a king of the place, and submitted to the unwritten law which declared his circle of friends and acquaintances to be the highest or court circle, into which it must neces-

sarily be the ambition of one and all to be admitted. It read with a sense of almost personal and pardonable pride that its county members had been at the Prime Minister's reception, the Home Secretary's dinner, or the Prince of Wales's levée. It revelled in every accurate little report in a local journal of the dress worn by either of the aforesaid county members' wives at Her Majesty's drawing-room. It believed in the superior flavour of its own trout over those of any other trout caught in known and civilised streams. It rather despised and pitied you if you didn't happen to have made the acquaintance of its Horradown-fed mutton. It liked to know the best and the worst, and, indeed, all the indifferent things too, that could be known about everyone who came to reside within its borders. But for all this it was not a remote or isolated village by any means, for it was within two hours of London, and had quite an attractive-looking little station at its southern extremity.

Mrs. Nesbitt had taken her little house from a London house-agent. She had furnished it from a London furnishing firm. She had come down alone, and stayed at the Horrafield Hotel for a few days, while her house was being arranged, during which time she had ingratiated herself so with the landlady as to induce the latter to secure one capable general servant for the strange lady. As this servant, in other respects a most superior person, could neither read nor write, Mrs. Nesbitt's correspondence were sealed books to her, therefore her interpretation of them revealed nothing to Horrafield.

"Her little house was a picture," the servant said, but no one had a chance of verifying the statement by a surreptitious inspection of any part of it except the kitchen; for when Mrs. Nesbitt went out she locked the doors of her sitting-rooms and bedroom, and put the keys beyond Mary's ken. Now this was a "way" for which no place that liked to have all things clear and above-board could have toleration.

When it was seen that she "looked and spoke quite like a lady," and discovered that there were no other means of finding out anything about her, all the upper ten of Horrafield called on her. But Mr. Lyne, the rector, was the only one who made the attempt successfully. The rest were baffled and beaten back from the door by the information either that she

was not at home, or that she was engaged and couldn't see any one.

Meanwhile the rumour grew in the village that Clement Lyne was about to be married to some lady unknown to Horrafield. Presently this rumour merged gradually into another and more definite one—he was to be married to little Miss Etherington, the only child of the rich City merchant who had lately bought and beautified an old mansion in the neighbourhood.

This last rumour had its birth in the fact of Mr. Lyne having told his gardener to go over to Holmlea (Mr. Etherington's place), to see some carpet-gardening arrangement which Mr. Etherington had much commended to his notice, and of his having dined twice with the new people.

"I think I've looked at her twice and spoken to her once," Clement Lyne said when his cousin told him of the rumour; "but I'm rather obliged to my neighbours for putting the idea in my head. She's not exactly what one would call pretty or remarkably prepossessing; but she has an amiable expression, and is very quiet and unpretentious. That in a girl who'll have the pile of money she'll have is some thing."

"It's not much by way of enthusiasm as regards marrying her," the rector remarked.

"No, you're right, Arthur," his cousin replied coolly; "but I exhausted all the enthusiasm I had on that subject many years ago, and I'm much obliged to gossip for once for having suggested little Miss Etherington to me."

To this the rector, having no suitable reply to make, made none, and the subject dropped between the two men for a time. But one evening when they were dining together, as was their frequent custom, Clement, who was the rector's guest on this occasion, observed:

"What a pretty crib you have here, old boy; better arranged and appointed in every way than The Hall. The only thing wanting to make it perfect is a mistress. How is it you've never given it one?"

"I thought of doing so in my curate days, but my uncle distinctly gave me to understand that if I married the lady I wanted to marry he would never give me this living. I didn't heed the threat a bit, but the lady did. She sent me about my business, and married a man who had patented a poker, or a pill, or something, and made a colossal fortune. Two or three years ago she wrote and asked me to take

two of her boys as pupils; 'the sum paid for their tuition might supplement my income agreeably,' she remarked. I declined to take the boys, and ceased to regret the woman. Try that trout; they're out of your own stream, but my cook manages them much better than yours."

The abrupt change in the conversation was due to the appearance of the rector's man. He was never oppressively present in the dining-room. Still there were moments when he felt that it behoved him as a man and a butler to change the plates, and fill the glasses.

When he vanished again for a brief period Clement Lyne said: "So my uncle dabbled and worked mischief in your affairs, too, with his idle interfering hands, did he? He did in mine to my awful discomfiture for years. My disappointment was put in with fiery colours; it's all faded and faded now, and I can't tell what has brought the memory of it back upon me vividly to-day; but it has been brought back, either by some sight or some sound—I can't tell which."

He paused, and his host looked politely interested:

"I'll tell you about it by-and-by, Arthur; I can't while Withers keeps popping in and out," the squire resumed animatedly. And so later in the evening he told his tale briefly.

"I was quartered at Knightsbridge, you know, the year before my uncle and I quarrelled, and he cut off my allowance, and so obliged me to sell out. And while I was there I went to a Sunday afternoon and evening entertainment at an establishment a famous actor and his wife had set up at Richmond. There was a queer mixture altogether of the aristocracy, art, literature, theatrical people, and military men, and I enjoyed it immensely, and lost the whole of my head and the best of my heart to a girl whom I thought very charming then, and think more charming now, when I recall her, and remember what she was.

"She was a bright, brilliant, well-bred girl, an evident favourite with the vast number of people who seemed to know her well, and beautiful with the beauty of youth, cleverness, vivacity, and goodness. I soon found out that she was an actress, a genuine, persevering, clever girl, who won every step she gained honestly by intelligence and assiduous study. Not a very rapidly rising or largely remunerated one,

but one who could take every farthing she made back to her mother, the widow with whom she lived, with a clear conscience and unblushing brow.

"She was of good family, of one that could hold its head well above my own with ease, and she led a merry, happy, double life, one with the swell relations who were rather fonder of her for relieving them of the onus of helping her and her mother, than they had been before she went on the boards, and the other the stage life and its inevitable associations and intimacies. She lived them both exquisitely, and I was the happiest fellow in the world the day I got her to promise to marry me.

"Then I wrote to my uncle in perfect confidence and hope. I knew I was dependent on him, but it never occurred to me as being within the bounds of possibility that an ignorant old provincial who knew little or nothing beyond the bounds of his own estate, who had difficulties with the English, and knew nothing of any other language, could 'object' to my marriage. I was mistaken. In an idiotic, ill-spelt letter he forbade me to entertain the idea of marrying a girl who had been a 'play-actress.' If I did, he vowed he would leave this place to the least deserving charity he could think of. I was fool enough to show it to Olive's mother, and to my horror I saw the moment after that the old lady's faith was shaken in me.

"However, I thought I could put that right directly I saw Olive. It was so thoroughly my set purpose to disregard the tyrannical, stupid old fellow's injunctions and threats, that I never thought of how they might goad and gall sensitive refined gentlewomen like Olive and her mother. By Jove! old boy, the speaking about these things makes them seem as if they only happened a few weeks ago; but it's seventeen years since I last saw Olive Vanthorne!

"I called several times, and always heard that the 'ladies were not at home.' I wrote to Olive, and my letters were not answered. I went to the theatre at which she was playing, and was told that by order of the manager 'none of the ladies' names or addresses were to be given to enquirers at the door.' Then I fell into a jealous fit of fury for a time, and ceased from my efforts to meet her, and teach her to treat my uncle's letter with the same indifference I did.

"One day, after about three months of this sort of work, I met Mrs. Vanthorne in Regent Street. She was crossing the pavement from Jay's to a brougham, and she couldn't evade me. She looked awfully distressed when she saw I was determined to speak to her, but I didn't care for that. 'Where is Olive?' I asked, taking off my hat, 'and why haven't you let me see her all this time, Mrs. Vanthorne?'

"The poor old lady seemed to crumble away as I asked these questions savagely, but she fetched up a smile from some diplomatic recess, and said:

"My daughter is quite well—very well, indeed, and very happy, Mr. Lyne. You know, of course, that she is married!"

"With that she tried to step into the brougham, but I wouldn't let her do that.

"Make an appointment with me, and give me an explanation, or I'll find your daughter, and get one from her,' I said. And she, unwillingly enough, made an appointment—and kept it! She wouldn't have done this last if she hadn't been afraid that I would have followed her daughter up and wrung one from her.

"She had to tell me the truth, for I was dangerously keen on the track of it. Her own pride, and her pride in her daughter, had been woefully wounded by that letter, and so she had concealed from poor Olive the fact of my even having ever called, and had intercepted my letters. In short, she had made Olive believe that I had given her up, and had stung her child into promising that she would have nothing more to do with me. All these things she had done out of mistaken motherly zeal and affection, and she asked for my sympathy and pardon on the plea that Olive had married comfortably and happily.

"I knew she loved her daughter, and I believe she felt sorry for me when she saw what a cut it was to me to hear all this. So I shook hands, and told her I believed she had done it all for the best. But I went away from the house a miserable, care-for-nought, reckless fellow, Arthur, and I remained the same for many a day.

"It's such an old story now, that I'm surprised at myself for telling it so well as I have told it to-night. Why, it's sixteen or seventeen years since I saw Olive! She must be nearly forty now; probably she has grown bulky and grey, and has

altogether forgotten that little summer romance of ours. I shall do a sensible thing in thinking of Miss Etherington."

"I think you will do well in being on with a new love, since you've been off with the old for so many years," the rector agreed. Then their thoughts veered round entirely to the present, and Clement Lyne was amazed by his cousin's account of the current mystery and topic of Horrafield—the stranger, Mrs. Nesbitt.

"I think, from your description of her, I must have seen her to-day. I met a ladylike woman in the lane that leads from the village to The Hall gardens. An unusual place to meet a stranger in, and an unusual face to see in Horrafield, I thought."

"An unusual woman altogether, in fact," Arthur Lyne replied. Then he told his cousin the manner of his own reception by Mrs. Nesbitt, and confessed that he would be shy of encountering a second edition of it.

One day soon after this, when Clement Lyne had ridden over to Holmea in pursuance of that plan of his of cultivating Miss Etherington with the view of asking her to be his wife, an unexpected visitor appeared at The Hall and enquired for the housekeeper. It was Mrs. Nesbitt—the lady whose quiet life in Horrafield was making her the object of greater curiosity and suspicion than she would have called forth if she had recklessly risked boring herself to death by plunging into all of frivolity and gaiety that the neighbourhood afforded.

As a stranger in the place, she had taken the liberty of calling to ask to be allowed to see The Hall; she understood there were some very fine pictures.

The housekeeper bridled with satisfaction, and replied:

"As for showing the house, that had never been the custom; but if the lady liked to walk through and glance at the pictures, she was welcome to do it."

Mrs. Nesbitt did like to do it, and so walked in.

The pictures were very average ones, dubious Lelys, very "Young Pretenders" to the honoured names of Vandyke and Gainsborough. Mrs. Nesbitt looked at them critically, and cautiously concealed her opinion from the housekeeper, who was as jealous of their reputation as if she had painted them herself.

There was no picture-gallery. The pictures hung unpretentiously in the

drawing and dining rooms and in the big entrance-hall. When they had made the tour of these, the housekeeper said:

"There's master's own room I haven't shown you; if you'd like to walk in and look round, you're welcome."

With a faint flush on her fair face, Mrs. Nesbitt availed herself of the desired permission, and went into the room, half study, half smoking-room, where Mr. Lyne chiefly sat.

"It has the look of a bachelor's house altogether; it will be altered greatly, no doubt, when Mr. Lyne marries," Mrs. Nesbitt remarked, and the housekeeper replied:

"The master need be in no hurry; he's a well-looking man as you'll see anywhere. Still, there is a talk about Miss Etherington coming here; may be there's something in it, for master goes to Holmea a great deal, but we all fancy this stands in the way."

As she spoke she drew back a velvet curtain, and displayed the portrait of a beautiful young woman, at sight of which Mrs. Nesbitt flushed still more deeply, and rearranged her veil.

"It seems to speak to you, don't it?" the housekeeper said admiringly.

"It's enlarged from a photograph, I see," Mrs. Nesbitt said. Then she went over and looked steadily and closely at the likeness which had been taken seventeen years before of—herself!

It gave her a shock to look at what she knew she had been then, and to think of the difference in her now. Time had crept on, and the changes had been so gradual, that she had never realised till this moment how completely she was metamorphosed from the glowing beauty of that day into the merely graceful, nice-looking woman of this.

It was a revelation. And it made her long for another.

"Has he changed, too, I wonder?" she thought. "How handsome he was then! No! men wear better than women; his were not the kind of good looks that go soon. At forty a man is at his best, while a woman can only look back then upon her prime."

Then she asked the housekeeper if there was a photograph of the squire himself anywhere about, and was shown one with complacent pride by that dame.

Was this the slim, supple, ardent soldier-lover of her youth? Impossible! Here was a massive little man, with a broad good-humoured face, and a contented

commonplace expression! She put the photograph down with a quick sigh. All through these seventeen years, though she had been an exemplary wife and mother, she had nursed the memory of the lover she had left. And he had never changed! Her realised ideal, for that he had been in those happy engaged days, had always remained the same gallant-looking, handsome young fellow who had exchanged love for love with her on that first day of their meeting at Richmond.

The change in him shocked her more even than the one in herself had done. She went away back to the little house which she had adorned with such taste, and admitted to herself that she need take no further precautions to keep herself undiscovered by him. All the little elaborate fabric of romance which she had been building up was dashed to pieces in a moment.

It had been her purpose to come to Horrafield, and find out whether her old lover was either married or thinking of marriage. If he were neither, she had intended gently to reveal herself to him one day. But the rumour about Miss Etherington had first made her defer her purpose. And now the sight of herself as she had been, and of him as he was, made her relinquish it.

After the first shock of these discoveries had passed over, Mrs. Nesbitt speedily recovered, and was able to laugh at herself for having felt them so keenly. Her two daughters were coming down to her soon, fresh from their school near Paris. It had been in her mind that they might have the surprise of hearing they were to have a step-father and a home at The Hall. But this design was changed now. She would only give them the benefit of the fresh country air for a few weeks, make herself known to and have a chat with Clement Lyne, for auld lang syne's sake, and then leave Horrafield and the old romance for ever behind her.

What a fool she had been! This was the reflection that would keep on recurring. Ten years ago, when her husband had died, leaving her well off, and with two tiny daughters, she had made a resolution—she had almost vowed a vow—that nothing should ever tempt her to give her girls a step-father. That resolution was made when she was still young enough to look upon the making of it as a merit. That resolution was made when she was still pretty enough to make it more than probable

that men would endeavour to make her break it.

But the memory of her good, kind, indulgent husband had been very fresh in her mind, and the memory of Clement Lyne, of whom she had heard nothing for seven years, had paled. And so she had been very sensible!

But just a few months ago thoughts of old times had been strongly stirred within her by seeing in some newspaper that Clement Lyne, late of Her Majesty's —th Regiment, had succeeded to the estates of his late uncle, Arthur Lyne, of Horrafield Hall, Middleshire.

She happened to be very much disengaged at the time; her daughters had just gone back to school; London was emptying itself; there was no special call made upon her to move in any other direction; and, acting on an impulse at which she was very much inclined to laugh now, she had come down to Horrafield with the intention of taking quiet observations of her old lover, and seeing what manner of man he had grown.

She had done this without any defined ultimate object. It had occurred to her that it would be pleasant if he recognised her without aid, and they two should hold friendly converse together again. The name of Nesbitt would be no clue to him; her husband had been Graves when she married him, and had changed his name to Nesbitt on succeeding to some property.

But when once she found herself in Horrafield, she found that she could only hope to meet with a genuine recognition from him by guarding against the inquisitiveness of the village. If Horrafield, in its eagerness to find out who she was and where she came from, and why she was there, lighted upon anything that might reveal her to him before her own time for doing so, or rather before he spontaneously remembered her, then she would be disappointed and disgusted. Thinking this she shut herself up rigorously, as we have seen—ostrich-like, believing that if she wouldn't see anybody, nobody would see her.

Now the futility of this proceeding made itself painfully manifest to her; he might meet her face to face and not recognise her, for there was nothing visible left of the beautiful girl she had been, in the pleasant-faced woman merely which she had become.

She decided at last to lose no more

time in bringing about just one friendly meeting with him, and then in leaving Horrafield. Towards this end she sent for the rector.

"You see I want a friend sooner than I thought I should," she said, receiving him very graciously.

"And your face tells me that you want one for some agreeable object," he replied.

"I am at your service, Mrs. Nesbitt; pray command me."

"Bring your cousin, the great man of the village, to call upon me."

"I will do so with pleasure if I can catch him in an hour of freedom. But he's scarcely his own master just now; he has got engaged to a lady, who monopolises a good deal of his time."

She could not help colouring a little when she heard this; not that she wanted him herself, but—it is never nothing to a woman to learn that a man who might have been her property once had she willed it, has bestowed himself upon another woman now.

"Indeed! I suppose it's a subject of local rejoicing that The Hall is to have a mistress?"

"It is, especially such a one as Miss Etherington will be. She's very wealthy and very liberal, and Horrafield looks forward hopefully to there being lavish expenditure at The Hall, and a great impetus being given to trade in the village."

"I should like to see Clement before he marries," she said absently, and the rector looked up quickly.

"You have known my cousin?"

She smiled and nodded.

"You haven't seen him for many years?"

"Not for more than seventeen."

"Your name was Olive Vanstone, if I'm not much mistaken?"

"Then he has spoken to you of me?" she asked eagerly; "did he speak kindly? has he lost all feeling of anger against me for having let myself be wax in my poor mother's hands?"

"He's a prosaic middle-aged man, you must remember, Mrs. Nesbitt," the rector said, with a vivid recollection of Miss Etherington and her claims.

"And I am a prosaic middle-aged woman," she answered promptly; "but I am capable of feeling anger still if I think I have been unfairly treated, and he had good reason for thinking that I treated him unfairly in those bygone days. He didn't know how my poor mother dressed me:

he didn't know that I was made to believe for a long time that he was as ready to relinquish me as his uncle could desire."

"And now such knowledge can do no good, and may do harm," the rector urged. "He has got engaged to this young girl now; don't you think you had better leave her in undisturbed possession?"

She smiled and shook her head.

"I haven't the vanity to suppose for an instant that I could upset her claims; she has youth on her side, remember."

"Many men prefer the second summer to the first," he said gallantly.

"Then many men have very bad taste. No, Mr. Lyne, you need be under no apprehension concerning your cousin's fidelity to his new vows. I only want to see him and shake hands with him before I leave Horrafield."

"If you'll only permit me to try and make Horrafield a little more agreeable to you, perhaps you might be induced to stay longer," Mr. Lyne said earnestly. "I've grown so accustomed to the look of the outside of this house under your treatment that it will be quite a blow to me to see other people's cruder curtains and blinds."

"There's a veiled reproach in that remark of yours," she said gaily; "you've grown so accustomed to the look of the outside of the house! Well, in future, while I stay here, I hope you'll grow accustomed to the look of the inside of it also."

"You'll find that I take you at your word; and now tell me why have you, who are so unsuited to the part of a recluse, been playing it all this time?"

"I wanted to meet Clement accidentally, and be recognised by him without an introduction; but the other day the fallacy of entertaining such a hope was shown me. I went up to The Hall as an ordinary British sight-seer, and the housekeeper took me to look at a portrait of Olive Vanstone seventeen years ago."

"That's the likeness of the lovely girl he has in his study?"

"Yes," she laughed; "and even after hearing one story from him, and now hearing it from me, you've never associated me with that portrait till the present moment; now have you, confess?"

"Well, I hardly——"

"You hardly like to tell the truth about the matter. I am changed indeed!"

"And so is Clement."

"Oh, he's altered terribly." Mrs.

Nesbitt cried heartily. Then she added "You and he are not a bit alike."

"When we were boys together we were thought to be so by some people."

"Boys together! Why, Clement must be years and years older than you."

"I am his junior by a year only," said Mr. Arthur Lyne, blushing a little. He was an extremely good man, with very little of the thoroughly manly attribute of vanity about him. Still, it gave him agreeable sensations to hear an attractive woman speak of him as years and years younger-looking than his cousin.

Meanwhile, Clement Lyne had fully committed himself in the eyes of all men to marry Miss Etherington.

The lady was, as the rector had said of her, "quite young;" but, somehow or other, "youthfulness" was not what a sight of her or a knowledge of her suggested. She was, as Clement Lyne had said once, "quiet and unpretentious," and she was these things to a really remarkable degree. In society she always appeared to shrink from notice, and her gentle retiring ways won her a good deal of approbation from people who thought her temptations to be arrogant and assertive must be strong indeed.

But the fact was the great heiress laboured under the mortifying conviction that she was only of value in the world as the future owner of vast riches. She was keenly conscious of having no peculiar personal or mental merits, and she was always trying to picture the different kind of treatment she would receive from mankind and the world at large, if she should suddenly have to pose as a pauper before them. She had, during the brief period which had elapsed since her "coming out," received several offers of marriage, and all these she had refused with promptitude and decision, firmly believing that it was her money and not herself that they wanted.

But when Clement Lyne came in his prosaic semi-paternal way, she found herself strongly moved towards him. It was borne in upon her that here was an honest sincere man who really thought that she could make him happy, and who valued that happiness more than he did her money-bags. In a plain, straightforward way he asked her to be his wife, telling her that her fresh, unsullied, unhackneyed youth was her greatest charm in his eyes, and frankly avowing that he knew himself to be too old to win anything like ardent

love from her in return. But little Miss Etherington, though she answered him very quietly and undemonstratively, felt that she was quite prepared to give him all this which he said he could never expect.

She had grown to have such a nervous dread of being married for her money, that the sight of his genuine indifference to the settlements was a source of profound satisfaction to her. For himself, he had quite enough, and for the rest, "tie it up tightly on herself and her children," he said to his future father-in-law, who obeyed him to the letter.

He came back one evening to dine with his cousin Arthur, after having spent several hours with his quiet little betrothed and her parents, settling some of the arrangements that had to be made for their wedding-day, and the gentle timidity of her character had never been so apparent to him before.

"She's as restful as twilight," he said to his cousin. "I feel that she will make my life a very peaceful and happy one; in fact she's exactly the sort of woman that's best suited to me; time was when I thought very differently," and he smiled at a recollection of brilliant, vivacious Olive Vanstone.

Here was the opportunity which the rector almost persuaded himself he had been waiting for, for several days.

"Do you think you would like to know Mrs. Nesbitt?" he asked rather constrainedly, leaning over the arm of his chair, and playing with his dog as he spoke, so that the expression of his face was concealed from his cousin.

"Who, I? yes, I don't care about it; but if you'll introduce me—— By the way, Arthur, isn't this rather a sudden change? The lady and you haven't been on visiting terms, have you?"

"No; but she sent for me the other day to do her a trifling favour, and in the course of conversation she said she would like to see you; in fact I promised to take you there. What do you say to calling this evening?"

"Rather late, isn't it, for a stranger to call?"

"I don't think you'll find she'll treat you as a stranger," Arthur Lyne said in some embarrassment. He had made no promise to Mrs. Nesbitt not to reveal her to his cousin, and yet he could not bring himself to do it. He staved off what he thought an evil discovery till the last

moment, and altogether felt strangely averse to playing the part of medium which Mrs. Nesbitt had assigned him.

By-and-by they strolled down through the village to Mrs. Nesbitt's door, Clement all the while expatiating on the twilight charm which there was about his bride-elect, and Arthur praying fervently that no cloud might arise out of to-night's meeting to obliterate that twilight charm.

"Why couldn't she have let wall alone till he was safely married?" the rector thought, and he felt aggrieved with Mrs. Nesbitt for her want of patience.

The blind was up and the window was open when they went into the little sitting-room. But a lamp stood on a small table, and full in the light of this lamp Mrs. Nesbitt was seated, with a couple of young girls on low stools at her feet.

What the two gentlemen saw was a very winsome woman, distinctly "no longer young," Clement Lyne thought. "A fair presence to have in a house," thought his cousin.

She had not expected to see them this evening, and her newly-arrived and much-grown young daughters were engrossing all her mind and thoughts. In her anxiety to show her children to him, Mrs. Nesbitt quite forgot that her former lover was utterly unprepared to meet her.

"I'm so glad to see you again, Clement," she said, rising up and stretching out a hand in hearty greeting over the bright heads of her children; "so glad to see you, especially to-night. My little girls came home yesterday, and I want you to know them."

He took the hand she held out to him, and gazed into her face in amazement. Something in the fair face, something in the sudden bright sparkle of the blue eyes, something in the sweet influence of the voice, recalled "someone" to him. But who that "someone" was he could not determine immediately.

She realised that he had utterly forgotten her, in an instant, and did not feel offended, or even hurt. One little bit of effect she could not resist attempting.

"Get up, Olive," she said to the elder of the two young girls at her feet; "perhaps you will recall me to Mr. Lyne's recollection more successfully than I have been able to do it myself."

Then, as the young girl sprang laughingly to her feet, and confronted him, Time seemed to have stood still; little twilight Miss Etherington was forgotten, and he

thought he was looking on his own old love again.

As the days went by, the two who had been so much to one another once, and who had so utterly outgrown all softer feeling for one another now, found the renewal of their intercourse a very pleasant thing.

The squire came to the widow's house constantly, always accompanied by his cousin, the rector, who soon ceased to feel anxious as to the result, as far as Mrs. Nesbitt was concerned. The engaged man was able to face the widow—his own old love—and feel conscience-free; and she in her turn merely marvelled at herself for having so thoroughly outgrown the passion and romance of her youth. But how about Olive, the younger?

Now that she saw him daily, Mrs. Nesbitt was fain to confess that she had done Clement Lyne injustice, in looking upon him as a mere massive, uninteresting, commonplace little man. He had nothing Apollo-like about him, but he had that perfect bearing, that thoroughbred, exquisitely-balanced manner, which runs the Apollos hard. No wonder that, young as she was, little Miss Etherington had been taken by such a man!

Perhaps Mrs. Nesbitt would have thought more about little Miss Etherington's publicly-proclaimed rights, and have been a little more observant of her old lover, if all this time his cousin had not been engrossing so much of her attention. As it was, with soft, half-shamed blushes, she was obliged to confess to herself that she was going through the same phase of feeling now for Arthur which she had once long ago gone through for Clement, and she felt thankful indeed that, before they had met, Clement had bound himself to little Miss Etherington.

"It will end in your going to the rectory, I see that," her eldest daughter said to her laughingly one day, when Mr. Lyne had been spending a couple of hours, on the weakest pretences, in their sitting-room; and this speech was another revelation to Mrs. Nesbitt. Her daughter had reached the age when the idea of matrimony for themselves or others becomes familiar to the mind.

"You child! don't talk of things you don't understand. Mr. Lyne is a very good friend of mine——"

"Don't I understand?" Olive interrupted. "In your wisdom, mother dear, don't overlook the fact that you are a very much more attractive woman than can be

found in all the region round. Clement Lyne has told me that over and over again. How nice he is, mother—so fond of you too. He says to see me growing more like what you were every day is the greatest pleasure he has in life.”

“‘Clement’ Lyne! The greatest pleasure he has is to see you growing more like me! My dear child, let me collect my startled senses, and tell you that you mustn’t speak of a man old enough to be your father”—she shivered a little as she said it—“by his christian-name. Like him and revere him as much as you like, but please—please, my Olive, don’t take up the tone of the day, and speak in a free-and-easy, jaunty kind of way of a man so much your senior—a man, too, who is shortly to be married.”

Olive’s impressionable soul was quick to mark a change of feeling on her face.

“Mother, mother dear, you don’t think him so very old, do you? and I’m not quite sure that he is going to be married to Miss Etherington, after all. They’re both beginning to feel that they’ve made a mistake. People do sometimes in love-affairs, you know, mother. There’s an amount of simpleness about her that almost amounts to silliness, I should think, from what he says.”

“I’ll speak to him; I’ll tell him he mustn’t speak to the child about his future wife. Olive is so young that no mischief can have been done yet,” the mother thought.

Then she reproached herself for having suffered that autumnal dream of hers to interfere with her strict supervision of her daughter.

But when Mrs. Nesbitt, acting under advice from the rector, did begin to mildly reprove and softly upbraid Clement Lyne for having talked nonsense to her child, he astonished her by saying:

“It’s the best sense I’ve talked for seventeen years. It has made Olive care for me, and Olive is too much like her mother not to have a heart worth winning and keeping. It’s a strange end to our story that you should marry my cousin, and that I should marry your daughter; but it is to be, Mrs. Nesbitt.”

“And what about Miss Etherington?” she faltered.

This sudden re-disposition of affairs, though not exactly displeasing, was distinctly startling to her.

“Miss Etherington is one of the best little creatures that ever lived. She will

give me her hand and wish me God-speed in my wooing of Olive, as you will do presently.”

A fine colour came into Mrs. Nesbitt’s face as he said this. For the world she would not have reminded him that he had spoken the same words about herself to her mother long ago. Her delicacy was spared something in that he evidently did not remember it. Her pride compelled her to say:

“Until you can come a free man, you mustn’t see Olive, you mustn’t come here. I shall reproach myself always with having brought sorrow upon Miss Etherington.”

“Ah,” he said with unintentional cruelty, “your daughter is so like what you were, how could I fail to love her? Wish me well with her; rely on me. Miss Etherington will not even feel greatly disappointed; she doesn’t feel anything deeply. Hers is a very sweet, but not at all an intense nature. Let me see Olive to-day; let me plead my cause with her.”

“Not till you can plead it as a free man,” the mother said decidedly. “Olive is too precious to me to let her be lightly won. When you come as a free man to ask for my child I will give her to you, if she is willing. Meanwhile, act as a man should. Let there be no go-betweens. See Miss Etherington; let no messages pass between you and her. A man is false to his manhood who lets any human being intervene between himself and the woman he loves.”

That was the only reproach she ever spoke to him, the only rebuke she ever gave him for his having inertly allowed her to slip out of his life.

“But I don’t love Miss Etherington in that way,” he explained; and then again he pleaded warmly for a few minutes with Olive. “Let me be sure of her,” he asked.

“No, indeed,” she answered; “that you shall never be till she stands at the altar with you. Oh, you are weak! You let the women you love and the women who love you go with equal facility.”

“If Olive ever goes from me it will kill me,” he said passionately.

“Have the courage to say that to Miss Etherington. If you have the courage to do that I shall not fear to trust Olive to you. Child as she is, she will admire your pluck.”

“Child as she is, she is the one object in the world to me,” he said; “and so

I shall find the courage to tell Miss Etherington."

"Here comes your cousin," the widow said, relapsing into a gentler mood. And while the rector talked to Mrs. Nesbitt, Clement Lyne made his escape into the little garden behind the house, and admired Olive's supple grace as she swung herself about in a hammock.

Little Miss Etherington had got her wedding-garments together, and quite banished that life-long delusion of hers about being married for her money. She had grown, since her engagement to Clement Lyne, to have a far higher opinion of herself than she had ever entertained before.

He was so absolutely true and sincere in all his dealings, that it was impossible to doubt the flattering fact of his truth and sincerity in loving her for herself—not for that alluring bugbear, her money. If such a man loved her for herself, why then she must indeed be well worth loving. So without growing one whit less gentle or one atom more pretentious, she grew into a more correct appreciation of herself under the influence of Clement Lyne's truth, sincerity, and general superiority.

In the first days of the renewal of his acquaintance with Mrs. Nesbitt he had told his betrothed that in that lady he had found an old friend. But, prudently, he had not thought it necessary to add that the old friend and he had once been on the brink of marrying one another. It is always quite as well, perhaps, that men should keep these bygone incidents in the background, and no one can impugn Clement Lyne's truth and sincerity for doing so on this occasion.

But when it revealed itself to him that Olive, the younger, was getting dearer to him than her mother had ever been—was getting dangerously dear, then indeed it behoved him either to confess the painful truth to little Miss Etherington, or to cease seeing Olive.

He did neither.

At last, when more than a week had passed without his either writing to or seeing Miss Etherington, there came a letter from her which compelled him to be honest at last, and definite.

Without her having told him so, he knew very well that Olive Nesbitt, the daughter of his first love, had given all her gracious young heart to him, and the

gift was too precious to him for him to throw it away. So when little Miss Etherington wrote in her confiding simplicity:

"I wish you would come over to dine to-night. As we are to be married so soon, my mother thinks we ought to settle definitely where we will go for our trip. Besides, dear Clement, I want to make my wedding-present to you before we are married."

In spite of his heart's desire being given him about Olive, Clement Lyne was a very miserable man as he drove over to Holmlea that day. In spite of what may appear like fickleness, he was a very kind-hearted man, and he did dread the moment when Miss Etherington's dove-like eyes should be opened to the truth.

She was walking about on the lawn with her mother when he arrived, and as he went towards them, she came forward with the shy trusting manner that he had found so infinitely touching at first. When she held up her face for him to kiss her, he was sorely tempted to do it, and defer the disagreeable disclosure. But he thought of Olive and refrained, and Miss Etherington drew back, feeling rebuffed and repelled, and strangely hurt.

"I will leave you in peace," Mrs. Etherington said, smiling; "don't shut your ears to the dinner-bell, please." Then she went in, and the moment was come.

"I have a sorrowful confession to make," he began. She looked at him wistfully, but said nothing, and he had to go on. "I have to ask you to release me from my promise. You deserve the best love of a man's heart. The best love of mine is given to a girl whom I have only known since I asked you to be my wife. Forgive me."

She put her hand out, and laid it on his.

"Go to her, my friend," she said softly; "it must have been hard for you to tell me. You shall not see my father and mother yet. When you come back to Horrafield with your wife they shall come with me to see her, and the wedding-present I have shall be given to her—not to you."

Then she said good-bye to him, and went in, and he got himself away from Holmlea, feeling out of joint with himself.

When, some time after, he brought his

wife home, he found that the Etheringtons had gone abroad, but little Miss Etherington had left her wedding-present for Olive.

Mrs. Nesbitt remains in Horrafield, and the rectory is not likely to lack a mistress long.

THE PURRINGTON TRAGEDY.

By DUTTON COOK.

I.

PURRINGTON boasted but one police-constable, and, of course, he was very much disturbed: indeed it may be said of the whole neighbourhood that it was extremely excited: when news suddenly came of the death of Farmer Bickerstaff. He had been found lying prone on the open down nearly two miles away from his own farmhouse. There was an ugly cut across his face, there were several wounds at the back of his head, and it was plain that he had been bleeding profusely. He was quite cold, had been dead many hours, it was said, when some of his own labourers came with a cart to carry the body home.

It was not surprising that Purrington was so deeply stirred; such an event had not been known to happen out Purrington way, as people said, within the memory of its oldest inhabitant, who by-the-bye was known to be old Gaffer Grimshaw, an inmate of the poorhouse, and generally reputed to be aged at least one hundred and three years. As a rule, indeed, nothing of much moment ever did happen out Purrington way, and its policeman was wont to have an easy time of it; for Purrington was but a peaceful little West-of-England village that usually seemed to be curled up and fast asleep in a comfortable hollow of the down country that outstretched and undulated far and wide thereabout. It claimed to own historical interest, however: the Romans had encamped on its uplands, and Druidical remains had been discovered in its vale. Moreover, it had been a posting-station in the good old coaching times; and in its high street a market had formerly been held, bestowing upon it the dignity of a town; and at one time it had returned a member to Parliament; but, of course, that was all a long time ago now.

Mr. Spreadberry, the policeman of Purrington, now found himself quite a per-

sonage. Hitherto he had represented justice only in a small way and in relation to her meaner affairs. He had been called upon to deal merely with what are known as "common assaults," with instances of rude tipsiness outside the taprooms of the village inn; he had arrested turnip-stealers and trespassers here and there, and been as a scourge to the small boys who threw stones, broke windows, and otherwise misconducted themselves and vexed society. But here was something very much more serious to occupy him. He had been engaged only in the lighter entertainments of the criminal law; but the death of Farmer Bickerstaff was in the nature of real heavy tragedy. The agitated villagers gathered round the policeman, hung upon his words, watched and followed him hither and thither. How had poor old Farmer Bickerstaff come by so dreadful an end? That was the question. Was it accident? or was it suicide? or was it murder? The policeman's aspect was imposing and portentous, but unsatisfying. He would say little of the farmer's death; he simply described it as "a case." But to some minds there was consolation even in this brief and narrow account of the matter; a legal leaven and flavour seemed thus imparted to it.

Of course the magistrates of the district had been roused and consulted with, the while a message had been despatched to the coroner for the county. For it was clear there must be an inquest upon the body of the deceased farmer. Mr. Partlett, the general practitioner of Purrington, who had assisted so many of its inhabitants into the world, and at times possibly had hastened the departure thence of some of them, had been summoned to the Abbey Farm to view the remains and testify to the cause of death. It was reported, too, that Dr. Bloomfield of Steepleborough had also been sent for, that a second opinion on the subject might be forthcoming. There were those who hinted that Mr. Partlett was not so young or so sharp as once he had been; it was even suggested that he was now a trifle gone-by, that he had not all his wits always about him, but was wont at times to let them go too far a-wool-gathering.

As tenants of Lord Hengistone, of the Abbey, Purrington West, members of the Bickerstaff family had occupied the Abbey Farm during a long course of years. There had always been a Bickerstaff, it was said, upon the Hengistone estate. The country-

side had been rather proud of the Bickerstaffs, and especially of the unfortunate man who was now lying disfigured by his wounds, stark and dead, in his own farmhouse. Not that he could have been called popular. He was known to be a man of violent temper, obstinate, opinionated, overbearing, quarrelsome. It was not only, his neighbours admitted, that he owned a "roughside to his tongue;" he had been wont to follow up hard words with hard blows. He had been brought before the bench of magistrates upon more than one occasion for assaulting sundry of his farm-servants, plying his horsewhip too freely, and inflicting personal chastisement upon those who had offended him. He was a man to make enemies and was no doubt here and there held in hearty detestation. And yet he was regarded as somehow a credit to the district. He was an excellent agriculturist, his farm had often been described as "a perfect picture." He had been the recipient of many a prize at the county cattle-shows for his ram-lambs or his stock sheep. He rode well to hounds; he was an admirable shot; he was skilled in all manly sports and exercises. And then, time out of mind, the Bickerstaffs had possessed great physical advantages. The late farmer had been famed for his tall stature, for his singular muscular strength, for his handsome face and figure. Even at seventy years of age Jasper Bickerstaff with his keen clear blue eyes, his abundant white hair, his ruddy complexion, and his firm and upright bearing, could only have been described as a very comely and picturesque-looking elderly gentleman.

II.

The coroner's jury returned an open verdict. It seemed clear that Mr. Bickerstaff had been thrown from his horse and had fallen very heavily. There was a heap of flints close by; similar heaps indeed at intervals marked out a bridle-path across the down, the farmer's shortest way home. It was likely that the horse had shied at the flints, or had stumbled over them, with a suddenness that had unseated the rider. It was late and very dark. Mr. Bickerstaff had been attending Steepleborough Market; had dined at the Farmers' Club, and remained there some hours playing cards. It was added that he had been drinking freely, though no witness ventured to say that he was drunk. The horse was young, and Mr. Bickerstaff was known to

ride carelessly with a loose rein. He had left Steepleborough alone; he had not been met on the road home. It was about five miles from the club-house door to the place where the body was found, which was not, perhaps, more than two hundred yards from the highway. There had been a toll-gate formerly standing where the bridle-path joined the broad open road; but the gate-house had been years since converted into a labourer's cottage, the toll having been abolished, and the turnpike trust brought to an end. In the cottage dwelt with his mother, one Jacob Haggard, a carter in the employ of Farmer Bickerstaff. On the night in question Jacob Haggard, it was shown, was up at the Abbey Farm, busied in the stables, attending upon one of the horses in his charge—the animal had gone dead lame in the course of the afternoon. It was Jacob who found the farmer's nag, much cut about the knees, shivering and scared, with a staring coat, standing riderless without the porch of the Abbey farmhouse. It was Jacob who started with a lantern across the down, along the bridle-path, in search of the missing farmer. To Jacob it was plain, from the condition of the nag, that something had happened to his master. It was Jacob who, having found the farmer's body, hurried in a very unnerved and tremulous state to rouse certain of his fellow farm-servants, to prepare and bring forth one of the farm-carts, and to convey the dead man to his home.

The evidence of the medical witnesses was thought to be rather vague and unsatisfactory. The doctors seemed unwilling to commit themselves to any very distinct opinion. Was an accidental fall the main cause of the farmer's death? That might be so. Or had the deceased been seized with apoplexy? It was possible; Mr. Bickerstaff had suffered from something like an apoplectic attack some few years ago, when Mr. Partlett had prescribed for him. The wounds on the face were not sufficient to account for the farmer's death. They were caused apparently by violent contact with the sharp edges of the flints. Supposing the farmer to have been suddenly thrown from his horse upon the heap of sharp jagged flints, the medical witnesses would have expected to find just such wounds upon his face. No; suicide was out of the question; the witnesses were quite agreed and confident as to that. As it was clear from the cuts upon its knees that the nag had stumbled and gone down.

it might be assumed that the farmer had lost his seat and been thrown. At the same time there was nothing to account for the wounds on the back of his head. The skull was severely fractured. It was as though it had been battered in by some heavy blunt instrument. They were not incised wounds; they differed from the wounds on the face. They could hardly have been effected by a heavy fall on the flints, even supposing that the farmer had fallen on the back of his head. Did they think then that Mr. Bickerstaff had been murdered? The witnesses would not take upon themselves to say that in their opinion Mr. Bickerstaff had been murdered. Still he might have been murdered? Yes; assuredly he might have been murdered. The wounds on the back of his head could not have been self-inflicted? No; the witnesses thought that such wounds could not have been self-inflicted.

The inquest had been held in the large upper room of The King's Head Inn, Purrington, the jury having been driven over in an omnibus to view the body of the deceased at the Abbey Farm. The excitement at Purrington was very great throughout these proceedings. There was much hurrying to and fro, riding and driving hither and thither. There was a line of dog-carts and pony-chaises ranged in front of The King's Head, and the stables of that establishment were subjected to excessive crowding.

An open verdict was, perhaps, unavoidable, especially as the coroner, an elderly gentleman who lived many miles away and was very anxious to return home in good time, afforded the jury but little guidance or assistance in the matter, but chiefly concerned himself with abbreviating the proceedings. An open verdict satisfies no one, however. It was felt generally that the coroner's jury had left the case very much where they found it, and that something further ought to be done. There were many who said in plain terms that Farmer Bickerstaff had been murdered and that it behoved the authorities to look alive, to discover and punish his murderer. A feeling that there had been in some sort a failure of justice was even visited upon the Purrington policeman, who now found himself, in his character of representative of the law, somewhat discredited and under-estimated. The Purrington people seemed to hold that they knew quite as much about the case of Farmer Bickerstaff as did Mr. Spreadberry; some even judged

that they knew more about it than he did, and were ready to taunt him with his inertness, to accuse him of lack of sagacity and perception. Sometimes he was plainly asked why he did not arrest somebody? To this enquiry, which was not perhaps one of much fairness or soundness, Mr. Spreadberry could return no satisfactory answer.

It was understood that the magistrates of the district had sat in conclave upon the case and had been in receipt of communications from the Home Secretary. A rumour prevailed that the bench had been stirred up and called to account by that member of the Government. It was not clear, however, that the justices had not been the first to move in the matter and of their own accord sought the aid of the Secretary.

III.

The arrival of a stranger was always an event in Purrington; but when it was known that the stranger could be described as "an emissary from Scotland Yard," the interest originally taken in his visit gradually rose to excitement. Presently he stood confessed as Mr. Dawkins, of the detective police—a middle-sized, middle-aged man, portly of form and good-humoured of facial expression, with little crescent-shaped patches of whisker defining the position of his cheek-bones. He came over unexpectedly in a fly from Steepleborough, bringing little luggage with him, and avoiding the more pretentious King's Head, contented himself with the inferior accommodation obtained at The Barley Mow public-house. He first appeared in a tall hat and a long brown overcoat, but speedily discarding these, he was found arrayed in a grey suit, with a "pot" hat, and had the air of an innocent excursionist quietly enjoying the fresh breezes blowing from the downs about Steepleborough.

Mr. Dawkins, however, was a very distinguished officer of police. He had acquired signal fame by his adroit dealing with such criminal cases of note as the great forgeries upon the Royal Bank of Sark, the Peckham Rye murder, the extraordinary kidnapping at Romney Marsh, the robbery of Lord Beamish's gold plate and Lady Belzize's jewels, etc. Undoubtedly Mr. Dawkins had displayed great judgment, courage, and enterprise on many important occasions.

The London officer soon made the acquaintance of Purrington's only con-

stable, and treated him with much cordiality. While disposed to hold that the metropolitan police generally were perhaps rather an over-valued and somewhat arrogant body—"bumptious," he termed it—Mr. Spreadberry freely admitted that Mr. Dawkins was a pleasant man, of affable address, and very good company. Mr. Dawkins was welcomed to Mr. Spreadberry's lodgings, and was there made very comfortable with a pipe of the churchwarden pattern and a tumbler of whisky-and-water, cold. Mr. Dawkins was a man of much conversation, many topics; he by no means confined himself to discussing the case of Farmer Bickerstaff, though he now and then, as it were, dropped into that in an accidental manner and increased his stock of knowledge concerning it.

He was London-born himself, Mr. Dawkins confessed, but he owned relations on his mother's side who were Norfolk people. Perhaps it was to that fact his interest in agricultural matters was attributable; for he loved the country. He enjoyed nothing so much as "an outing" among green trees, and hills, and lanes; had always from a boy taken a sort of interest in farming operations, and often wished he had been brought up to be a farmer. They farmed in Norfolk upon a different system to that prevailing about Purrington: he knew that much. Yet he thought the crops about Purrington—take the barley on Farmer Bickerstaff's land, for instance—wonderfully promising; he could see that with half an eye, Londoner though he was. Farmer Bickerstaff was no doubt very well served by his labourers. Only pretty well? Mr. Dawkins would have thought such a man had been particularly well served. Not so very popular? Wasn't he now. Not considered a good master? Mr. Dawkins was surprised. "Hard-mouthed, cold-hearted, and close-fisted." Was that what they said of him? Well, every man had his enemies, deservedly or undeservedly, that was Mr. Dawkins's experience. And no doubt, from what Mr. Spreadberry had said, there might be some not unwilling to do Farmer Bickerstaff a bad turn, supposing an opportunity were offered them.

"You had an advantage, you see," Mr. Dawkins observed to the country constable, "in attending the inquest. As a general rule we don't think much of inquests; they're apt to be muddles, are inquests. The coroner don't know what to do, the

jury don't know what to say, and the witnesses don't know where they are. The right questions are not asked, the wrong questions are asked, and the evidence isn't what is wanted. No; give me a police-court. I may be thought prejudiced, perhaps, but to my thinking there's nothing like a police-court. I prefer a police-court, if you'll believe me, even to the Central Criminal; though, mind you, there have been some fine things done at the Central Criminal. Now at this inquest at The King's Head it came out that Jacob Haggard was the first to find the body at, it might be, eleven o'clock, he says, or perhaps a little before. Well, I have nothing to say against Jacob Haggard. But it did not come out at the inquest who it was that was the last to see Farmer Bickerstaff alive?

"As a matter of fact," Mr. Spreadberry explained, "it was Jacob's mother, old Keziah Haggard, who was the last to see the farmer alive. She was at what we call the toll-gate cottages in the Steepleborough road. He had stopped at the cottage to ask for a drink; it was before ten by her clock, she says. She wasn't called at the inquest; she's old, crippled with the rheumatism, and terribly hard of hearing. She's pretty nearly past work, but she won't go into the House. She does a bit of washing and mending for folks now and then, and she's equal to a bit of field labour at times. It's not so long since I saw her hoeing turnips on the uplands over against the Abbey farmhouse."

"I've seen Mrs. Keziah Haggard," Mr. Dawkins admitted. "Nice tidy old body; well-spoken woman; I had an aunt once who was the very moral of her. Rather a nut-cracker order of face, but been good-looking in her younger days, dear old soul, I shouldn't wonder. Dropped into her cottage, quite by chance, as it were, and sat by the fireside, it might be, for half an hour, while the bacon and greens was a boiling; uncommon good to eat, I dare say, but strong-smelling all the same; and we talked over the case of Farmer Bickerstaff. She says there was a gun fired that night in the abbey preserves. She was standing at her door looking down the road for Jacob, and, deaf as she is, she heard the report, she tells me, plain as plain."

"She's quite right. There was a gun fired. The keepers all heard it. A bit of poaching, they suppose, but they weren't clear about it. But it couldn't have

anything to do with Farmer Bickerstaff's death."

"I suppose not. Yet Keziah Haggard thought it worth while to mention it. She was right, I dare say. It was odd that a gun should be fired just about the time the farmer met with his death. There might be no connection between the two incidents, and yet they might be connected. Did she wish us to think they were connected? Mind, I don't say she did. The farmer did not die of a gun-shot wound. Yet he might have been fired at before his head was beaten in. It's curious when you come to think of it, although I don't say that there is really anything in it, still it's curious that the first person to see the farmer dead should be Jacob Haggard, and the last person to see him alive Keziah Haggard—mother and son. It looks almost like a family arrangement."

Mr. Spreadberry shook his head. The Haggards could have had no motive for murdering the farmer.

"It's very well to look for a motive," said Mr. Dawkins; "but a motive isn't everything. Sometimes great crimes are committed for very small motives. And sometimes a murder's committed with a certain object, which is abandoned through fear, or nervousness, or confusion, or interruption, or what not, at the last moment."

"The motive wasn't robbery at any rate," observed Mr. Spreadberry.

"Are you sure? You mean that money was found in his pockets? But was it proved that all the money was found upon him that he was bringing home from the market? I don't think that came out at the inquest. And if there was no robbery it doesn't follow that the man wasn't murdered with a design to rob him—a design abandoned after the murder; for you know murder is an upsetting sort of thing to the murderer, who isn't generally a very courageous sort of person."

Mr. Spreadberry shook his head again. He thought that, as a rule, murder was rather more upsetting to the murdered than to the murderer. He could not believe in the guilt of the Haggards. "It was not likely," he said.

"We have to consider first what is possible; we shall get in that way at what is likely," said Mr. Dawkins. "But, mind you, I am not suspecting, still less accusing, this old woman and her son. Only we can't leave them altogether out of the

calculation. They may be but small figures in the sum, of trifling account enough, but they need to be added in. And then," he added suddenly, "there's Mr. Stephen Lambert, of Bostock Farm. I wonder why he wasn't called at the inquest?"

"Mr. Stephen Lambert! What could he know about it?"

"Well, it didn't come out at the inquest, yet, you know, it's rather curious when you come to think of it: young Mr. Stephen Lambert had words with Mr. Bickerstaff in Steepleborough market-place only a few hours before Mr. Bickerstaff was found dead on the down. And they tell me that Mr. Bickerstaff lost his temper, and even went so far as to strike Mr. Stephen Lambert in the face. And then it's odd too, when you come to think about it, that Mr. Stephen Lambert's way home to Bostock was Mr. Bickerstaff's way home to the Abbey Farm, only, of course, Bostock's a mile or two farther on over the hill. It's clear that Mr. Stephen Lambert rode along the bridle-path, and passed the heap of flints but a little while before Mr. Bickerstaff was found there with his head battered in, dead as a door-nail."

It was clear from Mr. Spreadberry's manner that he held it waste of time to suspect Mr. Stephen Lambert. Decidedly Mr. Spreadberry was of opinion that Mr. Dawkins's reputation for cleverness was in excess of his merits, that he was indeed too clever by half.

"And now I think I'll take a little rural walk," said Mr. Dawkins, "and I shouldn't wonder if I found myself near the toll-gate cottage; I may even step in and have another little gossip with Mrs. Keziah Haggard while she boils her bacon and greens or what not. She is a pleasant old soul to talk to is old Mrs. Haggard, and knows a deal about the neighbourhood. From her cottage window she can see everyone that passes up or down the Steepleborough road; and people are apt to look in as they pass, and to tell her any bit of news that's stirring. Perhaps—who knows?—Jacob Haggard may give his mother a look in—for his dinner, I shouldn't wonder—and I may have a pleasant bit of chat with him too; not that Jacob has anything like what I may call the conversational powers of his mother, nor her good temper."

"He's shy, is Jacob, and not one to talk much," explained Mr. Spreadberry; "but there's no harm in Jacob, not a morsel."

"That's as it may be," observed the London policeman. "To my thinking there's harm in every man, and you're sure to find it, if you only know when and where to look for it."

IV.

For some time Mr. Dawkins may be said to have pervaded and possessed the Purrington district generally. He was constantly to be found sitting on stiles or leaning over gates, much interested in agricultural pursuits, watching the field-labourers, talking to them, examining the various instruments and machines employed in farming operations. He visited various of the cottages upon the Abbey Farm, and was often found conversing with old Keziah Haggard at the old toll-gate. And many a pipe he smoked with Mr. Spreadberry at his lodgings, refreshing himself there with many a tumbler of whisky-and-water, cold.

Soon Purrington and its neighbourhood had new cause for excitement and amazement. It was known that Mr. Dawkins had applied for a warrant for the arrest of young Mr. Stephen Lambert of Bostock Farm, charged with the wilful murder of Farmer Bickerstaff.

In Mr. Spreadberry's opinion Mr. Dawkins was quite mad to think of taking such a step.

V.

There was a very full attendance of magistrates, who it was clear heard the case with some reluctance, and whose sympathies were entirely with the accused. It was understood to be a Government prosecution, however; counsel had come down from London to conduct the charge and secure the committal for trial of Mr. Stephen Lambert. Mr. Biffin of the Old Bailey appeared in almost all Government prosecutions. It was admitted that the case was at present one of strong suspicion only, dependent entirely upon circumstantial evidence.

Mr. Stephen Lambert was a young man enjoying an excellent reputation. He had succeeded his father as tenant of Bostock Farm. There was nothing to be said against his private character. He was thought to be decidedly steady, and clever as a farmer, and was supposed to have made money by his industry and enterprise. He was at work early and late upon his

farm; he was an excellent flock-master, and had been successful with his sheep when others had been most unfortunate. It might be good luck or it might be good management; but there the fact was.

Stephen Lambert was a handsome-looking young man of some six-and-twenty years or so. He looked pale and anxious when brought before the magistrates, it was thought, and his manner was certainly agitated. But that was only natural, the very serious nature of the charge brought against him being considered. He was defended by Mr. Ritson, the well-known Steepleborough solicitor.

What was the evidence against Stephen Lambert? Mr. Ritson was eager to pooh-pooh it even before it was forthcoming, and dropped hints about a malicious prosecution and a trumped-up case.

Mr. Biffin, after a brief address to the bench, called witnesses to show that there had been for some time ill-blood between the deceased and the accused; that they were not on speaking terms; that they had quarrelled, and that Stephen Lambert had been forbidden to show himself at the Abbey Farm. This was a matter that was well known in the neighbourhood. Stephen Lambert had been a suitor for the hand of Rachel, the youngest and only surviving daughter of Farmer Bickerstaff. The young people, Mr. Biffin informed the bench, had come to an understanding with each other, but the deceased had strenuously opposed their union. He could not spare his daughter, he had been heard to say, and he did not think Stephen Lambert good enough for her. Farmer Bickerstaff had been a widower many years, and his daughter Rachel kept house for him.

Certain of the neighbouring farmers were called to describe the altercation in Steepleborough market-place between the accused and the deceased, which occurred in the morning of the day on which late at night the body of the farmer was discovered some mile or two away from his farm.

"It was the affair of a moment," said the witnesses. "Farmer Bickerstaff was flushed and angry; he had been drinking; and he could not get the price he wanted for some barley he was offering for sale. He held a sample of it in his hand, when turning sharply to the right he struck against the accused, who chanced to be standing by, and the sample was upset, the corn being scattered over the floor of the

market-place. The farmer quite lost his temper, and swore loudly. 'Clumsy clown, you are always in the way,' he said to the accused. 'Clumsy yourself, Mr. Bickerstaff,' Stephen Lambert answered. Thereupon Farmer Bickerstaff struck him on the mouth sharply so as to make his lip bleed. Mr. Lambert raised his hand as though about to return the blow, then suddenly checked himself, and stepped back a pace or two. 'You'll be sorry for this treatment of me some day,' said Mr. Lambert. And that was all."

"Did you understand him to say that as a threat?" asked Mr. Biffin.

"I didn't understand it at all," answered the witness. "I don't understand a man's receiving a blow and not hitting back again."

Mr. Lambert complained bitterly to certain of his friends of the treatment he had experienced at the hands of Farmer Bickerstaff. It was shameful, it was cruel, it was most insulting, it was more than he could bear, he had been heard to say. There were limits to his forbearance; Farmer Bickerstaff had better not try it on again; there were things no man could bear twice. He had never been so tried before. And to think that such a thing should happen in the sight of the whole market! It was evident that he was extremely agitated and distressed. He had expressed an intention of speaking to Farmer Bickerstaff, of expostulating with him, and demanding some apology from him. He had remained in Steepleborough presumably with this intention, when, as though tired of waiting, he had rather suddenly mounted his horse and departed on his way home. Meanwhile the deceased had been smoking, drinking, and playing cards at the club-house. It was six o'clock when Stephen Lambert left Steepleborough to ride back to Bostock. At what time did he reach home? It was odd: according to the evidence of his own servants he did not arrive home until nearly eleven o'clock. His own groom stated that it was about that time when he took his master's horse to the stable. Mr. Lambert did not say a word to him as to its being late, or as to where he had been.

Where, indeed, had Mr. Stephen Lambert been between six and eleven? Lying in wait to murder, and afterwards murdering Mr. Bickerstaff, suggested Mr. Biffin. Mr. Ritson quietly intimated that he had a complete answer to that portion of the case.

The evidence adduced at the inquest was forthcoming anew. The doctors reappeared in the witness-box, described again the condition of the deceased's body, the wounds he had received, and were still reluctant to state distinctly their opinion as to the cause of death. Jacob Haggard recounted his story of the finding of the body, and his fellow-labourers stated how, upon the summons of Jacob, they made ready a farm-cart, and conveyed the dead man home to his farm.

Mrs. Keziah Haggard, the mother of Jacob, was a new witness—a sun-burnt, weather-beaten old countrywoman, with an abundant cap-frill shadowing her tanned and wrinkled face. She had shapely features, keen sparkling eyes, with thick iron-grey hair neatly braided; her voice was firm and strong, and her manner was energetic. She was sixty-five, she said, but she was crippled with rheumatism and "hard of hearing." Her gnarled brown hand was constantly raised and curled round her ear, after the manner usually adopted by the deaf, and she certainly looked older than she professed to be. A peasant's life, however, with its exposure to sun and wind, its hard labour in the open fields, brings about a certain premature aspect of age. She was rather a picturesque-looking old woman in her tidy print dress, with a red-and-white spotted cotton handkerchief neatly folded and pinned shawl-wise across her shoulders.

She had lived many years at the toll-gate cottage. She was born in those parts. She had often worked on the Abbey Farm. She remembered the night when Mr. Bickerstaff was found dead upon the down. It was dark, but she had been standing at her door expecting her son to come down, when she saw some one on horse-back coming along the road. As he drew near he called out to her, but she couldn't make out "for sartin" what he said. He stopped at the cottage-door, and said he was "main drouthy." He asked for a drink. She had nothing in the house but some small-beer. He had been drinking, he was a bit muddled, but he could sit upright on his horse. He could always do that, she thought, however much he might have been drinking. Had often seen him come home from market the worse for drink. He seemed terrible cross. He had always been a "rudderish" kind of man. He was given to swearing, and he swore at her that night. She brought him out a "dubbin o' drenk"—a mug of beer. He drank some; then

he said it was "main hash," and he threw the rest away. The beer might have been a bit sour. He was in a temper. He swore at her again, and called her evil names. She had often before seen him "in a pelt," and she didn't heed his "saace." He struck his nag a good "powlt" on the head, and then he rode off. She didn't see him again alive. When she heard from her son of what had happened, she crawled out and saw the dead body in the cart.

It was between nine and ten when Farmer Bickerstaff stopped at her door. It was soon after he had gone that she had heard the report of a gun. Did not think much about it; thought it might be poachers or the keepers. Many passed her cottage on market nights on their way home to Purrington, and the villages beyond. Few turned off by the bridle path. Who had gone that way before Farmer Bickerstaff? Mr. Stephen Lambert. What time was it when he passed the toll-gate cottage? It had gone nine. He had stopped for a minute and spoken to her. He looked pale and seemed in a to-do. He asked if Mr. Bickerstaff had passed yet. She said no. He said that he had missed Mr. Bickerstaff; that he had a word to say to Mr. Bickerstaff. He added that he was in good time then. Witness did not clearly understand him. Did he say anything more? Yes; he asked if the witness had seen anything of Miss Rachel Bickerstaff. It was true that Miss Bickerstaff often came to the toll-gate cottage. She was a sweet and kind young lady, and had been very good to the witness, who understood that Mr. Stephen Lambert and Miss Rachel were a-courting. They had sometimes met, by appointment as she thought, at her cottage.

Asked if she had heard any cries, or the noise of any conflict or struggle, after Farmer Bickerstaff had gone from her cottage-door, the witness answered that she thought once that she did hear voices talking at a little distance, but she could not be sure. Her hearing was bad; sometimes she fancied she heard things; at other times she could hear nothing at all. Her hearing was not worse that night than on other nights so far as she knew.

Mr. Biffin, the counsel for the prosecution, applied for a remand. That was all the evidence he could offer upon that occasion. Mr. Ritson, for the prisoner, opposed the application. There was really no evidence against the accused. The statements of the last witness amounted to nothing. The magistrates hesitated. They

were impressed by the fact that Mr. Biffin had come down expressly from London to prosecute. They had rarely been addressed by a barrister from the Central Criminal Court; they were disposed to think there must be a remand.

But of course they would hear any witnesses that Mr. Ritson might choose to call.

"Call Miss Bickerstaff," said Mr. Ritson promptly.

There was some commotion in the court-house upon the entrance of Miss Rachel Bickerstaff. She was dressed in deep mourning for her father; her face was very pallid, and she advanced with trembling steps. It could be seen, however, that she possessed rare beauty of the Saxon type—profuse light-brown hair, large limpid blue eyes, and a fair clear complexion. She was tall, graceful of movement, with a figure of noble proportions. She spoke in subdued tones, but with musical distinctness.

Mr. Ritson stated that he had but one or two questions to ask.

She was the only daughter of Mr. Bickerstaff. She remembered the night of her father's death. She had been at home the whole evening. She had been sitting in the drawing-room. She had not been alone. Who had been with her between seven o'clock and half-past ten or a quarter to eleven? Mr. Stephen Lambert. She was quite certain about the time? She was quite certain.

Mr. Ritson asked whether, in the face of Miss Bickerstaff's evidence, the magistrates would keep the accused any longer in custody. But Mr. Biffin had a question or two to ask.

The accused had been forbidden Mr. Bickerstaff's house. There had been a quarrel between Mr. Bickerstaff and the prisoner. Mr. Biffin did not wish to give pain, but he supposed he might take it, as a matter of fact, that any visits paid by the prisoner to the Abbey Farm after that quarrel had been of a clandestine sort? The witness admitted as much. On the night in question, then, the prisoner's visit was clandestine? His presence in the house was unknown to the servants? He entered by the garden. The drawing-room windows opened on to the lawn. He had paid many such visits. He had been accustomed to tie up his horse in the orchard, and then to steal through the garden to the house, remaining there some hours.

"He came, then, in point of fact, as your lover?" said Mr. Biffin with some insolence of manner.

"God forgive me!" cried the witness, bursting into tears; "he came as my husband—my own true, lawful husband! Gentlemen, he did not do this thing; he is incapable of it. You heard how, when he was struck in the open market-place, he would not strike back again. And why? Because it was my father who struck him, and because he is my husband, and he loves me. Speak to me, Stephen. Gentlemen, indeed, indeed he is innocent. How can he be guilty? He was with me—I swear it—at the time this murder was committed. I loved my father dearly. He had his faults, but it is not for his child to take count of them, least of all at such a time as this. I would not screen his murderer. Stephen is not his murderer. My husband was with me alone at the farm at the time they charge him with committing this dreadful crime."

"Do you mean, Miss Bickerstaff, that the prisoner is really your husband?" asked the senior magistrate.

She took from her bosom a folded paper and handed it to the bench. She then staggered, and uttering a feeble moan, fainted away. The paper certified that at a London parish church, some few months back, Rachel Bickerstaff had become the wife of Stephen Lambert.

"It is clear that we cannot listen to this witness," said the senior magistrate. "She can neither give evidence for or against the prisoner. She is his wife."

"I own myself taken by surprise," observed Mr. Ritson.

Mr. Biffin wore something of an air of triumph.

The prisoner was remanded.

"You don't really think as he's guilty?" said Mr. Spreadberry to Mr. Dawkins as they left the court-house together.

"If you put it to me point-blank," confessed Mr. Dawkins, "I don't think he is."

"There's almost as much of a case against old Keziah Haggard."

"Oh, you've come to that way of thinking, have you? But just look here. By charging young Lambert with the murder, we get Mrs. Haggard to open her mouth as a witness, and that's just what we wanted. Now, if we'd charged Keziah Haggard, we should have simply shut her mouth, and that wouldn't have done at all. It was particularly necessary that she

should tell her story in her own way. Sometimes, but not always, it's a good plan to give a woman her head, and let her run on till she's tired. It takes time, no doubt, but it has its advantages all the same."

VI.

Old Keziah Haggard was sitting over her fire rocking herself to and fro. She wore her red-worsted shawl over her head, and she shivered from time to time. She was pale, the light had gone from her eyes, and she seemed altogether weak, ill, and suffering. She explained as she coughed and struck herself upon the chest, that it was "along of going avore the magistrates;" she had "taken a chill, and it had pitched."

"You're a very wicked woman, Keziah," said Rachel, Farmer Bickerstaff's daughter, as she entered the toll-gate cottage.

"May be," asserted Keziah. "We're all wicked at times. No one knows it better than I do. I am a sinful old woman. There, I own it; a sinful and a sad. But, God knows, I'm sick and sorry too. And this cough's worrying me into my grave. And the sooner the better perhaps. The grave's the only place for a poor old woman like me. One's out of harm's way in the grave."

"You didn't tell the truth to the magistrates about my husband."

"Did I know he was your husband? God knows I didn't. To think of your having a husband. My poor Miss Rachel, I've known you ever since you were born, and loved you dearly, my lamb, if I may say so. I wouldn't have spoken a word against your husband if I had only known he was your husband. I thought you liked him, and he's a fine sprack young man is Stephen Lambert; but I never reckoned as you'd married him. May be I was wrong, or my clock wasn't going. May be he passed hours before your father, and could have had no hand in killing him. But it wasn't much I said; and they lawyers do worry a body so, one can't be sure what one says. But I didn't say enough to hang him? You don't think that of me, Miss Rachel? They'll never hang the poor young man."

"You're a very wicked woman," Rachel repeated, "and to the last day I live I'll not forgive you. I hate you, Keziah, I hate you!"

"Don'tee say that of me, Miss Rachel, don'tee now. I didn't mean to harm the

young man; I didn't indeed. It was to save myself I spoke."

"To save yourself, Keziah?"

"One has to think of oneself, you know, Miss Rachel; and that lawyer chap was trying to wind a net round me, he was; and that policeman from London, what they call a detective, if you please, Miss Rachel, he's been sneaking and speering about the place seeking to catch me tripping, the villain. Would you mind giving me some of that cough-mixture yonder, Miss Rachel, in the bottle on the chimley-piece? There's 'lody' in it, they tell me, and it's wonderful soothing to the chest. Thank you kindly, Miss Rachel. Not that it matters much what happens to a poor body like me—old and wore out, and well-nigh bent double. Still, one doesn't want to be hanged, however old and wore out one may be."

"What do you mean, Keziah? Who's been talking of hanging you?"

"Murder's a hanging matter, you know, Miss Rachel. If they were to bring it in as I'd murdered him, they'd hang me, sure as surs."

"Murdered him? Murdered whom? What! Do you mean that you murdered my father?"

"No, miss. Don'tee now—don'tee take on so. 'Twasn't I as murdered him; not to say murdered him. Though God knows he had given me cause to wish him dead times and times."

"What do you mean, Keziah? Are you dreaming? Rouse yourself, woman. Speak. What harm had my father ever done to you that you should wish him dead?"

"Don'tee scold me, Miss Rachel. It's the 'lody' in that cough-mixture as makes me so drowey, I'm thinking. I've been taking of it, off and on, all day long, and it's done me a power of good. Yet it's wonderful deadening too. It works like a charm. I seem quieted off to sleep like a babe in arms."

"What cause had my father given you to wish him dead?" Rachel repeated fiercely.

"I hated the master. I've hated the master this many a long year," the woman murmured in somnolent tones, as though hardly conscious of what she said or to whom she was saying it. "Why did I hate him? He did me the cruellest wrong that man could do to woman. It is an old story now. Of course, of course. But it's not the story as a woman ever forgets

or can ever forgive. But what did he care whether I ever forgot or forgave? He was insolent and tyrannical, wicked and cruel to the last. He'd a bad black heart of his own. I wrong him? My dear, I knew your father before you did years and years. I know him better than you do. He'd a lying tongue and a bad black heart, for all his good looks and his fine words. Don't tell me I wrong him. Who should know him if I don't? He's my boy Jacob's father, worst luck. It's all four-and-forty years ago, or more, but I feel the shame on it still. My face burns, my blood tingles, and my fingers grip when I think on it. It was your father as brought disgrace upon me, and taught me deceit, and put wickedness into my heart; and then he'd have left me to rot and starve, to die in a ditch—he didn't care where, he has said as much times and times. But I lived. The thought that some day I'd be even with him kept me from dying, I think. Else, God knows I've had reason enough to die a many times over. The chance was long a-coming, but it came at last. And when I saw him tumble head-long from his horse, pitched face forward on to those flints, I saw that God had given him into my hands! He didn't move; but he was breathing still. I took my hammer down from my shelf, and I went and finished him. I went on beating at his head until he seemed to be stone-killed, past praying for. Then I left him. I hid the hammer in the thatch over the doorway. It's there now. I didn't rob him. I thought of robbing him, but I put the thought away from me. I couldn't stoop to robbing him."

"You had murdered him, wretch!" cried Rachel.

"Not to say murdered him, my dear. Maybe if I had never struck a blow he'd never have stood again. He seemed nigh dead before ever I touched him. But seeing him down helpless and senseless—him as I had known so fierce, and proud, and strong, and cruel, I felt as the chance I had waited for so long and prayed for had come at last, and I couldn't help it. I struck at him hard as might be, until I knew as his skull was beaten in by my blows. And I laughed as I struck him to think he was in my power, poor helpless old woman as he thought me, and it was my turn to be wicked and merciless with him as he had been with me. The debt I owed him was an old debt forty-four years or more; but

'twas paid at last. We were quite—me and Farmer Bickerstaff."

"My poor father," moaned Rachel, and aghast she stepped back some paces gazing with terrified eyes at the murderess.

"A kind word would have turned me, maybe," continued the old woman. "I don't say as I'd have forgiven him; but I wouldn't have struck at him not so hard, I wouldn't. If he'd only been a bit civil to me, I wouldn't have done it. At least I don't think as I'd have done it. But he come in in his old bullying driving way. He got down from his horse. I didn't tell the lawyer chap that, but it's true. He was his own bad self, wicked self, all over. He swore, and slashed about the cottage with his whip; he pretty nigh killed my poor cat there, that had never done him no harm whatsoever; and when he found as the small beer wasn't to his liking, and 'twas a bit 'motherly' I own, he chucked it in my face. That was your father, Miss Rachel; that was Farmer Bickerstaff. And when I told him how poor I was, how I'd need of this and that, he called me names, and bade me go to the workhouse. Me! the mother of his son; for Jacob's his own son, though he'd never give the lad ever so little of a helping hand or a civil word. He's a good lad though dull, and he works hard, and I've done my duty to him, let who will say I haven't. He knows nought of what I've told you, miss, and if you'll

kindly believe me, I've never spoken in Jacob's hearing a word against the man that was his father. I've never let out to the lad who his father was, nor the manner of man he was, nor how cruel bad he has been from first to last. I've been true and faithful so far. I've kept my shame and sorrow to myself. But it's all over now."

"Very nearly so," said some one, entering the cottage suddenly. "About as pretty a confession of a crime as I think I ever listened to, or had the pleasure of taking down in writing. Easy does it, my dear. That's right. Now we are all tidy and comfortable. I've the warrant in my pocket, and we shall soon be having a pleasant little ride together in a tax-cart to Salisbury Gaol."

As he spoke Mr. Dawkins slipped a pair of handcuffs over Keziah Haggard's wrists.

She stared at him wildly, uttered a strange scream, threw up her fettered arms, tottered a few paces, and then fell heavily in a disordered heap at his feet.

She never moved or spoke again. But she had furnished an explanation of the Purrington Tragedy. There was now a very complete answer to the charge against Stephen Lambert. Mr. Spreadberry, however, was never quite clear in his own mind as to how far Mr. Dawkins's success in dealing with the case was due to his own skill, or how much might be attributed to mere accident.

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