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THE MURDER OF RIZZIO. See page 81.
After a drawing by Maurice Greiffenhagen.





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THE CHILDREN OF THE POTTERIES.

BY THE DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND.

“What are all these destinies thus driven pell-mell?
whither go they? why are they so?
He who knows that, sees all the shadow.
He is alone. His name is God.”

HAVE you ever heard of the Potteries? It is a collection of towns in North Staffordshire that, with differing names, varying ambitions, fluctuating fortunes, and distinct rivalries, spread into one another and have a staple trade—the making of china. The people in the Potteries mould and bake and glaze and paint, and do all the other things that have to be done to china and pottery, yet they never grow very rich.

Now much good is to happen to the Potteries. The towns are to join together and become a city under another name; they are to wake up their systems of education, and produce the beautiful ware by more scientific processes. Still, at the moment, till these things come about, the Potteries are very poor indeed. Work is uncertain, trade is slack. Government regulations about the sanitary conditions of their occupation must be complied with; new houses must be built, and insanitary buildings demolished; indeed, the whole scheme of sanitation reformed.

All the evils that hang about a manufacturing centre are here—in spite of public spirit among the inhabitants and enthusiasm for enlightened progress; in spite of a wooded and hilly country all

around, to bring, through nature's loveliness, rest and refreshment to the weary toiler on his Sundays and holidays.

You may imagine that where very few people are rich, and a large number poor, the first thought is for the children.

I do not like exaggeration. Some people must exaggerate an evil or a good, and perhaps we should stick fast in our own self-satisfaction if they did not. Still I am born to play the rôle of exaggerator badly, from a fatal habit of seeing two sides to a question; and when I tell you that the children in the Potteries offer a grave problem; that, to quote the words of another, “there is an awful waste of young life going on in our cities,” I put simple facts upon paper.

Oh yes, there are the happy and the healthy children too—bright scholars, merry rogues—children who come from tidy homes, the offspring of honest and practical parents. I wave my hand to them when I drive through the dingy towns to some bazaar or meeting, and see them tumbling out of class. I can never forget how I envied them in long years past.

Yet, for the size of the population in the Potteries, the number of weakly children, the number of crippled children, the number of those in want, is staggering.

There is a point to be considered in connection with the condition of the children: almost all the women in the Potteries are at work on the pot banks.

Many thousands of women, married and single, are there employed. They go to work directly they leave school, and their health often breaks down from the heavy unskilled labour which they undertake before they arrive at the flower of womanhood.

They marry at ridiculously early ages. Till within a few days of the birth of a child they work, and they return a week or two afterwards to their occupation, leaving the infant at nurse. They are strikingly ignorant of the simple laws of health, thrift, or domestic management, and

half-cooked meals, coarse jokes, blows, and frequent intemperance among their elders.

Yet it is not among the poorest that the worst evils are found. Take one house, for instance. It is jerry-built perhaps, and full of draughts; but it has a top story, a back yard, a kitchen and a parlour. You enter, say at three o'clock in the afternoon, and for a wonder find the mother at home. She remarks that she is busy, but it is almost impossible to gather what she is doing; you merely notice that her dress sleeves are rolled



Convalescents at the Home.

though in a comparative sense wages are high, many homes are in abject poverty.

The consequence is that the children struggle up somehow, and go to school; but what are children without a mother's care? The curious discrepancy between their education in school and their experience, has brought many a curly head to puzzling.

Dry facts are drilled into little beings who cry out for food. The importance of work and virtue are impressed upon rickety, solemn-faced infants, who, the moment they are released from school, know only the slipshod existence of hasty,

to the elbow, and that there is a large pail of dirty water on the only chair in the kitchen. Certainly there is not a sign of clean clothes about. There is, it is true, a horsehair couch in the corner, and upon this a child of three sits stolidly, sticky sweets in its hand, and its pinched face breaking into sores; a baby lies wailing on a heap of rags beside it. The parlour, on the other hand, has furniture heaped everywhere—a chair upon the table, another couch of sorts propped against the dresser; the room is colder than a cellar.

This is not a typically poor home, but



A street in the Potteries.
After a drawing by A. S. Hartrick.

it is a typically thriftless one. In the worst houses—the houses with no back ventilation and in the most appalling sanitary condition—the greatest neatness and cleanliness often prevail. But the excellent back yard of the house I mentioned is choked with refuse and rubbish; and upstairs, if you struggle so far, you will find beds unmade, not even aired, the windows unopened, and, worst of all, the slops unemptied.

There are many houses like this, where children should fear God and honour their parents: homes with a decent front and a bit of lace across the window to

working men who revive the heart; to those patient homes where faith and honest hard work have done more than education to preserve the simplicity of thought, the touch of fresh imagination, that make all true workers kin, and where reality of feeling and sincerity of sentiment never lack. Like the children, these plain people carry longest the hall-mark of their Creator. It was to them first, therefore, that I talked of the children and what we might do for them at once.

From talking came action, and the Hanchurch Home was built on the hilly slopes beyond Trentham Park; its view



Dinner-time.

satisfy the passer by; and within, the sickly, the cripple, the child who "never 'eard o' Jesus."

We optimists hope that another decade's education will alter all this. Domestic economy is in the curriculum of all our best board schools; Bands of Hope promise to make drunkenness disgraceful. Yet we would begin afresh here and now. The desire to "go higher than a god, deeper than prayer, and open a new day," is upon all workers, even if we chide ourselves for a critical spirit and acknowledge our debt to the past.

With my wish to help the children of the Potteries I went first to consult those

upon a bank of mysterious woods, and beyond to the west, where the sun sets. No factory smoke is here, no sight of chimneys, but everywhere the sweet green grass and hedgerows, the sounds of the beasts in the farmyard near by, and the ringing laughter of the country children in the lane. The Home has received splendid support from all classes in the Potteries. It was built just as a holiday home: one fortnight for fifteen boys and another fortnight for fifteen girls—that was what I wanted. But the children came very sick and ailing, and we knew that we had to set them up for the life to which they must return.

It became, therefore, rather sadly, a Convalescent Home; yet to the little ones fairyland. It is a place full of queer

friend. They love a story, a jewel, a flash of bright things, the stroking of a fur with head and legs, a little made-up anecdote



The workshop.

tales of life and with children coming and going: children, strange compounds of utter innocence and premature knowledge, deeply interesting to the observer.

as to the origin of the beast. Their quaint conceits would fill a book.

From listening to the conversation of their parents' friends they have usually



A quiet corner.

There is a great lack of shyness among the Pottery children—a certain directness of speech, and a quick instinct as to a

become acquainted with many public events which have been unheard of in the nurseries of the well-to-do, and they form

their own opinions in quite a startling way upon men and things. Their knowledge of religion is culled chiefly from the visits

they have managed to gather vague information concerning the Higher Powers.

There is, however, one touching story



The seat by the window.

of "Church ladies," bringing beef tea if they feel ill; or the children have crept

of a child who learned to associate the Deity only with the prayers she had been



Flower-making.

into some neighbouring chapel on mission nights, and there, between sucking bad sweets and picking holes in the chairs,

taught in the Hanchurch Home and the kindness of the Sister in charge. She had been with us three weeks. The last

night before she left to return to the slums of the Potteries, she was heard to gulp out between her sobs, as she crept into bed: "Good-bye, God!—I'm going home to-morrow."

On another occasion I remember asking a child how was the big new doll which she had received at the Christmas-tree the week before. It was perhaps the first time that she had possessed a toy

intently. Then she spied a tiny cup with "Good Morning" on it. Her joy was unbounded when she heard it was to be had for one penny. She bought it, and was soon out of the grimy town, hastening three miles along the country road. She was taking her treasure where her heart was—back to the Home where the sun shone brightly, and where all the golden days in her life had been spent.



The cheerful cripple.

that was not broken. "Thank you, my Grace," she answered, "it is still mended."

There are many instances of appreciation of the happiness that children have had in the Home, and of their love for those who have taken care of them.

One of the children saved up two half-pennies. With the whole penny she went to the market. Round the stalls she walked, looking at each article

It was a present to the Sister in charge, and has been one of her cherished possessions ever since. The little child is dead now.

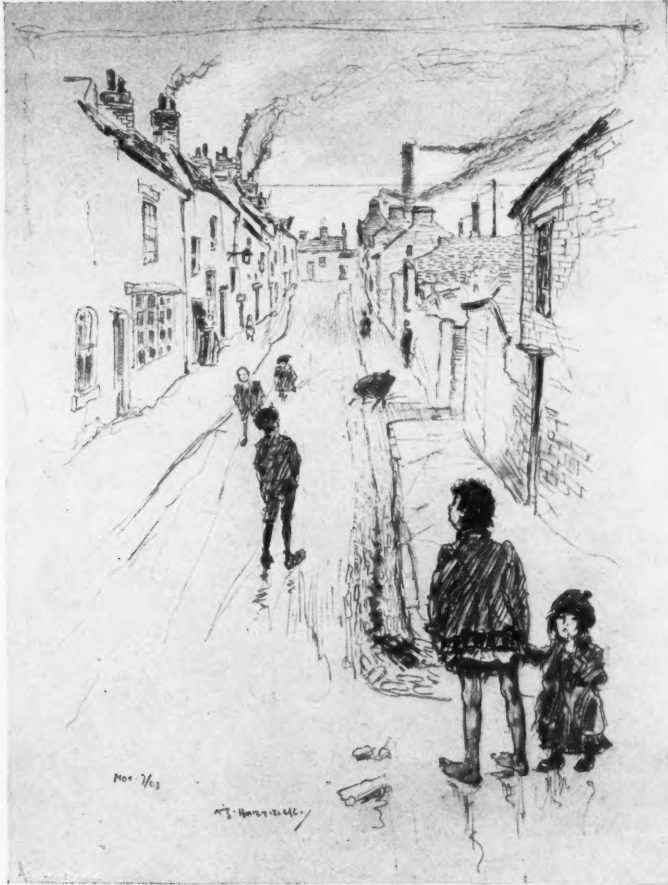
But not only in the Convalescent Home can one learn to know and to love the Pottery children. In all manufacturing centres there is a terrible feature—the cripples. The neglect of children in early childhood, and the unwholesome surroundings of the mother before child-birth, lead

to a large number being born unfit or accidentally becoming so.

I think it was on a hot July day, some two or three years ago, that I grasped the extent of crippledom in the Potteries—the needs of the cripples. I left London in the height of its brilliant season, where health and gaiety seemed a *sine qua non*

their bodily distortion, remarkable and eager intelligence. Children were here half-tired of life, yet pining to enjoy it better; children neglected educationally, yet thirsting for help to learn.

It was my chance that day, and, with the help and encouragement of others, I took it. The Potteries and Newcastle



The long, unlovely way.

in all gatherings, to find my bright garden, with its geraniums and long ranges of summer colouring by the lake side, full of broken lives. It was the cripples' treat. The paralysed, the blind, the lame, the twisted, and the maimed, lay for once in blissful content upon the lawn between the flower beds, displaying, in harness with

Cripples' Guild was formed, and now nearly three hundred cripples are under its supervision. Those who are ill and incompetent are comforted with all forms of invalid aid, and those who are comparatively able in mind and movement have been drawn into the industrial training which, by artificial flower making,

metal work, printing, and basket making, bids fair to become important among the many Home Arts and Industries' revivals in England.

The artificial flower making for girls is

To see our crippled children at their work makes the heart ache and yet rejoice : we rejoice at their marvellous skill in taking advantage of the chances we are able to offer them ; we grieve for the over-



The waste of young life.

a pleasant occupation. They are brought into touch with gay colours and graceful forms, and under the tuition of a French teacher they are coming to rival the perfections of French flower making. These flowers have been sold at sales in London, in Manchester, and elsewhere, and have received universal admiration. It is unfortunate that in the wholesale trade the Guild flowers are largely undersold by German artificial flowers, which at absurdly low prices are poured into this country. The boys are chiefly employed in metal work and in printing. In Newcastle-under-Lyme there is a flourishing cripples' basket industry. The metal work, thanks to our present teacher, is singularly artistic, and the printing does not lag behind ; in fact the Guild is about to print a book of original verse which will be published in the spring. The leading poets of the day have generously contributed to this book for the sake of the children's need.

willing spirit which sometimes finds the body too weak for work, however light.

Amongst our cripples, too, there are quaint stories. Alice, a little lame girl, eight years old, was asked why she had not been to the class lately. She replied : " Mother's been very poorly, and you know I've to look after the house and get my father and brother's snapping (food) ready."

A few weeks ago I called on one of our little fellows at home. He told me they were going to "flit" (move) shortly, "because father thinks a little change will be good for us." I tried to find out where they were going, but without success, although I could see the lad knew. The next time the secretary called at the house a neighbour told him that they had been compelled to move into the Workhouse !

The following dialogue took place in the Guild office a day or two ago :—

DOLLY: "Why don't you have your bad leg off, Lily, like I did?"

LILY: "Why? Two legs are better than one, any day."

DOLLY: "But not two legs like yours. One isn't any good: you have to carry it about with you always; and, besides, look at the trouble! You have to black two boots, and I only black one."

A little pet of mine, Julia, was in the North Staffordshire Infirmary, awaiting a very severe operation. She heard the doctor tell the nurse to prepare her for the theatre on the following day. She lay in bed thinking of the treat in store, and wondering what the play would be. She told me since, with a grim humour, that

"next time she goes to the theatre, she hopes all of her'll come out of it again." She left three ribs in the last!

Poor little blighted lives! The sense of fun still undiminished, and their pathetic gratitude silent, but unbounded. From the threads we now spin for these children will there be a woven web in the future? We believe and hope everything of the future, and we dare not stay our hand. Truly has it been written, "food and drink, roof and clothes, are the inalienable right of every child born into the light." But more than that, in spite of adverse conditions, we would keep as long as we may, in the life of each child of the Potteries, the enchantment tangible of a "child-world."



[We are indebted to Mr. Salt, the Secretary of the Guild, for the photographic illustrations which accompany this article.]



Photo by Gavillard.

The housetops look so dangerous.

THE SENSATIONS AND EMOTIONS OF AERIAL NAVIGATION.

HOW IT FEELS TO NAVIGATE THE AIR.

BY ALBERTO SANTOS-DUMONT.

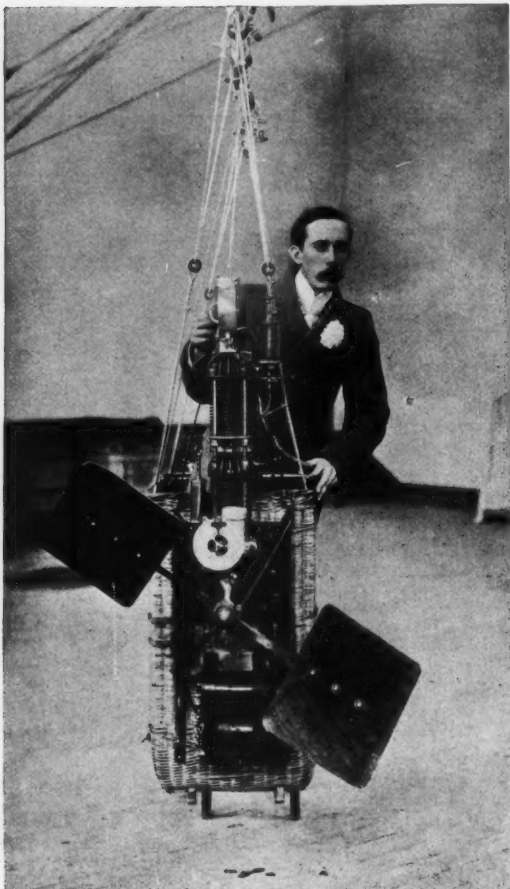
HOW does it feel to travel in an air-ship? My first impression of aerial navigation was surprise to feel the air-ship going straight ahead. It was astonishing to feel the wind in my face. In spherical balloons we go with the wind and do not feel it. True, in rising and descending, the spherical balloonist feels the friction of the atmosphere, and vertical oscillation often makes the flag flutter; but in all its horizontal movements the ordinary balloon seems to stand still while the earth flies past under it.

This was on the first of all my trips, on Sept. 20th, 1898, the air-ship making only moderate speed. Nevertheless, as it ploughed ahead, the wind struck my face and fluttered my coat as on the deck of a transatlantic liner; though in other respects it will be more accurate to liken aerial to river navigation with a steamboat. It is not at all like sail-navigation; and all talk about "tacking" is meaningless. If

there is any wind at all, it must, regularly, be in a given direction, so that the analogy with a river-current becomes complete. When there is no wind, we may liken it to the navigation of a smooth lake or pond. It will be well to understand this matter.

Suppose that my motor and propeller push me through the air at the rate of twenty miles an hour. I am in the position of a steamboat captain whose propeller is driving him up or down the river at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Imagine the current to be ten miles an hour. If he navigates against the current, he accomplishes ten miles an hour with respect to the shore, though he has been travelling twenty miles an hour through the water. If he goes with the current, he accomplishes thirty miles an hour with respect to the shore, though he has not been going any faster through the water. This is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to estimate the speed of an air-ship.

Copyright 1904 by A. Santos-Dumont.



"I had seen motors 'jump' along the highway. What would mine do in its little basket?"

Photo by Liébert, Paris.

It is also a reason why air-ship captains will always prefer to navigate, for their own pleasure, in calm weather, and, when they find an air-current against them, will steer obliquely upward or downward to get out of it. Birds do the same thing. The sailing yachtsman whistles for a fair breeze, without which he can do nothing; but the river-steamboat captain will always hug the shore to avoid the freshet, and will time his descent of the river by the outgoing rather than the incoming tide. We air-shipmen are steamboat captains and not sailing yachtsmen.

The navigator of the air has this one great advantage—he can leave one current

for another. The atmosphere above us is full of varying currents. Mounting, he will find an advantageous breeze if not a calm. These are strictly practical considerations, having nothing to do with the air-ship's ability to battle with the breeze when obliged to do it.

Before going on my first trip, I had wondered if I should be seasick. I foresaw that the sensation of mounting and descending obliquely with my shifting weights might be unpleasant; and I looked forward to a good deal of pitching (*tangage*), as they say on board ship. Of rolling there would not be so much; but both sensations would be novel in ballooning, for the spherical balloon gives no sensation of movement at all.

In my first air-ship, however, the suspension was very long, approximating that of a spherical balloon. For this reason there was very little pitching. And, speaking generally, since that time, though I have been told that on this or that trip my air-ship pitched considerably, I have never been seasick. It may be due in part to the fact that I am rarely subject to this ill upon the water.

I know that what one feels most distressingly at sea is not so much the movement as that momentary hesitation just before the boat pitches, followed by the malicious dipping or mounting, which never comes quite the same, and the shock at top and bottom. All this is powerfully aided by the smells of the paint, varnish, tar, mingled with the odours of the kitchen, the heat of the boilers, and the stench of the smoke and the hold.

In the air-ship there is no smell—all is pure and clean; and the pitching itself has none of the shocks and hesitations of the boat at sea. The movement is suave and flowing, which is doubtless owing to the lesser resistance of the air-waves. The pitches are less frequent and rapid than

those at sea; the dip is not brusquely arrested: so that the mind can anticipate the curve to its end, and there is no shock to give that queer "empty" sensation to the solar plexus. Furthermore, the shocks of a transatlantic liner are due to first the fore and then the after part of the giant construction rising out of the water to plunge into it again. The air-ship never leaves its medium—the air,—in which it only swings.

This consideration brings me to the most remarkable of all the sensations of aerial navigation. On my first trip it actually shocked me! This is the utterly new sensation of movement in an extra dimension.

Man has never known anything like free vertical existence. Held to the plane of the earth, his movement "down" has scarcely been more than to return to it after a short excursion "up," our minds remaining always on the plane surface even while our bodies may be mounting; and this is so much the case that the spherical balloonist, as he rises, has no sense of movement, but gains the impression that the earth is descending below him.

With respect to combinations of vertical and horizontal movements, man is absolutely without experience of them. Therefore, as all our sensations of movement are practically in two dimensions, this is the extraordinary novelty of aerial navigation, that it affords us experiences—not in the fourth dimension, it is true, but in what is practically an extra dimension—the third; so that the miracle is similar. Indeed, I cannot describe the delight, the wonder and intoxication of this free diagonal movement onward and upward or onward and downward, combined at will with sharp changes of direction horizontally when the air-ship answers to a touch of the rudder! The birds have this sensation when they spread their great wings and go tobogganing in curves and spirals through the sky!

*Por mares nunca d'antes navegados!
(O'er seas hereto unsailed).*

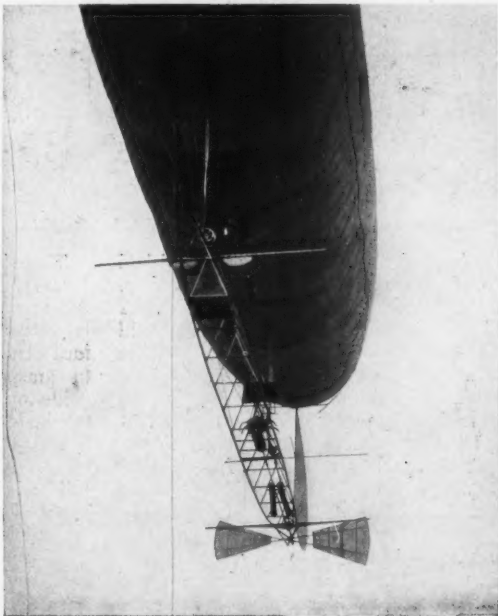
The line of our great poet echoed in my memory from

childhood. After this first of all my cruises I had it put on my flag.

It is true that spherical ballooning had prepared me for the mere sensation of height; but that is a very different matter. It is therefore curious that, prepared on this head as I was, the mere thought of height should have given me my only unpleasant experience. What I mean is this.

The wonderful new combinations of vertical and horizontal movements, utterly out of previous human experience, caused me neither surprise nor trouble. I would find myself ploughing diagonally upward through the air with a kind of instinctive liberty. And yet when moving horizontally—as you would say, in the natural position—a glance downwards at the housetops disquieted me.

"What if I should fall?" the thought came. The housetops looked so dangerous, with their chimney-pots for spikes. One seldom has this thought in a spherical balloon, because we know that the danger in the air is nil: the great spherical balloon can neither suddenly lose its gas nor burst. My little air-ship balloon had to support not only exterior, but interior pressure as well, which is not the case with a spherical



In mid-air

Photo by Russell & Sons.

balloon; and any injury to the cylindrical form of my air-ship balloon by loss of gas might prove fatal.

While over the housetops I felt that it would be bad to fall; but as soon as I left Paris and was navigating over the forest of the Bois de Boulogne, the idea left me entirely. Below there seemed to be a great ocean of greenery, soft and safe. It was while over the continuation of this greenery in the grassy *pelouse* of the Longchamps racecourse that my balloon, having lost a great deal of its gas, began to double on itself. Previously I had heard a noise. Looking up, I saw that the long cylinder of the balloon was be-

will begin to break, one by one, as I go down!" For the moment I was sure that I was in the presence of death.

Well, I will say it frankly, my sentiment was almost entirely that of waiting and expectation. "What is coming next?" I thought. "What am I going to see and know in the next few minutes? Whom shall I meet first when I am dead?" The thought that I might be meeting my father so soon thrilled me. Indeed, I think that in such moments there is no room either for regret or terror. The mind is too full from looking forward. One is frightened only so long as one has still a chance.



In the streets of Paris.

ginning to break. Then I was astonished and troubled. I wondered what I could do.

I could not think of anything. I might throw out ballast. That would cause the air-ship to rise again, and the decreased pressure of the atmosphere would doubtless permit the expanding gas to straighten out the balloon again, taut and strong. But I remembered that I must always come down again, when all the danger would repeat itself and worse even than before, from the greater quantity of gas I should have lost. There was nothing to do but to go down instantly.

I remember having the sure idea: "If that balloon cylinder doubles any more, the ropes by which I am suspended to it will work at different strengths, and

The descent became a fall. Luckily I was falling in the neighbourhood of the grassy turf of Bagatelle, where some big boys were flying kites. A sudden idea struck me. I cried down to them to grasp the end of my 60-yard-long guide-rope, whose extremity had already touched the ground, and to run as fast as they could with it *against the wind!*

The bright young fellows grasped the idea and the rope-end at the same lucky instant. The effect of this help *in extremis* was immediate—and such as I had hoped it might be. By the manoeuvre we considerably lessened the velocity of the descent, and so avoided what might otherwise have been broken bones, to

say the least. As it was, I had a bad shaking up.

I have been so often and so sincerely warned against what is taken for granted to be the principal and patent danger of operating explosive engines under masses of inflammable gases, that I may be pardoned for stopping a moment to disclaim undue or thoughtless rashness.

Very naturally, from the first, the question of physical danger to myself called for consideration. I was the interested party; and I tried to view the

and stopped as gently as those great steel hammers in iron foundries, whose engineers make a trick of cracking the top of an egg with them without breaking the rest of the shell.

My tandem-motor of two cylinders working the same connecting-rod and fed by a single carburator produced $3\frac{1}{2}$ horsepower—at that time a considerable force for its weight; and I had no idea how it would act off *terra firma*. I had seen motors “jump” along the highway. What would mine do in its little basket that

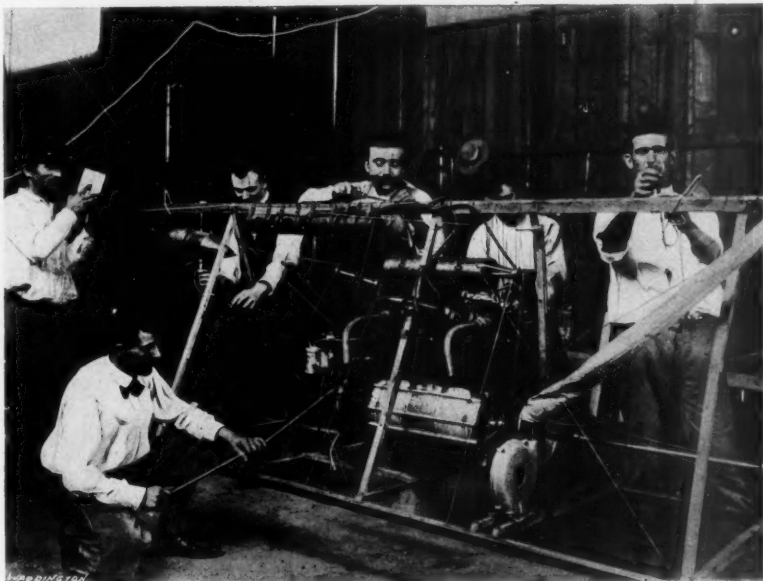


Photo by P. Raffaele.

A balloon motor.

question from all points. Well, the outcome of these meditations was to make me fear fire very little, while doubting other possibilities against which no one ever dreamed of warning me!

I remember that while working on this the first of all my air-ships—in a little carpenter's-shop of the Rue du Colisée, I used to wonder how the vibrations of the petroleum motor would affect the system when it should get into the air.

In those days we did not have the noiseless automobiles, free from great vibration, of the present. Nowadays even the colossal 80- and 90-horse-power motors of the latest racing types can be started

weighed almost nothing, and suspended from a balloon that weighed less than nothing?

You know the principle of these motors? One may say that there is gasoline in a receptacle. Hot air passing through it comes out mixed with gasoline gas, ready to explode. You give a whirl to a crank and the thing begins working automatically. The piston goes down, driving combined gas and air into the cylinder. Then the piston comes back and compresses it. At that moment an electric spark is struck. An explosion follows instantly; and the piston goes down, producing force. Then it goes up, throwing

out the product of combustion. Thus, with the two cylinders, there was one explosion for every turn of the shaft.

Wishing to have my mind clear on the question, I took my tricycle just as it was after I had left the Paris-Amsterdam race; and, accompanied by a capable companion, I steered it to a lonely part of the Bois de Boulogne. There, in the

at the ropes until it had unequalised their tension, and then break them one by one? Would it jar the interior air-balloon's pump and derange the big balloon's valves? Would it continually jerk and pull at the silk hems and the thin rods which were to hold my basket to the balloon? Free from the steadying influence of the solid ground, would the jumping motor jar itself until it broke? and, breaking, might it not explode?

All this and more had been predicted by the professional aeronauts; and I had as yet no proof outside of reasoning that they might not be right on this or that topic.

I started the motor. I felt no particular vibration; and I was certainly not being shaken. I increased the speed—and felt less vibration! There could be no doubt about it: there was less vibration in this light-weight basket hanging in the air than I had regularly felt while travelling by its means on the tricycle. It was my first triumph in the air!

I will say frankly that, as I rose in the air on my first trip, I had no fear of fire. What I feared was that the balloon might burst by reason of its interior pressure. I still fear it. Before going up I had minutely tried the valves. I still try them minutely before each of my trips.

The danger, of course, was that the valves might not work adequately, in which case the expanding of the gas as the balloon rose would cause the dreaded explosion. Here is the great difference between spherical and dirigible balloons. The spherical balloon is always open. When it is taut with gas it is shaped like an apple; when it has lost part of its gas, it takes the shape of a pear: but in each case there is a great hole in the bottom of the spherical balloon—where the stem of the apple or the pear would be—and it is through this hole that the gas has opportunity to ease itself in the constant alternations of condensation and dilatation. Having such a free vent, the spherical



Over the Bois de Boulogne.

Photo by P. Raffaele.

forest, I chose a great tree with low-hanging limbs. From two of them we suspended the motor-tricycle by three ropes. When we had well established the suspension, my companion aided me to climb up and seat myself on the tricycle saddle. I was as in a swing. In a moment I would start the motor and learn something of my future success or failure.

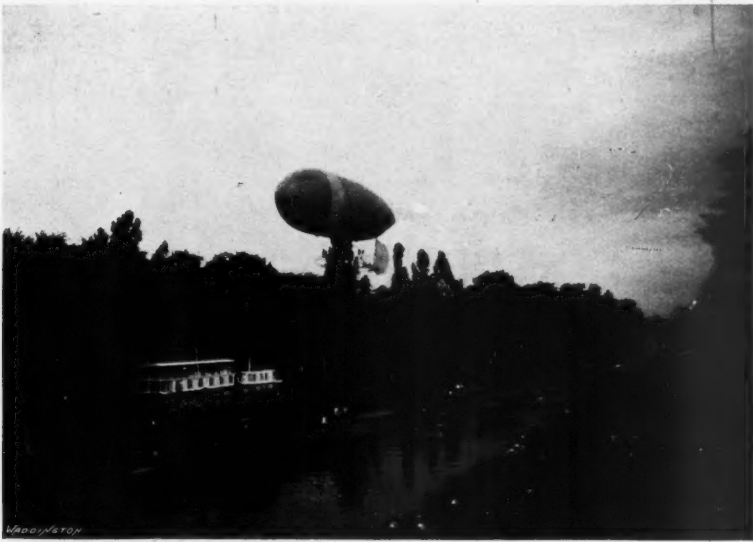
Would the vibration of the explosive engine shake me back and forth, strain

balloon runs no risk of bursting in the air; but the price paid for this immunity is great loss of gas and, consequently, a fatal shortening of the spherical balloon's stay in the air. Some day a spherical balloonist will close up that hole. Indeed, they already talk of doing it.

I was obliged to do it in my air-ship balloon, whose cylindrical form must be preserved at all cost. For me there must be no transformations as from apple to pear. Interior pressure only could guarantee me this. The valves to which I refer have, since my first experiments, been of all kinds, some very ingeniously

"Do we dare strike matches in the basket of a spherical balloon?" they asked. "Do we even permit ourselves the solace of a cigarette on trips that last for many hours?"

To me the cases did not seem the same. In the first place, why should one not light a match in the basket of a spherical balloon? If it be only because the mind vaguely connects the ideas of gas and flame, the danger remains as ideal. If it be because of a real possibility of igniting gas that has escaped from the free hole in the stem of the spherical balloon, it would not apply to me. My balloon,



An alarm of fire. The flame was extinguished with a Panama hat.

interacting, others of extreme simplicity. But their object in each case has always been the same—to hold the gas tight in the balloon up to a certain pressure and then let only enough of it out to relieve dangerous interior pressure. It is easy to realise, therefore, that, should these valves refuse to act adequately, the danger of bursting would be there.

This possible danger I acknowledge to myself; but it had nothing to do with fire from the explosive motor. Yet, during all my preparations, and up to the moment of calling "Let go all!" the professional aeronauts, completely overlooking this weak point of the air-ship, continued to warn me against fire.

hermetically closed except when excessive pressure should let either air or a very little gas escape through one of the automatic valves, might for a moment leave a little trail of gas *behind* it as it moved on horizontally or diagonally, but there would be none in front where the motor was.

In this first air-ship I had placed the gas escape-valves even farther from the motor than I place them to-day; the suspension-cords being very long, I hung in my basket far below the balloon. Therefore I asked myself: "How could this motor, so far below the balloon and so far in front of its escape-valves, set fire to the gas enclosed in it, when such gas is not inflammable until mixed with air?"

On this first trial—as in most since—I used hydrogen gas. Undoubtedly, when mixed with air, it is tremendously inflammable. But it must first mix with air. All my little balloon models are

munity from the *retour de flamme*. Then, in the same week in which Mr. Vanderbilt burned himself so severely, on July 6th, 1903, the same accident overtook me in my little "No. 9" runabout air-ship, just



Photo by Numa Blanc.

The balloon house at Monaco.

kept filled with hydrogen; and, so filled, I have more than once amused myself by burning *inside them*, not their hydrogen but the oxygen of the atmosphere. All one has to do is to insert in the balloon model a little tube to furnish a jet of the room's atmosphere from an air-pump, and light it with the electric spark. Similarly, should a pin-prick have made ever so slight a vent in my air-ship balloon, the interior pressure would have sent out into the atmosphere a long thin stream of hydrogen that *might* have ignited—had there been any flame near enough to do it. But there was none.

This was the problem. My motor did undoubtedly send out flames for, say, half a yard around it. They were, however, mere flames, not still-burning products of incomplete combustion like the sparks of a steam-engine fed by coal. This admitted, how was the fact that I had a mass of hydrogen unmixed with air and well secured in a tight envelope so high above the motor to prove dangerous?

Turning the matter over and over in my mind, I could see but one dangerous possibility from fire. This was the possibility of the petroleum reservoir itself taking fire by a *retour de flamme* from the motor. During five years, I may here say in passing, I enjoyed complete im-

as I was crossing the Seine to land on the Ile de Puteaux. I promptly extinguished the flame with my Panama hat . . . without other incident.

For reasons like these I went up on my first air-ship trip without fear of fire; but not without doubt of a possible explosion due to insufficient working of my balloon's escape-valves. Should such a "cold" explosion occur, doubtless the flame-spitting motor would ignite the mass of mixed hydrogen and air that would surround me. But it would have no decisive influence on the result. The "cold" explosion itself would doubtless be sufficient. . . .

Now, after five years of experience, and in spite of the *retour de flamme* above the Ile de Puteaux, I continue to regard the danger from fire as practically nil; but the possibility of a "cold" explosion remains always with me, and I must continue to purchase immunity from it at the cost of vigilant attention to my gas escape-valves. Indeed, the possibility of the thing is greater technically now than in the early days which I describe. My first air-ship was not built for speed: consequently it needed very little interior pressure to preserve the shape of its balloon. Now that I have great speed, as in my "No. 7," I must have enormous

interior pressure to withstand the exterior pressure of the atmosphere in front of the balloon as I drive against it.

THE SPEED OF AIR-SHIPS.

The speed problem is, doubtless, the first of all air-ship problems. Speed must always be the final test between rival air-ships; and until high speed shall be arrived at, certain other problems of aerial navigation must remain in part unsolved. For example, take that of the air-ship's pitching (*tangage*). I think it quite likely that a critical point in speed will be found, beyond which on each side the pitching will be practically nil. When going slowly, or at moderate speed, I have experienced no pitching, which, in an air-ship like my "No. 6," seems always to commence at 25 to 30 kilometres per hour through the air. Now, probably, when one passes this

it sums up all other air-ship qualities, including "stability." At Monaco, when I made my best speed, however, I had no rivals to compete with. Furthermore, my prime study and amusement there was the beautiful working of the maritime guide-rope; and this guide-rope, dragging through the water, must of necessity retard whatever speed I made. There could be no help for it. Such was the price I must pay for automatic equilibrium and vertical stability—in a word, easy navigation—so long as I remained the sole and solitary navigator of the air-ship.

Nor is it an easy task to calculate an air-ship's speed. On these flights up and down the Mediterranean coast, the speed of my return to Monaco, wonderfully aided by the wind, could bear no relation to the speed out, retarded by the wind; and there was nothing to show that the force of the wind, going and coming, was constant. It is true that on these flights



Photo by Numa Blanc.

A flight at Monaco.

speed considerably—say at the rate of 50 kilometres per hour—all *tangage*, or pitching, will be found to cease again.

Speed must always be the final test between rival air-ships, because in itself

one of the difficulties standing in the way of such speed calculations—the "shoot the chutes" (*montagnes Russes*) of ever-varying altitude—was done away with by the operation of the marine guide-rope;

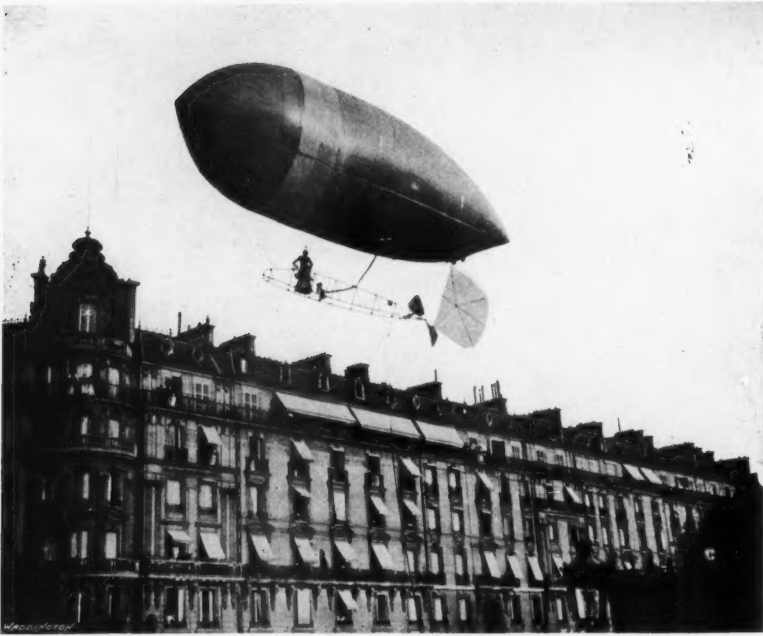


Photo by Simons.

"One can guide-rope in the centre of Paris."

but, on the other hand, as has been said, the dragging of the guide-rope's weight through the water, acted as a very effectual brake. As the speed of the air-ship is increased, this brake-like action of the guide-rope (like that of the resistance of the atmosphere itself) grows, not in proportion to the speed, but in proportion to the square of it.

On these flights along the Mediterranean coast the easy navigation afforded me by the maritime guide-rope was purchased, as nearly as I could calculate, by the sacrifice of about six kilometres per hour of speed; but, with or without maritime guide-rope, the speed calculation has its own almost insurmountable difficulties.

From Monte Carlo to Cap Martin at ten o'clock of a given morning may be quite a different trip from Monte Carlo to Cap Martin at noon of the same day; while from Cap Martin to Monte Carlo, except in perfect calm, must always be a still different proposition. Nor can any accurate calculations be based on the markings of the anemometer, an instrument which I nevertheless carried. Out of simple curiosity I made note of its

readings on several occasions during my trip of February 12th, 1902. It seemed to be marking between 32 and 37 kilometres per hour; but the wind, complicated by side-gusts, acting at the same time on the air-ship and the wings of the anemometer windmill—*i.e.* on two moving systems whose inertia cannot possibly be compared—would alone be sufficient to falsify the result.

When, therefore, I state that, according to my best judgment, the average of my speed through the air on these flights was between 30 and 35 kilometres per hour, it will be understood that it refers to speed through the air whether the air be still or moving, and to speed retarded by the dragging of the maritime guide-rope. Putting this adverse influence at the moderate figure of 7 kilometres per hour, my speed through the still or moving air would be between 37 and 42 kilometres per hour.

Where speed calculations have their real importance is in affording necessary data for the construction of new and more powerful air-ships. Thus the balloon of my racing "No. 7," whose

motive-power depends on two propellers each 4 metres in diameter and worked by a 60-horse-power motor with a water-cooler, has its envelope made of two layers of the strongest French silk, four times varnished, capable of standing, under dynamometric test, a traction of 3000 kilogrammes per linear metre.

I will now try to explain why the balloon-envelope must be made so very much stronger as the speed of the air-ship is designed to be increased; and in so doing I shall have to reveal the unique and paradoxical danger that besets high-speed dirigibles, threatening them, not with beating their heads in against the outer atmosphere, but with blowing their tails out behind them!

Although the interior pressure in the balloons of my air-ships is very considerable, as balloons go—the spherical balloon, having a hole in its bottom, is under no such pressure—it is so little in comparison with the general pressure of the atmosphere, that we measure it, not by “atmospheres,” but by centimetres or millimetres of water-pressure—*i.e.* the pressure that will send a column of water up that distance in a tube. One “atmosphere” means one kilogramme of pressure to the square centimetre; and it is equivalent to 10 metres of water-pressure, or, more conveniently, 1000 centimetres of “water.” Now, supposing the interior pressure in my slower “No. 6” to have been close up to 3 centimetres of water (it required that pressure to open its gas-valves), this would have been equivalent to $\frac{1}{333}$ of an atmosphere; and as one atmosphere is equivalent to a pressure of 1000 grammes (1 kilogramme) on one square centimetre, the interior pressure of my “No. 6” would have been $\frac{1}{333}$ of 1000 grammes, or 3 grammes. Therefore on one square metre (10,000 square centimetres) of the stem, or head, of the balloon of my “No. 6,” the interior pressure would have been 10,000 multiplied by 3, or 30,000 grammes—*i.e.* 30 kilogrammes.

How is this interior pressure maintained without being exceeded? Were the great exterior balloon filled with hydrogen, and then sealed up with wax at each of its valves, the sun's heat might expand the hydrogen, make it exceed this pressure and burst the balloon; or should the sealed balloon rise high, the decreasing pressure of the outer atmosphere might let its hydrogen expand—with the same result. The gas-valves of the great balloon, therefore, must *not* be sealed; and, furthermore, they must always be very carefully made, so that they will open of their own accord at the required and calculated pressure.

This pressure (of 3 centimetres in the “No. 6”), it ought to be noted, is attained by the heating of the sun, or by a rise in the altitude, only when the balloon is completely filled with gas. What may be called its working-pressure—about one-fifth lower—is maintained by the rotary air-pump. Worked continually by the motor, it pumps air constantly



Falling.

into the small interior balloon. As much of this air as is needed to preserve the outer balloon's rigidity remains inside the little interior balloon; but all the rest pushes its way out into the atmosphere again through its air-valve—which opens at a little less pressure than do the gas-valves.

Let us now return to the balloon of my "No. 6." The interior pressure on each square metre of its stem-head being continuously about 30 kilogrammes, the silk material composing it must be normally strong enough to stand it; nevertheless it will be easy to see how it becomes more and more relieved of that interior pressure as the air-ship gets in motion and increases speed. Its striking against the atmosphere makes a counter-pressure *against the outside* of the stem-head. Up to 30 kilogrammes to the square metre, therefore, all increase in the air-ship's speeds tends to reduce strain—so that the faster the air-ship goes, the less will it be liable to burst its head!

How fast may the balloon be carried on by motor and propeller before its head-stem strikes the atmosphere hard enough to more than neutralise the interior pressure? This, too, is a matter of calculation; but, to spare the reader, I will content myself with pointing out that my flights over the Mediterranean proved that the balloon of my "No. 6" could safely stand a speed of 36 to 42 kilometres per hour without giving the slightest hint of strain; but had I wanted an air-ship of the proportions of the "No. 6" to go twice as fast, under the same conditions, its balloon must have been strong enough to stand four times its interior pressure of 3 centimetres of "water," because the resistance of the atmosphere grows, not in proportion to the speed, but in proportion to the square of the speed.

The balloon of my "No. 7" is not, of course, built in the precise proportions of that of my "No. 6"; but I may mention that it has been tested to resist an interior pressure of much more than 12 centimetres of "water"—in fact, its gas-valves open at that pressure only. This means just four times the interior pressure of my "No. 6." Comparing the two balloons in a general way, it is obvious, therefore, that with no risk and, indeed, with positive relief from outside

pressure on its stem, or head, the balloon of my "No. 7" may be driven twice as fast as my easy-going Mediterranean pace of 42 kilometres per hour—or 80 kilometres!

I say with relief from outside pressure on the balloon's stem, or head; and this brings us to the unique and paradoxical weakness of the fast-going dirigible. Up to the point where the exterior shall equal the interior pressure, we have seen how every increase of speed actually guarantees safety to the stem of the balloon. Unhappily it does not remain true of the balloon's stern-head. On it the interior pressure is also continuous; but speed cannot relieve it. On the contrary, the suction of the atmosphere behind the balloon as it speeds on increases also, almost in the same proportion as the pressure caused by driving the balloon against the atmosphere. And this suction, instead of operating to neutralise the interior pressure on the balloon's stern-head, *increases* the strain just that much, the pull being added to the push. Paradoxical as it may seem, therefore, the danger of the swift dirigible is to blow its tail out rather than its head in!

How is this danger to be met? Obviously by strengthening the stern part of the balloon-envelope. We have seen that when the speed of my "No. 7" shall be just great enough to completely neutralise the interior pressure on its stem, or head, the strain on its stern-head will be practically doubled. For this reason I have doubled the balloon material at this point.

I have reason to be careful of the balloon of my "No. 7." In it the speed problem will be attacked definitively. It has two propellers, each 5 metres in diameter. One will push, as usual, from the stern, while the other will pull from the stem, as in my "No. 4." Its 60-horse-power Clément motor will—if my expectations are fulfilled—give it a speed of between 70 and 80 kilometres per hour. In a word, the speed of my "No. 7" will bring us very close to practical everyday aerial navigation; for, as we seldom have a wind blowing as much, even, as 50 kilometres per hour, such an air-ship will surely be able to go out daily during more than ten months in the twelve.



Picking up a man overboard.

A GUEST OF THE ADMIRAL.

THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET AT HOME.

BY ARNOLD WHITE.

L YING in bed in the Admiral's cabin, I woke in the morning to find three electric pushes hanging from the deck above, just over my head. One was red, one was blue, and one was white. The red called the marine stationed at the door of the Admiral's dining-room, the white push called the servant told off to wait on me, and the blue the officer of the watch. As I lay there I recalled the dilemma in which a great lady had once found herself when occupying a similar cabin on the occasion of some great national function. She rang the wrong bell. The officer of the watch duly appeared at the door, only to be asked to bring some hot water.

The smart young marine told off to wait on me brings a bath, arranges my things, and very shortly I am ready for the excellent breakfast which awaits me at eight o'clock in company with the Admiral, Chief of the Staff, flag captain, flag lieutenant, flag secretary, and four or five guests from other ships in the Fleet.

When smoking an after-breakfast cigar in the stern walk of the ship, watching the screw churning the blue water of the Mediterranean, and the sea-birds dipping and swooping in the wake of the vessel, while the seven sister battleships are ranged right and left of us in magnificent array, it occurred to me that a simple description of the Mediterranean Fleet might be interesting to English readers.

Both the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria and the King of Italy recently remarked to English guests that the peace of the world depends on the strength of the Mediterranean Fleet. The Kaiser, in a conversation with the present writer, expressed an opinion which is shared by all who know the facts: namely, that the pivot of English power is the Mediterranean Fleet.

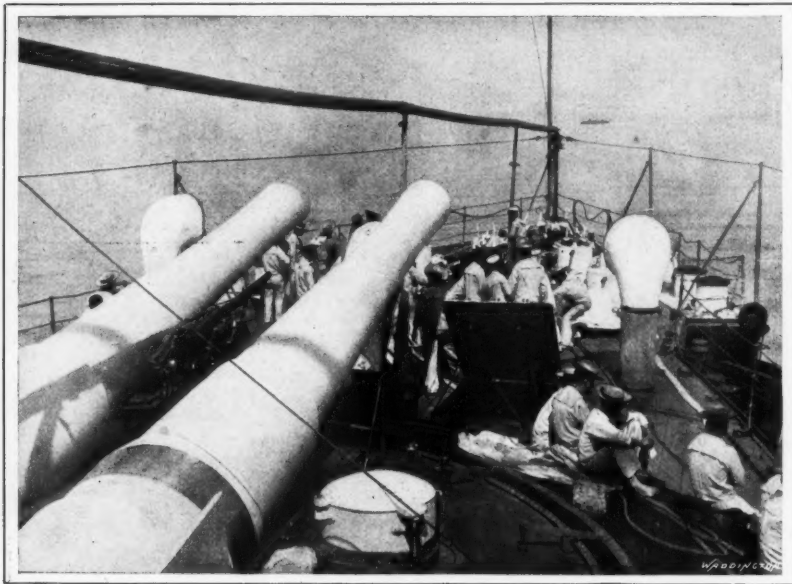
Except at the annual manœuvres, the British public hear little and know little of the Mediterranean Fleet. Less important squadrons, the Household troops or the Army Corps at Aldershot and on

Salisbury Plain, are better known to the public. The man in the street knows the name of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and of his predecessor, but if you were to stop a hundred foot-passengers on Ludgate Hill or Cheapside, it is doubtful if five of them would know the name of the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Squadron, and it is improbable that two of them would know the name of his predecessor.

The Admiral commanding the Mediterranean Fleet is one of the greatest men in our scheme of Empire. He is a greater

Chief of the Army, the Lord High Chancellor and the Lord President of the Council will shortly vacate their appointments.

In time of war the Channel Fleet becomes the second division of the Mediterranean Fleet. In the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, accordingly, is the fate of the British Empire. If his battleships are de-forced, the enemy will command the trade routes of commerce, and thus be able to concentrate his strength upon preventing food arriving in England. No matter how efficient the

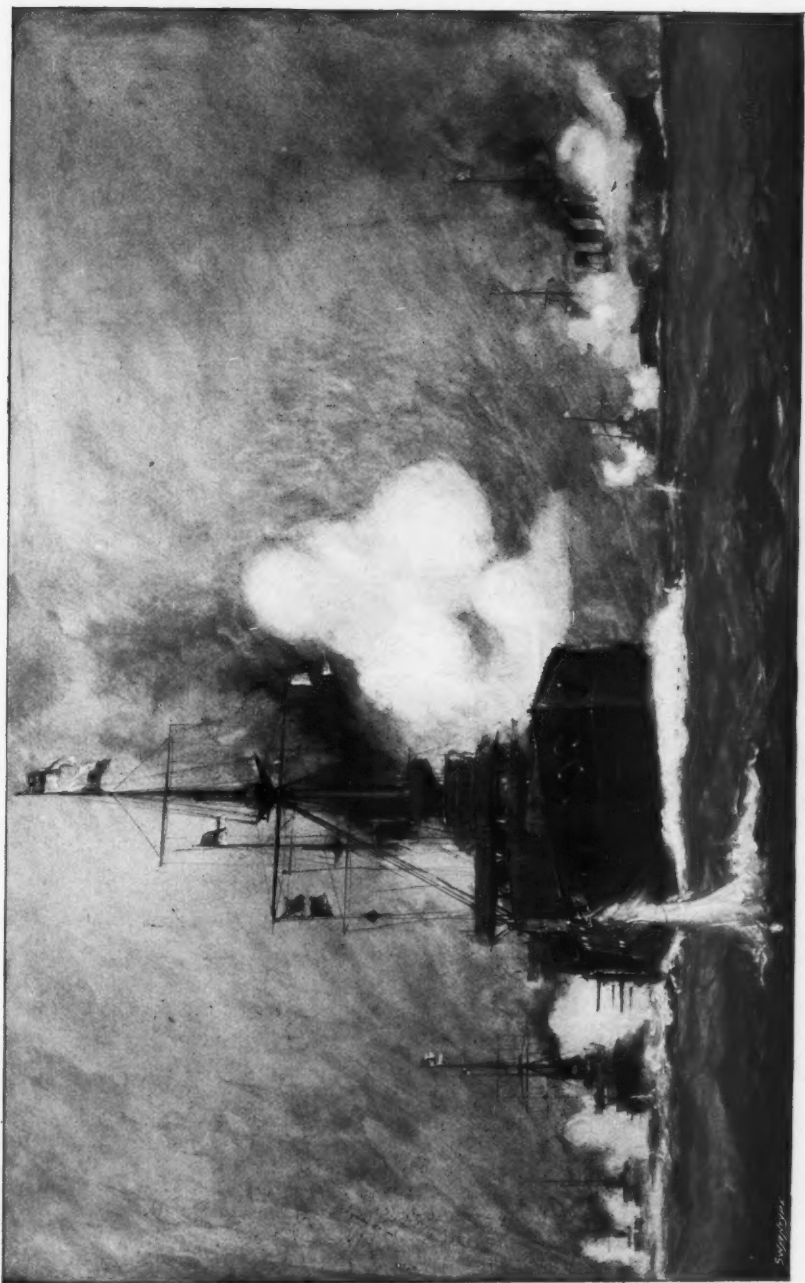


A "stand easy."

man than the Viceroy of India, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Lord High Chancellor, or the Lord President of the Council. The reason why he is more important than these eminent personages is because, in the event of war with a European combination of maritime Powers, the Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean is the Admiralissimo of the British forces: to the hands of the Admiral in command of the Mediterranean Squadron is entrusted the duty of meeting, beating, sinking and burning the enemy wherever he may be found. Unless he succeeds in doing this, the Viceroy of India, the Commander-in-

British Army may be, no matter how accurate the rifles, how powerful the ammunition, how numerous the soldiers, or how gifted with genius the Secretary of State for War, none of these advantages will avail England if the Mediterranean Fleet is beaten. All that would happen would be that the butcher and the baker would cease to call in the morning. The enemy would have no reason to press invasion, because Great Britain would be "Ladysmithed," and the acceptance of the enemy's terms could only be a question of weeks.

These are the conditions that impart interest to the Mediterranean Fleet. Is



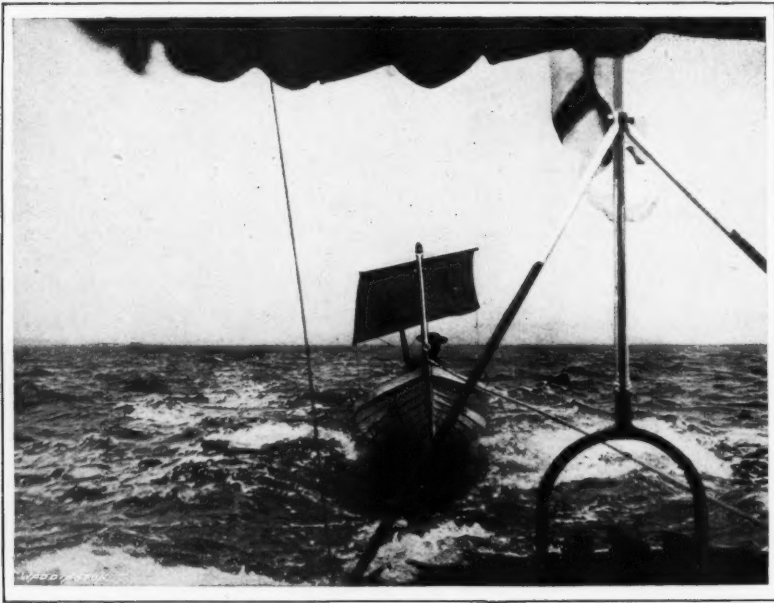
*Battleships going into action in line-ahead formation.
After a drawing by Norman Wilkinson.*

it capable of performing the services expected from it? The answer until recently was emphatically in the affirmative. Whatever may be said of the shooting, the *personnel* is in a first-rate condition, and the smartest squadron in the service is that "up the Straits." Mediterranean smartness is notorious throughout the Service. To attain it is to be on the high road to promotion; to fall short of it is regrettable, but the standard set up by our great Admirals is almost too high for human endurance.

On more than one occasion it has been

foes. In war time it is unsafe for battle-ships to approach within 120 miles of certain points in the Mediterranean. The British Admiral in the Mediterranean must be a tireless worker. Whether at Admiralty House in Valetta, or on his flagship at sea, there is no hour and no minute between 5 a.m. and bedtime that is not devoted to the service.

The programme of the Commander-in-Chief in his pleasant house at Malta is to rise at 5 a.m. and to write hard for two hours the important semi-official letters to the authorities at home, to the

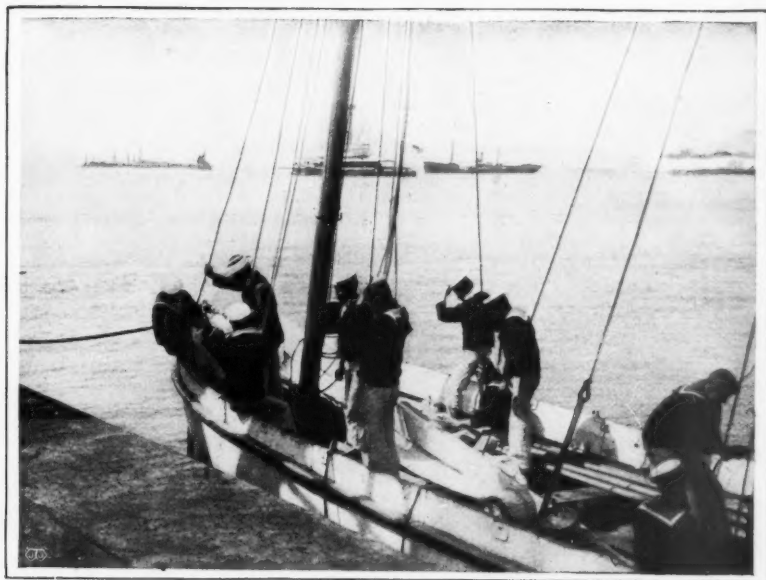


Towing the gig behind the Admiral's launch.

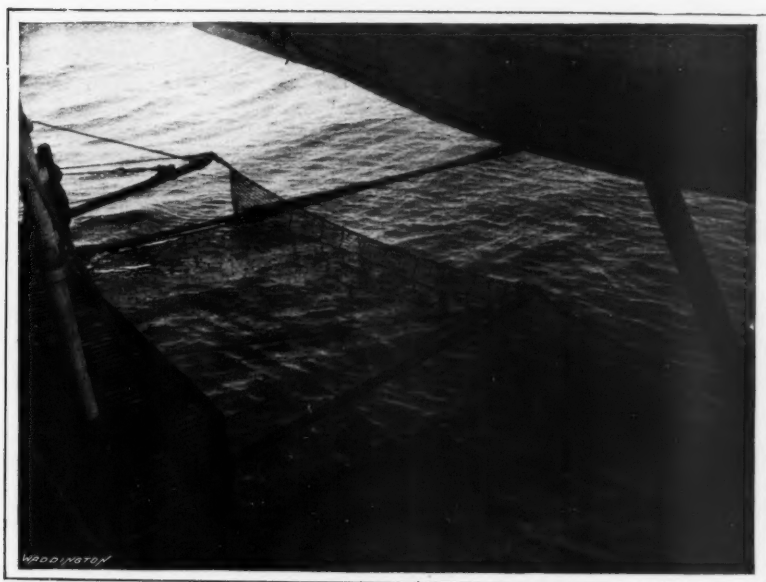
the good fortune of the writer to see something of the Mediterranean Fleet "at home," and to get a glimpse behind the scenes in the Latin lake, studded with torpedo stations that were not constructed from a spirit of enthusiasm for the British.

The Admiral of 1903 has a harder job to perform than Nelson in 1805. The one-armed man who gave to England the Empire of the Seas had no torpedo zone to fear by night; no submarines by day. Day and night, in port or at sea, the British Admiral to-day is compelled to take precautions against unseen

admirals commanding other squadrons, and to other important people with whom it is better to communicate direct than through a secretary. At 7 a.m. the Admiral will knock off work, take a bath, and dress. At 8 o'clock, attired in white undress uniform, he breakfasts with the Chief of the Staff, the flag captain, flag lieutenant and flag secretary, and any guests who may have been invited, to talk over the work of the Fleet. Among these guests are often to be found a couple of midshipmen from one or other of the ships in harbour. The Admiral is not too great a man to inspire the youngest



Starting for the Gibraltar Cup Race.

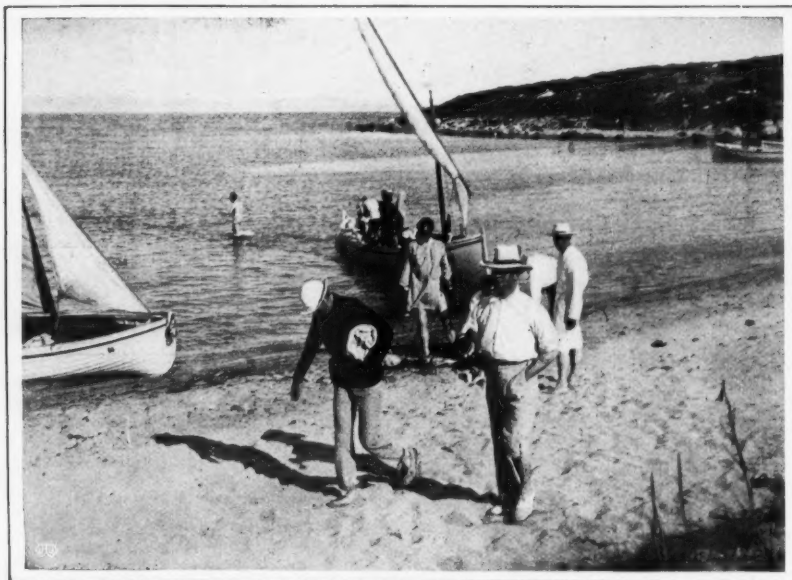


Lowering a torpedo-net on a battleship.

officers in the service with the desire to excel by winning the regard of the Commander-in-Chief. At 9 a.m. office work is resumed. The correspondence is multifarious. The requirements of the station are innumerable. Secret service work in the Mediterranean is now removed from the Foreign Office to the Commander-in-Chief. The Admiralty correspondence is voluminous. Official inquiries range from buttons to battle-ships. Dispatches before now have been addressed to the Commander-in-Chief on the subject of sailors' socks, of officers'

adroitness of their respective crews; or he may drive out into the stony centre of the island and pay a friendly call at one of those houses with enchanting garden oases which make Malta one of the most fascinating spots in the British Empire.

When the Admiral joins his flagship and the Fleet puts to sea the day of the Commander-in-Chief is spent in a different manner. Rising early, all correspondence and orders for the Fleet for the day are then despatched. The main object of the Fleet when at sea is the exercise of



The middies' morning dip.

trousers, and of the sanitary arrangements of a small village at the western end of Malta. There are letters to ambassadors, governors, and consuls; letters to the captains of battleships, cruisers, gunboats, and destroyers; letters to all sorts and conditions of men about every subject under the sun. A clear head, a taste for scientific organisation, and untiring purpose, are the essential qualifications of every admiral appointed to the command of the Mediterranean. In the afternoon, after luncheon, the Admiral may attend the naval sports on the Marsa, or exercise-ground of Malta, an historical spot, where ship vies with ship in the efficiency and

evolutions and the practice of manœuvres. To facilitate this practice a secret book of steam tactics is prepared for the use of the Fleet. On each page of this little work is described the exact methods of performing a given evolution. Page after page the steam tactics are practised by the Fleet, until the performance is mechanical, accurate, and deadly to any possible foe. The Commander is engaged day and night in extracting the highest efficiency from each ship and from each subdivision of the Fleet in the various methods by which an enemy is to be met. The object of all naval strategy, when reduced to its simplest form, is so to



The Enemy.
After a drawing by Norman Wilkinson.

arrange the British force that the whole of it may be concentrated on a portion of the hostile fleet. It is only when the spectator at manœuvres has mastered this principle that he can take an intelligent interest in what is going on. Of recent years Admirals have allowed the captains of battleships to assume temporary command of the Fleet or part of it, in order that when they are promoted to Admiral's rank they shall not be ignorant of the duties they have to perform. When the Commander-in-Chief is at sea the Fleet is practised in steam tactics until 1 p.m. At

or four ships for the presence of those captains, commanders or officers whom he may desire to see at his table.

The present Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean is known for his devotion to straight shooting. It would be extraordinary, but for the revelations of the Royal Commissioners on the late war, how indifferent successive Boards of Admiralty have shown themselves to the question of straight shooting. The fighting value of a straight-shooting ship, like the *Bulwark*, the flagship of Admiral Sir Compton Domvile, is at least double

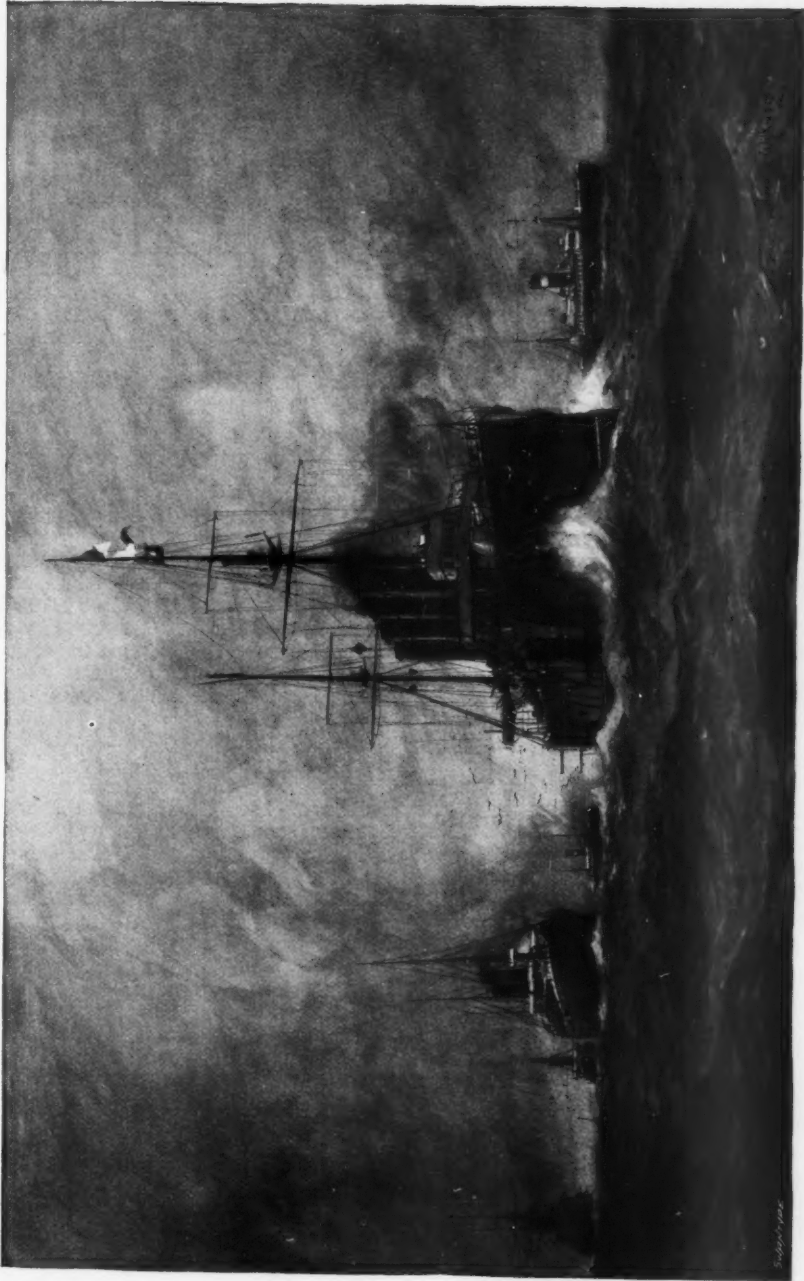


The last of the Mediterranean Fleet steaming out of Valetta harbour at 14 knots.

(Observe the crowds on the bastions.)

that hour the Admiral goes to luncheon. At 2 p.m. more manœuvres take place, which last for about three hours. At 5 p.m. it is often the custom in fine weather to stop the Fleet and to order all hands overboard. Thirteen or fourteen thousand white-skinned British blue-jackets and their officers have been seen by the writer splashing about in the water hundreds of miles from land, while the great monsters to whom they supply vital force wait motionless and almost helpless until the bathing drill is over. At 7.30 p.m. the Commander-in-Chief will sit down to dinner, having probably signalled to three

that of a sister ship that shoots no better than the average. This is why the usual comparison between fleets by measuring their tonnage, the number of their guns and the thickness of their armour, is futile. Captain Percy Scott, who commanded the *Scylla* in the Mediterranean before he was promoted to the *Terrible*, following the example and precept of Sir John Fisher, has done much for straight shooting. Already the result of Sir John's teaching is visible. There is no reason to doubt that the strength of the Navy may be doubled by devoting as much attention to straight shooting as has



*Cruisers conveying in time of war.
After a drawing by Norman Wilkinson.*

hitherto been given to the polishing of brass, to the purity of paint, and to the niceties of the bluejackets' dress.

The cost of coal and the exigencies of steam compel all modern fleets to visit port more often and to remain there longer than when sails were the means of propulsion. During the blockade of Toulon by Nelson the Admiral never left his ship for a period of eighteen months. It is rare for the Mediterranean Fleet to be at sea four days without visiting a port, although the British Fleet remains at sea twice as many days in a year as the French or Russian fleet.

The life of the Mediterranean Fleet, however, is not all work. Jack and his admirals and officers find time to play, and very agreeable play it is. The picture of midshipmen bathing in a cove on the south coast of Sardinia, about eighty miles from Cagliari, shows the undress of the Mediterranean Fleet.

One of the favourite amusements of my Mediterranean hosts was boat sailing. The interest in the capture of the Gibraltar Cup grows year by year. This coveted trophy is contested for by *bonâ-fide* men-of-war boats of every rig. They are sailed under service conditions, and after the race is over the winning boat is filled with water and she is expected to float in that condition.

The naval officer ashore is deeply attached to his gun. He is a spirited sportsman, but when in the midshipman stage he is sometimes a terror to the prudent. I once took part in a shoot in which two small buck were put up by the beaters up the wind. The unanimity with which the midshipmen turned round and shot down the line with their whole energy—while bullet after bullet whistled round my head—determined me for ever afterwards to shoot with nobody under the rank of sub-lieutenant. In the Levant, which the fleet at certain times of the year is in the habit of frequenting, the game is both scanty and gun-shy; still Jack ashore is so keen a sportsman that he will tramp for twenty miles to catch the smallest of trout and trudge over moor and fen the livelong day for one red-legged partridge or a solitary snipe.

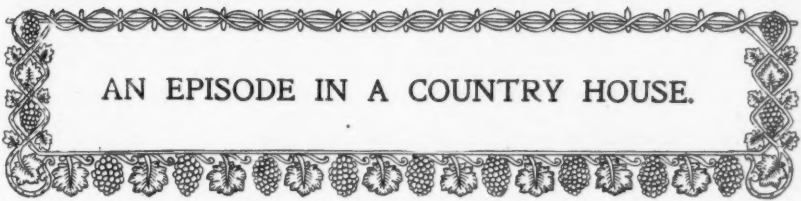
Society at Malta, being composed largely of the young wives of naval officers, is bright and cheerful to an extent incredible to those who know the clouded and grey existence of veteran Southsea, half-pay Bath, or tedious Torquay.

To begin with, the climate is almost perpetual sunshine. Then the husbands of the Fleet are constantly away from home, and therefore their return to Malta constitutes an agreeable change. There is little or no scandal in Malta society. A note of dignity and simplicity, which contrasts vividly with that in other parts of the Empire, is largely attributable to the high sense of duty traditional in the Royal Navy. The excellent character of the officers is reflected upon the men, and though from ten to fourteen thousand men are sometimes on shore at one time, few people ever see a drunken blue-jacket in the streets of either Valetta or Gibraltar.

As the income of the average naval officer is limited, economy is compulsory. Expensive ball-dresses, motor-cars, and the luxuries of a great establishment, are almost unknown at Malta. The head of society is of course the Governor, whose beautiful house and gardens, a few miles from Valetta, form an ideal home for the Commandant of the vital spot of the Empire—Malta.

The Admiral's house, however, is the Mecca of naval society at Malta, and as the Admiral is seldom a millionaire there is little display. Naval men at Malta, however, contrive to amuse themselves and have a good time. There is an excellent club in one of the "auberges" which were left by the Knights of Malta. The dining-room of this club is one of the most beautiful examples of mediæval decoration that exists, and has been said by good judges to be unique. When subscription balls are arranged, some of the loveliest women in the Empire, plainly dressed, dance the happy hours away.

Taken all round, the Mediterranean Fleet has a good time, whether at sea or in port; but it were well if the English people thought a little more of their principal Fleet, of their First Line of Defence.



AN EPISODE IN A COUNTRY HOUSE.

BY FRANCES HARROD
(FRANCES FORBES ROBERTSON).

CLUSTERED together as flowers in a bouquet, were some very charming young women, women of to-day—and, search into what period we list, more delightfully intelligent and good-humoured, more fastidiously dressed or bewilderingly mischievous specimens of the perplexing sex are not to be traced—white begowned flowers of the twentieth century, which came in, it seems, for them, in argent, symbolical doubtless of the new freedom that was to be theirs as against the dingy grey and absurd restrictions of the long quiescence preceding it. To-day our young woman, be she married or single, bedecks herself in white, winter or summer; she winds a blue sash round her waist for laughter, and tucks a red rose under her hat for sentiment; she smokes cigarettes, plays cards, and, after all, understands Browning, and can order an excellent dinner.

They were together under some ancient cedar trees on an equally ancient lawn that undulated about them in the smoothest of rises and declines, reaching an ultimate hollow which cradled a stretch of water, appearing like nothing in the world but a silver mirror to reflect the pink and white of our young women, should they be tempted to see their really amazing little toilettes.

Not very far from them a man and a girl were playing some game of golf, that was not as it were whole golf, but a game possible for practice; the diminutive red flags spotting here and there the receding turf. The girl—she seemed that in distinction from the others by some absence of a fashionableness which made of them, even if single, so certainly young women—might actually have stepped from one of the old portraits from which her companions had copied their modish gowns; and it was, peculiarly enough, not

her costume that suggested this picturesqueness of a bygone age, for her hat was not so wide or her fichu so correctly cut as theirs, but just the grace of her, the same indescribable flower-like modesty that, however absent in the originals, prevails so entirely in the paintings of the young girls our great-grandmothers admired. The absence of frills, of style or intentional lines, the absence of the latest phase of deportment, added to her look of simplicity—of very beautiful unconsciousness so much a contrast to the beautiful—one insists upon that—self-consciousness of her companions. When with them she felt herself to be absurdly insignificant and inadequate. She was, too, a little frightened of their wit, their cigarettes, their slang, and their expensive accessories, their stockings and brushes and feathers and furs, their cards and young men.

These last filled her with confusion that reached almost to dismay. They seemed to be perpetually on the verge of being "clean broke," so they phrased it, but always in the best of humour over the expectancy. They rattled off in the most confiding way to her descriptions of their simply *dire poverty*, till she wanted to offer them two shillings: the glimpse, however, of silk embroidered socks, with a mental vision in which motor-cars were conspicuous, and they owners rather than chauffeurs, confused her sense of any reality in such protests or the sufficiency of a loan of two shillings.

The man, however, with whom she was playing golf, was really different from the men who usually stayed at her cousin's, and she had fallen in love with him in the very simple-hearted way that such gentle temperaments do, with a boldness that is contrary to all their usual instincts. Love, to this girl, was just a fact that

had come to her overwhelmingly, and any denying of it, hiding it more than in a silent way, was beyond her power. If he cared for her or not she did not know: she did not allow herself to dream that he did. She could not believe that anything so wonderful could happen to her, but she did believe that some strange impossible friendship might be theirs if she claimed it. He had noticed her more than he had noticed others of the house party, he had sought her out almost every day: their eyes had met, and she had thought that his had seemed the kindest in the whole world, and she felt that no one in the world could take from her that look,—its meaning: it could not be as if had never been. She had no artifice with which to hide her secret, and her companions had discovered it at once. They were fond of this little distant cousin of their hostess: they knew she was poor, that her clothes were absurd, that she went into no kind of society excepting on these visits, and that she was shortly to make herself even more impossible socially by becoming a secretary to some business man, a typist it sounded like—at any rate something that must cut her off from themselves, not by reason of any snobbish objections, but simply because her work and their gaiety could not run in leash: the circumstances of everyday life precluded the meeting of fashionable idlers with struggling young women. They would of course always welcome her; but when on earth had such people time to be welcomed? And how could one rout out persons from places called Ludgate Circus? She was after all one of themselves, and charmingly pretty, and her way of falling in love moved them through all their cynicism, through all their humour, to a still stronger loyalty—a desire to give her a chance to remain, where she had every right to be, in their world. When alone, they laughed consumedly over the idyl passing under their noses, and then fell to wistfulness as they pinned on a jewel or tucked flowers into their sashes before a mirror; but things that went swimmingly enough at first began to lag. In another week the party was to break up, the going and coming of relays of visitors to cease; and now under the cedar trees our young women tossed the subject to and fro with a kind of good-tempered fury, in a manner that brooded some storm of mischief.

"Will he, this afternoon?" said the youngest married of them.

"No," said Lady Susan, after a moment's silence.

She was hostess, and several months older than her companions, and was absurdly young.

"When, then?" said Helen, an unmarried girl with even more of the look of a woman of the world than the former speakers.

"I believe never."

"But you do think he cares!"

"I haven't a doubt!"

"Then, in the name of the saints, why?"

"She keeps him off."

"You mean to say he doesn't see?" said Helen.

"Oh! he sees—we all see; she doesn't hide it; but she has that amazing ability—she prevents him from speaking because she does not demand it. She does not for a moment dream how much he is in love with her."

"Still, I cannot make out why he is kept off! I do not believe, you know, between ourselves, that he thinks of marriage any more than she does. They love to be together, and they manage in a shamefully open way to be together. Perhaps twenty years hence, when he is alone, he will remember her and wonder why he did not ask her to be his wife."

"Ah! but that is why one feels so provoked. These two, who could so easily be happy—Heavens! it is hard enough to be that, even when one grabs at all one can get; and here are two people missing the great thing by a kind of wilful negligence. . . . I really can't stand it!"

They laughed; but Lady Susan began to walk up and down the lawn between the trees, with a restless movement which indicated that her mind was hot on the subject, and that her young body was healthfully a partisan in the struggle. She wanted tremendously that this affair should end the right way. She had turned to these two persons (from the hundred-and-one social activities that fill up a modern woman's life, and into the pursuit of which she puts such an amazing amount of energy, giving pleasure and taking pleasure—that remains the wonderful thing—even when the heart of her may be aching: a disposition named, by

mischievous philosophers, *insatiably frivolous*, nevertheless one which makes her the charming companion she is)—turned to render it possible that they should have what she would not admit she had exactly missed, but what, however much she may have desired, could not have come her way whilst the world went just as it did.

Her companions watched her lazily, then one of them remarked, "Isn't Countess Resika coming to-night?"

"She is," said Lady Susan indifferently.

"Well, doesn't she go in for willing people?"

"Willing people? Oh! I believe so. I believe she is a great hand at it. She makes one find pins sticking into other people, and money where it shouldn't be."

"Still she makes one do things?"

"Yes, any amount."

"Then why shouldn't she make——"

"——Robert Lindsay say the thing to Violet," murmured Helen.

"Heavens!" Lady Susan stood still, gasping.

Everybody remained silent, with in-drawn breath. At last one among them said, "It's too good!"

"Ah! let's be serious—let's really be serious!" said Lady Susan.

Every one, of course, at once laughed. "We will," they said together, and began to warm to the plot, looking mischief from their eyes, and waiting for Lady Susan to develop further so amusing a plan.

"We were speaking this morning," said one of them, "of Countess Resika, and of her pretensions to occult powers. Mr. Lindsay said it was all humbug, and that he had failed ever to find any one who could make him budge."

"Precisely: he never budes—there would be no trouble if he did," said Lady Susan. "My dear ladies, to-night Countess Resika shall prove her power, and we will give our aid."

* * * * *

Robert Lindsay stood quite still, facing the little Russian, who in a very wilful way had insisted upon the evening being given up to the process of converting him to a belief in her occult powers. She was a charming person, but typical to her finger-tips of everything in the world our young man disliked in women. He read in the depths of her eyes a challenging wit that twinkled mischief

and power, and something of an almost Eastern consciousness of evil, suggesting unutterable abominations which she might with that amazing plausibility peculiarly hers translate into seemingly harmless practices corrupting in an insidious way: theories of morals, theories of religion, of living, of self-consciousness, of sensuous powers, a thousand vague evil things inherited from a dim past by ancient peoples of dead civilisations, the spiritual worms, as it were, of a spiritual putrefaction, and brought from them by such people as herself among good women—women (he found himself thinking, of Violet Rendall's temperament) whose sensitive dispositions are so easily affected by any audacity of thought under the cloak of a higher spiritual teaching. He had been forced into this abominable *stance*, and now, as he stood in the great shadowy drawing-room, purposely left in a dim light from a single shaded lamp, an odd feeling of losing his practical thinking power, as it were—of an outside influence gradually taking possession of him, and emanating from this woman's extraordinary evil eyes, oppressed him: a swift sense of anger at the same time rose to meet the lethargy. He determined he would not be influenced, nevertheless an inclination came over him to do something, the nature of which he could not discern. The sceptical side of him was moving dangerously towards a sense of defeat. He looked quickly towards Lady Susan, and noticed that she was watching him, her lips parted, and an odd expression of intense purpose in her eyes. The paralysing sense was stealing rapidly over him when the door of the room opened, and Violet Rendall entered, and stood with an astonished look in her young eyes at himself and those round him. He made an immense effort to throw off his stupor, and crossed over to her side.

"My dear Miss Rendall, we are playing the fool: do rescue me. Let us go into the garden, where there is at any rate some air. The Countess has failed to——"

"To what?" said the girl, with a hesitating laugh, for every one in the room seemed at a pitch of some controlled excitement. An unnatural stillness held the atmosphere.

"Oh!" he answered, "to make me find a pin, or move a photograph, or

some nonsense or other. Come along!
 . . . Look what a night it is."

The girl waited for a moment, then the two went out.

"Hush! don't move," said Countess Resika. She put her hand over her eyes, and the odd silence remained.

At last Lady Susan rose. "I can't bear it any longer," she said; "let's give it up."

"It's all right now," said her friend.

Every one stirred, as persons released from a self-imposed discomfort. They rose and moved about restlessly.

"What do you mean by all right?" said Helen.

"You will see to-morrow," answered the foreigner, smiling with lazy triumph at the flurried figures hovering about her. "I will say nothing more. . . . Give me a cigarette: these experiments with the incredulous exhaust one's nervous vitality. Lady Susan, don't go into the garden!"

Lady Susan was standing in a flood of moonlight at the open window, a look of perplexity on her face as she moved a hesitating foot towards the garden.

"It's very absurd," she said, "but I didn't mean the thing to be so serious. One feels that what we have done isn't quite straight: I have a very keen inclination to go and tell Robert."

"It is too late," said Countess Resika.

"How awful!"

"Wasn't it understood what I was to do—what you were all to do?"

"Yes, of course I am not blaming you. . . . It seemed all right, and now it seems all wrong."

The foreigner laughed. "Come," she murmured, in a low caressing voice, "we mustn't be too serious, you know. Nothing is worth that!" She twinkled with a look of immense satisfaction as Lady Susan reluctantly came back to her place.

* * * * *

"Violet came into my room last night," said Lady Susan.

"Well?" said Helen.

"He proposed."

"Then we succeeded?"

"Heaven knows!"

"Has she accepted him?"

"She said she was so taken by surprise that she asked him to wait till this morning."

"Well, it's all right, then."

"Do you feel that?"

"I don't know."

"I think it's low!"

"Low?"

"It's a low-down thing to have done. . . . Think of Violet."

"She'll never know."

"That doesn't alter our responsibility."

"We did it for a joke."

"I didn't even do that. I was awfully serious, and only when the thing was done did it suddenly come over me what a really disgraceful affair we had taken part in. That little girl came into my room with flushed cheeks and, Heavens! what happiness in her eyes, happiness we know nothing about, you and I. . . . I felt the meanest hound extant."

"My dear Susan, you talk about it too seriously. After all, I don't believe we did it."

"But you can't alter the fact that we all deliberately willed Robert to propose to Violet there in the garden—that he should take her there, that Countess Resika used all her power, and she is known to have some kind of power, and that he did propose to Violet!" Lady Susan spoke argumentatively, uttering each word distinctly; when she turned her head she saw the girl of whom they had been talking standing a few paces off.

"Good God—Violet!"

"I came to fetch this book," she said, feebly. "I did not notice you were here." Every drop of blood had gone from her cheeks, and a tiredness seemed to paralyse her movements: with a little sigh she turned upon her heel, holding the book she had come to fetch, and left them.

* * * * *

They had taken from her, then, her lover! Alone in her room she stood still to grasp the ugly thing, to realise that so trivial a trick of fortune had actually deprived her of all that mattered to her in the world. Her lover was not a lover at all, her most beloved was not to be hers to love with the whole of that great love that was singing in her heart. "Husband," she murmured the word, was not to be, then! A monstrous desolation swept in upon her. She moved a step to throw it off. Was it permissible to suffer in this way? An absurd mistake had been made; she surely had sense enough not to suffer so intolerably. There was real enough pain in the world—but what was pain more than this? She tiptoed to the window, as if noise would be

frightening. She must have a moment's silence and darkness, to bear this physical pain that now was numbing all mental activity, the throbbing unbearable of a body which panted to save the broken-hearted spirit from too full an understanding.

* * * * *

She went down to the morning-room and found Robert Lindsay alone. She hardly knew what happened before she was aware that her lover seemed to be waiting with an embarrassed manner for her to speak. His eyes were upon the cover of a book he had put down, and he did not raise them to look at her or move forward to meet her. He was not the lover of the night before; a chill reality of what had happened faced her only too certainly in what seemed disinclination on his part. She spoke hurriedly the few words of refusal, and he was at once very kind to her, with a nervous persistency, as if he would save her from the awkwardness of so unreal a situation. "It has all meant nothing, then," he ended, with a strange look in his eyes: "it is my fault if I misunderstood."

For a swift moment she thought she discerned a note of disdain in his voice, which was not at once followed by the kindness she found herself shrinking from. A lover could not have been kind at such a moment. He touched her hand and then went out of the room. Her desolate solitariness was sharply interrupted by the entrance of some of the house party, adding a seal so effectually to the end of her shameful love-story.

* * * * *

"You cannot refuse him, Violet?"

"I have refused him, Lady Susan: you have made it only too necessary."

"Oh! blame me, blame me—I deserve it; but for God's sake don't punish me so overwhelmingly. Wait a little while. Don't break with Robert."

"It is impossible to do anything else. Do you not see how helpless I am?"

"Yes, if the question of the willing were a fact . . . but there is no such certainty. My dear child, the thing is absurd. I do not for a moment believe he was affected at all, and I know that he cares for you."

"I have tried to think that; but later it would come back, come for ever between us . . . He is chivalrous—he would not withdraw now; if told he would

not for a moment admit it; but later . . . think of it later?"

"Does your caring count for nothing, then?"

"My caring? Oh yes: it's because I care I cannot . . ."

"I contend that he cares for you."

"I think not."

"You thought so."

"We . . . he has changed since then."

"Do you mean since yesterday?"

The girl coloured. "He was not the same," she said bravely.

"You have imagined that."

"I think not."

"Ah! you are punishing me dreadfully."

"You know when he took me into the garden he said, 'I can't tell you how that horrid woman affects me. I feel as if she had followed us out here and was fixing me with her eyes now: as if I must do something she wants.' I laughed . . ."

"Well?"

"Then he asked me."

Lady Susan pressed her head in her hands. "What's one to do? Circumstances are so absurdly against us, and yet I am certain it is nonsense. I am miserable over the very wicked absurdity of it—one simply must put it straight."

Violet looked at her companion with her tired eyes, and said quickly, "I am sorry; you must not consider that it matters so much." There was a tremor in her voice, a note of pleading—that her friend should not make it harder for her to bear by insisting, by so greatly concerning herself. She showed a dignity that was both unassailable and pathetic.

"Violet, is there nothing to be done?"

"Well, you see it with me, do you not?" She came over to Lady Susan's side, but did not look at her. "Whatever he might say, nothing could change the fact. In honour he would, of course, plead his case, but one could not accept it. It is an *impasse*; there is no conceivable way out."

"And we have done this."

"You must remember that he had never asked me to marry him before, and would never have done so."

"Ah! you are generous."

The two remained silent for some moments; then Violet continued, "Try as we might to put aside the thing, to laugh it away now, when we were married and were not always quite happy it would

creep in and widen the division: if we were happy, it would convert trivial incidents perpetually into suspicious occasions——”

“Don’t! don’t!”

“Ah! but that is the truth. . . . It is hopeless, Lady Susan, quite hopeless.”

“You can never forgive me.”

The girl looked at her companion for a long time. “You must not say that,” she said at last: “it will only be the difficulty of not associating you with——”

“I don’t expect you to forgive me.”

* * * * *

They were all scattered about the morning-room in odd places, hovering, as it were, between remaining or going about their amusements, their light gowns glistening in the shadows. They appeared to be held prisoners by a discussion between Lady Susan and Helen, in which they only took an intermittent part, dropping a sentence now and then as they turned to look minutely at a picture on the walls or a magazine on the table: there seemed to be a general desire to thrust in an opportune word that might somehow exonerate them from the responsibility of a catastrophe for which it had grown to be felt they were all to be blamed.

“He must be told,” said Lady Susan. “It is the only decent thing to do, though none of us can see any way out even if he is told. What can he say but obviously the one thing that Violet will never accept?”

“That he was not influenced, you mean?”

“Precisely.”

“Then what is the use?”

“We owe it to him. Of course, it is humiliating. . . . one never dreamt of such an ending.”

“When does Violet go?”

“This afternoon: she is quite determined.”

Lady Susan got up.

“What are you going to do, Susan?” said Helen.

“Tell him now. . . . Here he is, coming through the garden: do go away, all of you, and Helen get hold of Violet and bring her on to the verandah. Keep her there, hold her down by force if needs be—she must hear what he says when she knows he is unaware of her presence. There is nothing he can say, unfortunately, that can alter the situation; she

will always believe that a sense of honour must dictate anything he says—but it is the last hope.”

* * * * *

As Robert entered the room, Lady Susan was alone, seated in an armchair near the window in such a way that he could not easily pass her.

“Oh! sit down, Robert—sit down there.” She pushed a chair with her foot near the window, so that any one outside on the verandah could easily overhear anything she or her companion said.

She listened for a moment till she heard steps along the verandah, which halted just the farther side of the window. “I have something to say to you,” she said, “and I can’t ask you to be anything else but very angry when you hear what it is, nor to forgive me. It would annoy me if you did. I wish simply to apologise, and my only excuse is that I haven’t one. My behaviour has been that of a child, and if any one would give me a whipping I should be delighted; but even then it would not better matters or help you.”

“My dear Lady Susan, what is the matter? If you didn’t look so serious I should like to laugh.”

“There is matter to laugh at, but you will not laugh.”

Robert Lindsay looked at her searchingly. “If,” he said suddenly, with a faint rising colour, “it is about Miss Rendall you want to speak, believe me there is nothing to say. We simply made a mistake.”

Lady Susan stirred uncomfortably. The calm of her companion seemed to confirm Violet’s opinion that he had changed. A feeling of sickness came over her. Violet was hearing what was being said.

“Please listen,” she said, sitting forward. “If what I am going to say to you seems impertinence, you must nevertheless have patience to the end. . . .”

“Go on.”

“You remember Countess Resika willing you the day before yesterday!”

“Of course I do.”

“Do you know what she willed you to do?”

“No; but I know that she failed.”

“That is the awful thing: she apparently did not fail.”

“What do you mean?”

Lady Susan stood up; she became pale, and the odd look in her eyes made her companion rise and move forward with an action of impatience. "Countess Resika willed you to take Violet Rendall into the garden and propose to her."

"Why the devil, then, didn't she will her to accept me?" he shouted.

* * * * *

Our young women were again under the cedar trees in lazy attitudes, smoking cigarettes and laughing. The sunlight formed trellis patterns on their white gowns, and their wide hats threw broad shadows across the always mysterious eyes of their mischievous sex.

"What then happened, Susan?" said one of them good-humouredly.

"Why, he said so wonderfully the one only sentence on earth out of all the possible combinations of words that could meet the horrid situation and

dissipate the thing as though it had never been."

Helen laughed. "You know," she interrupted, "I was holding Violet to the seat on every absurd pretext I could think of. Her face was as pale as we all had seen it. When she heard his voice she seemed to be dazed, and looked most pathetically at me for her release. Fortunately she does not know me very well, her good manners kept her hesitating, and simply and plainly we both stared at one another and listened. She was waiting, I think, for me to speak, caught at the same time by the lure of his voice; and then he said that wonderful thing—that spontaneous guarantee of his real passion in the matter, and the colour swept into her face in the most upsetting way. He came striding out to her, and that was the end. They were our absurd lovers again."

A SONG.

BY LADY LILY GREENE.

COULD you forgive, could I forget,
 We might perchance be happy yet,
 And bygone years of barren grain
 Might ripen into love again.
 Oh what a harvest then were ours,
 Could time but glean the wasted hours!
 We might perchance be happy yet,
 Could you forgive, could I forget.

Must all the web of wedded life
 Be woven into strands of strife?
 Can ne'er a thread of silver gleam
 Across its dark and tangled seam?
 Ah! no, it cannot be too late
 When Hope stands trembling at the gate,
 Oh Love! We may be happy yet,
 If you forgive, as I forget.



The leader of the expedition.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE OPAL.
THE JOURNAL OF THE LATEST EXPEDITION.
BY ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

[The following article reaches us from the centre of Australia. It is written by the intrepid leader of the latest Expedition organised for the purpose of seeking opals in these untrodden solitudes.—Ed. P.M.M.]

TOWARDS the beginning of April in the present year (1903) the Scottish Australian Exploring Expedition arrived in Sydney from London, bound on a somewhat unique mission. Many expeditions have set out from time to time to cross the forbidding "Never never Land" of Australia, but all have had the same story to tell at the end: the vast Australian interior has neither rivers nor lakes nor mountains in its keeping; sand, endless sand, and ironshot wastes are its characteristic features. But, as if to compensate for her tardy endowments in this respect, Nature has gifted these same sullen tracts with extensive deposits of gold and rare gem-stone formations, and it was particularly to search for these latter treasures that the expedition mentioned was organised. It has been my lot to command several exploring parties in the Western and Central divisions of Australia, but only on this occasion have I looked forward to acquiring some degree of wealth from the desolate region hitherto avoided as if a devouring

phantom reigned within its salt-crusted borders.

We left Sydney, after a short stay for outfitting purposes, six strong. Each of my companions had done pioneering service with me on previous journeys in different parts of the globe, so that I knew their capabilities well. Philip Morris, a young Englishman who had been associated with me in Australian travel for several years, was duly nominated "second in command" before we left the hospitable portals of the hotel in which we stayed. "Mac," my stalwart henchman of many journeys, at the same time solemnly named himself as "general adviser," a duty he remembered to perform faithfully at every opportunity—much to the disgust of the three remaining members of the party, each of whom considered himself admirably adapted for a similar position. These three, by the way, known severally as Billabong Dave, Long Ted, and Emu Bill, had done valiant service with the Bushmen in South Africa since I had last known them—

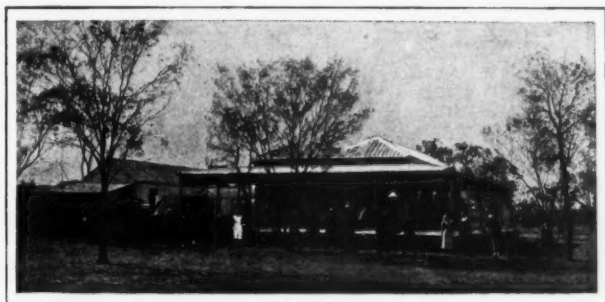
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an experience which gave them an everlasting topic of conversation and led to much wordy strife on many occasions.

The outfit collected for our expedition was by no means an elaborate one. Flour, tea, and tinned meats ("tinned dog," in the bushman's vernacular) are the sum total of an Australian explorer's needs, and I did not wish to be encumbered with much else in the way of foodstuffs. But I observed that Long Ted—who had been unanimously elected "chief cook"—had purveyed certain weird-looking boxes marked "Emergency Rations," to be used as a reserve, so he said, in case the "bally old dog should go cronk,"* and he shuddered as if painful recollections had been aroused at the thought.

From Sydney to the western terminus of the Queensland Railway is a distance approximately of 1200 miles, and this we

Cunnamulla lies but one hundred and eighty miles across country in a N.N.W. direction. Phil, with the rest, was in favour of such a scheme. "That hundred odd miles overland will just get us into working order," said he, "and if you go round by train we shall be awaiting you at Cunnamulla station." So it was speedily settled that Phil with the three warriors should proceed by this route, while Mac and I journeyed in more comfortable fashion round by the Queensland capital. This latter course was very essential to me, for I was anxious to report myself to the Royal Geographical Society's branch in that town; and Mac, also, had the onerous duty of attending to certain heavy boring appliances *en route*, which could not have been sent with the rest, who had intimated their intention of cycling across the divide. We therefore left Sydney in two



Glendilla Station (Western Queensland).

had arranged to negotiate in the orthodox manner, leaving the bulk of our supplies to be collected at the little outpost settlement of Cunnamulla, where also I depended upon securing the necessary means of transport for our further westerly travel. It was only when we were on the point of sailing for Brisbane that I discovered that the great drought, which had been raging for many years, had so paralysed the country as to render a regular train service into Western Queensland unnecessary, and only one train per week was billed to undertake the weary journey towards the point of our final departure. It happened that we had just missed our connection with that solitary mail conveyance; and rather than wait longer in civilisation my companions loudly clamoured to be allowed to proceed by way of Bourke, in New South Wales, from which township

detachments, one going west, the other north, bound for a rendezvous marking a diagonal course between both routes; and so our troubles commenced.

It was nearly a fortnight after leaving Sydney when I found myself approaching Cunnamulla, and I had little doubt that Phil's detachment would be lined up, as he had said, awaiting my arrival; but instead of such a reception I could distinguish only one familiar face among the crowd who had congregated to witness the event of the week—the arrival of the mail train.

"It's Long Ted," whispered Mac, "an' he's got a face on him like an Egyptian mummy. Something's wrong surely."

Ted did not leave me long in suspense. He strode forward gloomily, and jerked the carriage door open.

"Phil an' Dave an' Bill are bogged in a

* *Cronk*, Australianism for "bad" or "wrong."

muskeeter swamp twenty-five miles back," he announced, with an air of resignation.

"What!" I cried: "bogged? Do you mean to say there has been rain out here? You must be dreaming, Ted."

"Nary dream," grunted he. "The drought has broke, an' the trail from Bourke is like the trail to South Africa."

"How did you leave them?" I asked, as we turned towards the Bush Hotel we had fixed upon as our meeting-place.

"They is all camped on the darned bog," he groaned, "an' sinking every minute. I got through to tell ye, an' I want to git back lively with horses to pull 'em out afore they croaks."*

It was indeed an alarming state of affairs to find so early on our journey; but I had never reckoned on the much-bemoaned drought breaking up so suddenly and so completely. I knew that the long stretch of mulga country on the disastrous route chosen was far from secure after a good rainfall, but I was unaware of any such rainfall having taken place for at least seven years.

"It will be a good thing for the country," cheerfully said the hotel proprietor; and I tried to console myself with that reflection.

Next morning a weary-looking procession hove in sight over the horizon, and as it drew nearer I recognised the belated members of my party. They had started out with bicycles, but they came in without them. There was no need to ask for details—I could imagine them all easily enough; and yet it seemed well-nigh incredible that these drought-stricken tracks should be rendered impassable by excessive rain!

So ended the first stage of our travel, somewhat inauspiciously perhaps; but nevertheless it augged well for the future of our journeyings across the interior plains, for clearly the water difficulty would be a difficulty no longer—at least, in the sense I had grown accustomed to anticipate. I fervently hoped that the rainfall had been general throughout the farther western and central districts.

Little time was lost in moving ahead, for we were already delayed nearly a week more than I had calculated upon. Instead of camels I was glad, owing to the altered state of the country, to decide on horses as our best means of locomotion. Half a dozen wiry bush animals were promptly placed at our disposal by

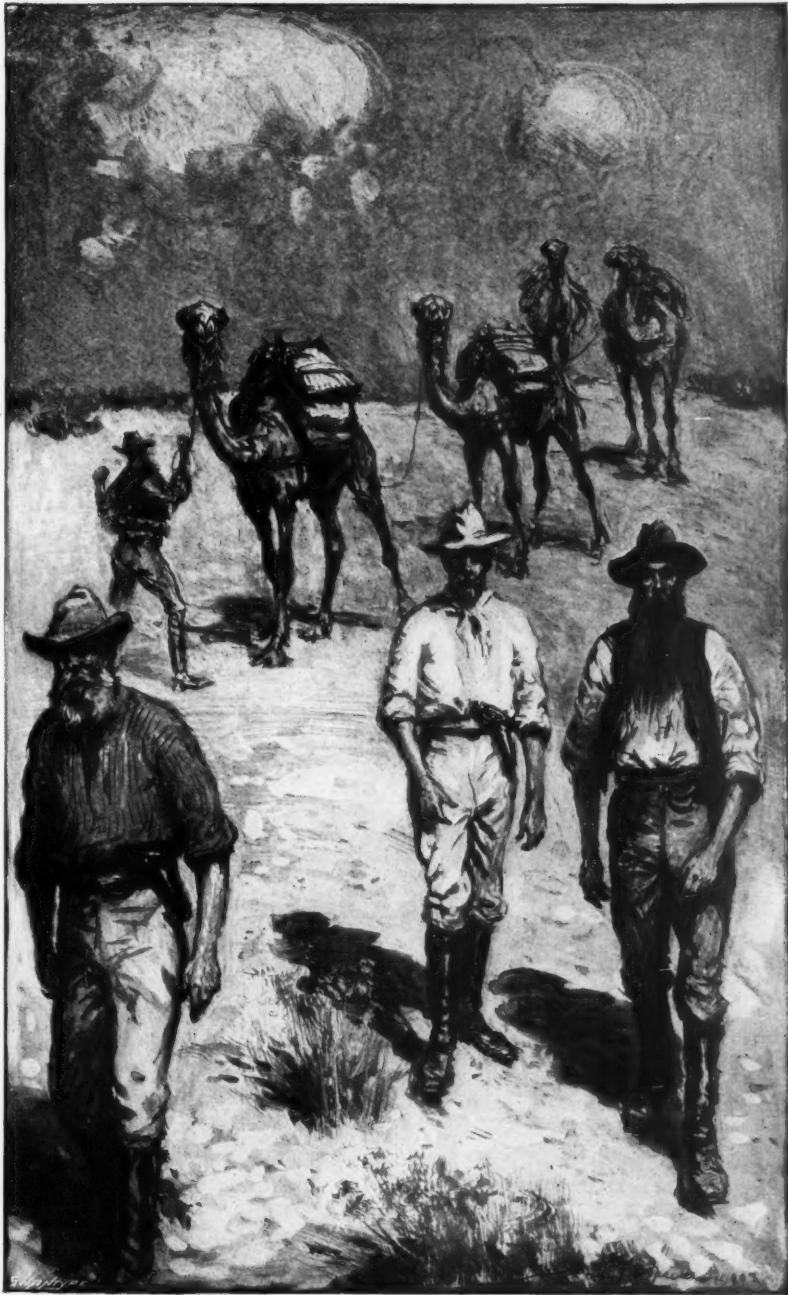
the owner of Glendilla Station, a jolly-faced and generous-hearted Irishman, whose homestead lay directly in our route, and formed our last link with civilisation.

I may pass briefly over the first few days of our march. Progress was painfully slow, and the rain came down in torrents, flooding us out of our tents regularly each evening. I mention this particularly, for I had never seen such a deluge in interior Australia before, and I do not think it has fallen to the lot of many others to witness a similar down-pour in the same country. If such rains could be relied upon, Queensland would soon become one of the finest pastoral countries in the world. Each shower seemed to make the grass spring up where formerly the shifting sands alone could be seen. We were already nearing the limit of the great gem belt which stretches across into the heart of the continent; and soon our work must begin in earnest, for on this occasion the mere fact of crossing a little-known territory was unworthy of any note, considering the nature of our principal duty.

Towards the end of May we seemed to have got well clear of the rain, and the familiar ironstone gravel and sand began to strew the mulga plains. Gidgya trees were also much in evidence, and remembering an old bush saying—"Opal and gidgya are always found together"—I began to look around for a convenient camping space, where we might erect our tents, fit up our mining implements, and incidentally sink one or two prospecting shafts. It was while descending a dioritic ridge on the upper reaches of the dry-channelled Paroo river, that the out-cropping strata at once attracted Phil's attention, and brought about a halt even sooner than I expected. "It's the same formation," he exclaimed, examining it closely—"it's the same formation exactly that we located two hundred miles farther west nearly two years ago."

This in itself proved little or nothing, for opal is found in many and various formations and conditions; but Billabong Dave, who had been leisurely scrutinising a heap of conglomerate rubble, climaxed matters by hauling to light a giant boulder literally shot with fiery radiance. "I reckons that there brick came from somewhere around," he remarked casually, directing my attention to his find,

* *Croak*—meaning "die," "peg out."



Our last expedition with camels.

As if jealous of Dave's luck, his companions at once became eagerly alert, and in less than five minutes they had brought to me quite a collection of similar specimens. It should be understood that the gem opal is seldom found in a free state on the surface, though the whole ground may be ablaze with streaks of its effulgence. Iron, or sandstone pebbles, or outcropping rocks in the vicinity of opal-bearing country, are usually intermixed and sometimes surrounded by a beautifully opalescent matrix, which serves only as a sure indication of what lies underneath. It was so in the present instance, and we straightway proceeded to found our first gem camp near at hand. We were fortunate in finding within a mile of our "prospect" a small dry ravine, which, on being deepened by Mac and Emu Bill, showed a likelihood of conserving sufficient water for our needs even if no further rain fell. This important matter arranged, we unloaded the pack-horses, hobbled them securely, and turned them adrift into the wilderness, to feed on whatever vegetable substance it might be their fortune to find.

It is not a difficult matter tracing up a greenstone stratum, once the area containing it has been located, but notwithstanding this the opal is so wonderfully elusive, and so deceptive in its numerous aspects, that great care has to be exercised in mining for it. It hides within rusty-looking boulders, sometimes fifty feet below the surface, and is often thus accidentally smashed within its casing; again it protrudes in chalk-covered stems from a pipe-clayey deposit, scarcely distinguishable until ruthlessly broken by a chance blow from the pick; or it may tantalise the eye by appearing in long fiery seams set between flinty rocks, so that any attempt at its removal almost surely shatters the valuable gem sheets into fragments. So does Nature set a bar to the secrets of her treasure-houses.

Having pitched our tents and pieced together the boring machinery which we carried in sections for "proving" the country traversed, we made our way, under Phil's guidance, to a flat gravelly expanse directly underneath the ridge containing the specimens, and there we commenced to dig. No matter how long a man may have followed the fortune-seeker's vocation, he never can become entirely indifferent while watching the

progress of a testing bore or shaft. There is an indefinable fascination in the mere thought of perhaps bringing to light by some lucky chance wealth beyond his wildest dreams. I do not know that any of my party became extravagantly excited on this occasion, but I am certain we each kept our eyes fixed on the samples of sand raised with keenest interest, as if half expecting to see among it gems rich and rare. But no such delightful vision greeted us. Sand of reddish brown colour came up first; next came sand of whitish appearance; then again a dioritic sandy gravel oozed from the narrow tube. Billabong Dave and Emu Bill worked the diamond point jumper meanwhile with a will, and as the edged tool reached the lower levels, and became more difficult to manipulate, Mac and Ted went to their assistance, and hauled at the thudding rods with fierce energy.

"Thirty feet," murmured Phil, without raising his eyes, as the sixth length of steel was added to those already sunk from sight: "we should be close on bottom now."

Another period of waiting, and slowly the outpouring sand changed from brown to red, then from red to blue. "Bottom!" announced Phil, picking up a handful of the last prospect, and examining it closely. He passed it on to me almost immediately. "Got it," he said, smilingly—"got it, first try! That should wipe out our first misfortune, I think."

With a simultaneous howl of delight the four who had been looking at the dull sodden gravel now exuding so slowly from the bore mouth with something like dismay on their features, dropped the haulage ropes and clustered round me. But as yet I could see nothing to warrant any special exuberance; indeed, I could see nothing but a damp deposit of flaky clay, which, had I been mining for gold, I should have discarded at once as utterly barren.

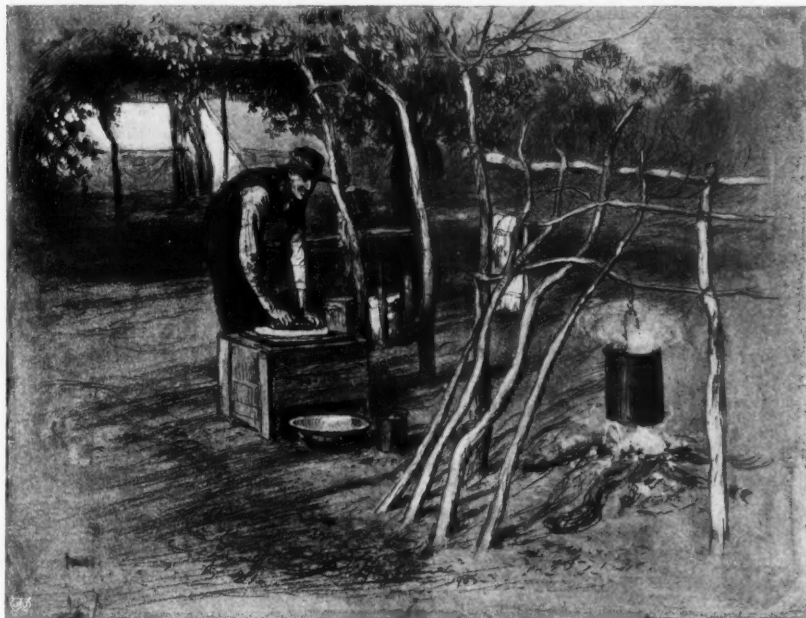
Phil noticed my dubious gaze, and he laughed. "Why, it's all been pounded into powder," he explained; "but you can tell it at once, nevertheless, if you look at it in the sun glare. But hold hard; get some water, Bill, and you'll see what we've got."

Bill hastened for the water-bag lying near, and our geologist gravely tilted a few drops over the powder in my hand. The result was astonishing. Gleams of

radiance flashed from innumerable points in the little heap, making the whole literally ablaze with colour. Mac broke an impressive silence. "Good old geologist!" said he. Long Ted was more emphatic. "I shouts for geologist next time we is in Sydney," he grunted. Then we returned to camp to consider our next plan of action.

Having received such practical encouragement while yet we were scarcely within the borders of the region we had

excavation went on apace. Bottom was soon reached, and then it was plainly evident that we *had* "struck" it. The opal-bearing clay fairly scintillated in the candle-light, and here and there protruding pieces of the gem stood out in splendid profusion. To "drive" along this seam was the next course, and as only one man could find room in the narrow tunnel made necessary for efficient work, Billabong Dave was left in sole charge of operations, while the others



Long Ted manufacturing the "deadly damper."

set out to exploit, it required little further inducement to make me decide on remaining in the vicinity until we had time to gauge the approximate extent and value of our location. Our course lay west; but we had many months before us, and it was as well to execute our work thoroughly as we went along. For the next several days, therefore, I set my willing quartet digging a shaft over the line of the bore in the usual manner. A shaft for opal prospecting, as for gold, is sunk in the form of an oblong pit, measuring 5 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 6 in., or just large enough to allow a man to descend, and give him ample room in which to swing his pick. And so the work of

busied themselves sinking further shafts in close proximity.

The days now began to pass pleasantly enough, much more pleasantly than I had ever imagined. It was here that we experienced the value of the recent rains: we could give our attention wholly to gem mining without being oppressed by the constant fear and danger of running short of water.

Kangaroos and emus were very numerous in the district, and in consequence we had no lack of sport when the fascination of the opal failed. On one occasion a herd of emus penetrated right into our camp, and showed no inclination to leave us until two of their number had fallen

victims to Mac's trusty blunderbuss. Long Ted and I had many exciting chases during these days: that worthy, being cook, contrived to have a great deal of time at his disposal, and replenished the larder regularly with a medley collection of parrots, pelicans, emus, kangaroos, and other sundries. One day, however, a chase of an entirely different nature took place, in which the whole camp was concerned. It happened in this way. Emu Bill had gone off in the morning to round up the horses, a duty he usually performed every second day; but he had no sooner entered the outlying bush than heavy clouds began to gather over the horizon, and before an hour had passed the sun was obscured in vapoury mists. Everything portended a storm, and to make matters worse, the horses must have gone farther off than usual, for their bells were not within hearing distance.

"It's a good thing Bill is a thorough bushman," remarked Phil, when after four hours' absence, despite our anxious watching and listening, no signs of the wanderer were forthcoming.

And now long peals of thunder rent the air, and great sultry raindrops began to spatter down upon us.

"Poor old Emu is bushed, for a dead cert.," spoke Long Ted, with conviction.

"He ain't no use without the sun," supplemented Billabong Dave, with equal assurance.

"In that case, boys," I said, "we'd better get a move on, and look for him. We may pick up his tracks somewhere around in the scrub."

I felt somewhat loath to doubt Emu Bill's skill in bushcraft; yet the afternoon was well advanced, and night would effectually prevent any likelihood of our finding him. Leaving Mac in camp, with instructions to discharge his gun at regular intervals as a guide to us while pursuing our quest, Dave, Ted and I set out in different directions; and Phil made the best of his time by keeping up a constant clatter on a spare horse-bell, which certainly made a noisy enough signalling apparatus, though only for a moderately short distance. Bill had been gone full five hours before we started, and I thought that possibly he might have made a wider detour than usual; but in any case it was a dangerous day for even a well-trying bushman to be abroad, and despite myself I felt vaguely uneasy about his welfare.

The rain was falling in a steady shower before I got a mile from camp, and the overcast heavens gave promise of a deluge before night. Eagerly I sped onwards. Back in the distance the boom of Mac's gun was becoming fainter and fainter, and the shrill tattoo of Phil's warning gong had softened to a note that might well have been mistaken for the flute-like call of the delusive bell-bird. I was just on the point of turning back, when the sudden clang of a bell on my left made me veer off promptly towards the origin of the sound, and in five minutes more I had found the horses which had caused all the trouble. They were standing together under the spreading shade of a giant eucalyptus tree, and I observed hurriedly that one of them was bridled, while the others were secured by rude rope halters—clearly Bill's handiwork. But where was Bill? I moved round towards the trunk of the central tree, to pick up the bridle reins, and lo! there lay Emu Bill, fast asleep, his body sheltered from the dripping rain by a huge piece of bark which he had evidently stripped from the tree for that purpose. I awoke him from his slumbers somewhat rudely, I fear. I could already hear Dave and Ted crashing through the brushwood in our direction, impelled by the chance stroke of the bell which had first attracted me.

Bill stretched himself leisurely and yawned. "Just meant to have a nap until the rain went off," he said, apologetically; "but 'pears I has been snoozin' some time—"

"Bill!" howled Ted's voice from the timber, "we reckoned ye was bushed, Bill!"

A look of profound disgust passed over the weary one's features, as he watched his two comrades approach. "Bushed!" he echoed—"me bushed! . . ." Words failed him, and he glared at the newcomers wrathfully.

"It was because of the clouds we came, Bill," I hastened to explain. "We knew you couldn't see the sun to-day, and anyhow you might have turned into a second Rip Van Winkle if we had not arrived."

But he would not be appeased. "Bushed!" he muttered again; then he turned to the unfortunate Ted. "Why, darn ye, ye long-legged heathen," he stormed, "does ye think I needs the old sun to steer by? So long as I can see a bit o' mulga I reckons I'm all right."

Then I knew wherein lay Emu Bill's

strength as a bushman, for a *delicate moss grows on the south side of every mulga stump or tree.*

Thus ended our bush chase, and it bids fair to be a subject of never-ending irritation to the gallant Bill, who has volunteered in his wrath to navigate the party across Central Australia "without sextant, nor compass, nor nuthin' neither."

When we had been just three weeks in camp, and were considering the advisability of getting under way once more, an event happened which helped to precipitate our departure. It was late in the afternoon, and Phil and I were down in a new drive made by Bill, examining the "show" appearing, and

"Make for the surface!" bellowed Bill: "the durned roof's caving in!"

But the roof was doing nothing of the sort; being of a hard whinstone formation, it was proof against anything short of an earthquake.

"It sounded like a buggy driving over the shafts," hazarded Phil.

Another instant put that matter beyond doubt.

"Get yer horses clear o' them shafts, ye mulga-whiskered baboon!" yelled a well-known voice on top; and Mac proceeded to harangue some one in eloquence unmistakable.

I clambered to the surface without delay, Phil following at my heels; and



Bore water near Glendilla Station.

endeavouring to fix the trend of the matrix leader. It was the last of a series of shafts we had sunk for the purpose of proving the extent of the gem area we had so happily located; and as my work lay not so much in mining the gems as in finding their position for future operations, I thought my duties had been performed most satisfactorily.

"We'll move out in a few days," I was saying to Phil. "It is by no means likely that any one will find their way out here if the drought clutches on to the country again."

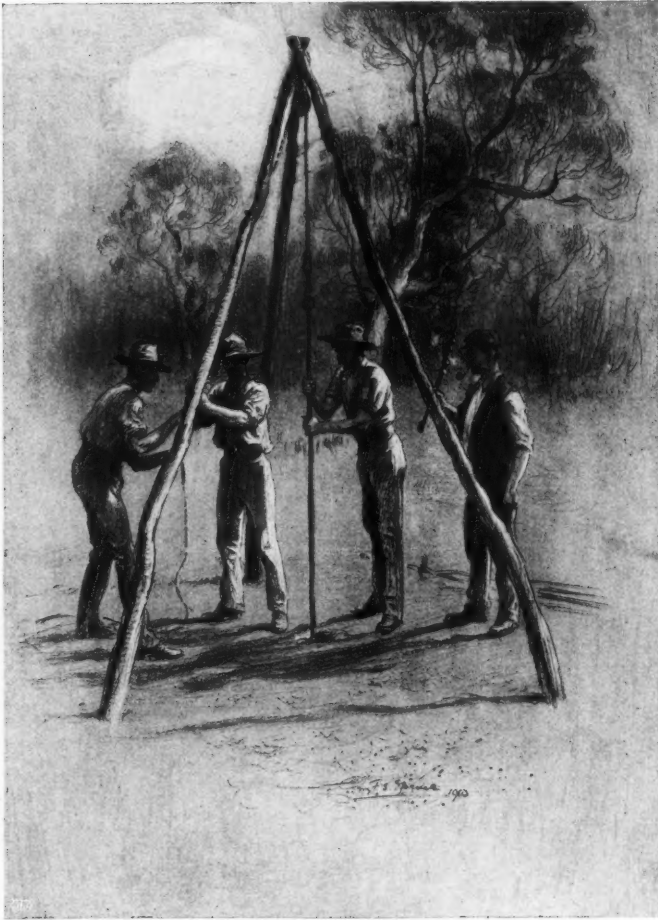
"I should think not," he answered. "But hillo!—what's that?"

A long low rumble sounded distinctly overhead.

there I saw a gaunt-visaged man calmly alighting from a ramshackle buff-board buggy, as if he had been in the habit of driving up to our camp every day. Two perspiring horses stood in the traces of his conveyance, their hoofs perilously close to the gaping shaft mouths. My astonishment was great, and my annoyance was more so.

Meanwhile our unwelcome visitor said never a word, but with a theatrical flourish handed me a card of considerable size, whereon I read the inscription: "Benjamin A. Green, Travelling Correspondent."

"You are certainly an enterprising sort of individual," I said, with ill-concealed vexation. "May I ask which journals you represent?"



Sinking a "bore."

He reeled off a lengthy list of newspapers, home, foreign, and colonial, in which he included some notable London organs which I fear to mention. Before I had recovered from the shock, he started off again with a further list. "I want to know what you are doing out here," he climaxed pleasantly. Indeed, in my capacity as correspondent to the great Australian Press I must ask you to hide nothing from me."

His aggressive manner added to my annoyance, and, uncertain what best to do with such an exalted personage, I turned to Long Ted, who with his comrades was standing in speechless

amazement gazing at the strange figure. "Take care of him, Ted," I said; "give him a good supper and show him the back trail."

Our visitor seemed by no means pleased. "I thought you would be glad to see me," he protested, losing some of his bumptiousness. "I've been following your tracks all week. I want to camp with you for a bit and see what you are doing."

From his manner and frequent wild statements I soon realised that Mr. Benjamin A. Green had fallen victim

to the hallucinations of the bush. It is a disease which is rather prevalent among dwellers in the back country of Australia, but it usually takes the form of extreme absent-mindedness. Our visitor noticed how I regarded him, and he startled me by saying suddenly: "Of course I am a bit ratty—mad, you know; but it's the country's fault, not mine. You would be the same if you remained in Queensland for any time."

It was clear that we had started operations too early on our journey. Owing to the unusual rains, our tracks could be followed to this point with comparative ease. There was no need to reason with

the erratic journalist ; he was deaf to all argument. He demanded to know *everything*—without reserve ; and yet I do not believe he could have written down a correct sentence in the English language had he endeavoured ever so hard. However, I tried the policy of pacification, lest we should indeed be entertaining some stray member of the Australian Parliaments. It is so difficult to know when one does meet a man of note in Australia.

"Do you think you know where you are?" I hazarded tentatively, while we were having tea.

"In old Australia," he returned promptly, "and that's near enough for me."

As a matter of fact he was in *new* Australia ; but I soon gathered that he had not the remotest idea whether he was north, west or south of the nearest form of civilisation.

That night he regaled us with stories of his experiences in a manner that proclaimed him anything but a student of veracity ; and so interested did he become in his own creations that the object of his visit seemed entirely forgotten. Noticing this, I saw where my opportunity lay of getting rid of his presence without unnecessarily wounding his feelings. When morning arrived, by a hurried prearrangement, Mr. Green found himself a much sought-after personage. "An' what did ye do wi' the Bunyip after ye got it?" asked Mac during breakfast. "An' I reckons I is a bit anxious to know where them chunks o' gold ye were telling us about are," chimed in Emu Bill. "As for the fishes that walked round your camp that night," murmured Phil, reminiscently, "I know that is a straight yarn, for I have seen the uncanny little beggars myself out farther west." And so a running fire of comment was kept up while our pack team was being loaded, —and our inquisitive friend left us that afternoon bound back for civilisation, charmed, as he said, with our company, and determined to speak well of us wherever opportunity offered. But what he really did think in his rational moments, or say to the "Great Australian Press," anent our movements, I should be most interested to know.

So far my narrative has been one of comparatively easy journeying and pleasant camping ; but now, as I write these concluding lines, I am filled with

misgivings as to the future welfare of my party. We have reached a point beyond which no rain seems to have fallen these many years. My tent looks out on a bleached and arid sand plain, dotted promiscuously with dwarfed mulga and mallee shrubs, and where water may be found in the trackless wastes between this camp and the Macdonald Ranges I have but vague conjectures. On the former expeditions in Western Australia which it was my fortune to command, the real object of our travel in each case soon became lost in our eager search for water in the form of "soaks," claypans, or native wells. Gold, though almost an irresistible incentive, loses its attraction when life itself is threatened by the grim desert containing it. So in the present instance it may be that our search for the flashing opal has already ended. I wish to prove the existence of the gem stratum right into the heart of the country, but whether we may be able to accomplish that end or not I am at the moment by no means certain. Generous rains have, in a few short months, made eastern and central Queensland a veritable pastoral paradise, but farther west apparently Nature has still withheld her precious bounty. The life of a traveller in the Australian interior is not as a rule one filled with many pleasures. Rather do vague possibilities for ever obtrude their mocking influence upon him. The stunted eucalypti afford no welcome shade ; they stand phantom-like across the horizon-bounded landscape, and the eye is wearied by their everlasting motionless presence. Even the birds of the air add to the melancholy which so insidiously makes its presence felt when he has most need of all his vital energy. The pelican stands sullenly in his path, as if to guard from intrusion its undiscovered home ; the parrots' dismal wailing rings incessantly in his ear ; the horrid carrion crow, with its hideous rasping scream, is for ever circling overhead ; and the unseen mopoke's dull monotone sounds as a calling from a shadowy world. Here at the westerly longitude of 138° have I fixed my camp, where as yet the absence of water and herbage for the horses is not felt. To-morrow Emu Bill goes back over our tracks for extra horses, after which our gem-hunting expedition will next crop up somewhere along the Overland Telegraph Line in Central Australia.

THE LADY AND THE PROPERTY.

BY MARIE VAN VORST.

TO the border of Crendleton Park, where the turf, velvet as a rose, sank inches deep, the rugged fields of Harwarrenden came fearlessly in somewhat touching simplicity, and against the cold stone wall of separation bewitching seas of wild thyme, daisies and common grasses dashed their gentle tide.

Lord Crendleton looked over the acres of meadowland whose luxuriance bespoke the indifference or the ruin of the owners. Harwarrenden consists of farms, park and castle: grey towers just seen through the thick oaks' jealous bower of green. It seemed as though the immemorial trees loved the very stone and sought to hide its decay from carping eyes. They were on it now. The gentleman who, with hands on the top of his gold-headed cane, viewed the landscape, possessed the keenest eyes in the county. He wanted Harwarrenden dreadfully: his agents had more than once bowed to the direction, "When you can purchase the place for a song, do so." But the owners were singularly unmusical or obstinate; neither agents nor his lordship had been invited to sing for Harwarrenden.

On this day, as he stood musingly scanning the country, it was to him peopled by those he had known years ago. The hard expression of his face softened as he seemed to watch a gay, debonair band of children maying in the wasting fields. High above the well-cut turf rose a maypole with fluttering ribbons, and around it sturdy legs, bright frocks and tossing hair merrily flashed before his eyes, blending with the streamers in the breeze. The Harwarrenden brood: too pretty a flock to be scattered by the wind of death! But only one remained, and her he had not seen for years. Of the playmates, as Crendleton looked, were two boys whose subsequent lives he could intimately follow,—Gregory to South Africa and his grave; Wilfred, his sole son and heir, who now waited an interview with his father.

"Wilfred!"

By the time the old nobleman had painfully reseated himself the young man appeared from the tower room, where he had been smoking.

"If you can find anything sufficiently long in which to dispose yourself—do so."

Wilfred chose a lounge.

"You persist in refusal to invest with me in Homburg?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders. "I am afraid I do persist."

"You're a fool," said his father rudely. "If Greg had lived! . . . He was a true sportsman to his finger-tips. But you are . . .! Well, *what?* An idler, dreamer. Gad, if there aren't times when I'd not be surprised if you were a *poet!*"

Wilfred stroked his blond moustache and confessed, "I'm nothing, sir."

"Worse yet. If our race and blood had earlier learned the value of money there'd be fewer members of a decayed nobility who pay their debts from the pockets of the hog-raising millionaires. Now, will you share in this enterprise of mine at Homburg or not?"

Wilfred said: "I gamble myself when I feel inclined, father, as you have reason to know! But I won't own a gambling hell—not if it doubled our fortune."

His father said, after a few moments: "Folly! I have purposed to set you up for yourself this year. Here's your choice: joint ownership with me in this at Homburg, or thirty thousand pounds cash and not one farthing more till I die."

"And the rest of your capital—?"

"Will be in this enterprise."

Without hesitating Wilfred said, "Then I will take thirty thousand pounds."

And, as though pounds fell into existence at a touch, Lord Crendleton took a little cheque-book from his pocket, drew the order on his banker and handed it over to his son.

"There!" His eyes were not unkind. "Make ducks and drakes of it when you like—there's no more to follow. I am good for forty years!"

So vivid had been the pictures of childhood to Lord Crendleton, that he had once or twice during the interview thought Wilfred too tall for his age. His vision was still full of little figures; and when, on his son's exit, a visitor was announced, the old gentleman, looking up to see how

she bore her name, found her, as well, tall for her age!

Mary Harwarrenden had made the pink frock she wore. She had made her pink bonnet. She carried a trifling sunshade which she had not made—and the rest of the picture she presented had been done with skill and bounty.

Crendleton was doubled up on himself, as it were, in his chair. He struggled to rise.

"Pray don't, Lord Crendleton! . . . Oh, let me help you!"

He had risen too abruptly, for he staggered; parched and withered, he threatened to crack like a dry leaf. He said: "Sit down. There—there—I haven't seen you for . . . (and he obliged himself to face the date) since Gregory went to Africa. You've grown—shot up—shot up!"

The young lady did not notice the ridiculous idea. She had come on an absorbing errand, and without diplomacy dashed to the heart of her subject.

"Lord Crendleton, I think you want to purchase Harwarrenden?"

Crendleton jumped as if his trembling wires were struck all at once.

"God bless my soul—no! Whatever gave you that idea?"

Her blooming face faded a little.

"Ah, sir" (she had a pretty, timid way of saying it in her rich Irish voice)—"you *don't*, then! I thought—I had heard . . ."

"If we bought all we are credited with buying, we'd be spendthrifts, and if we economised as we're reported to do, we'd be misers. Strike a medium, Miss Harwarrenden!"

"Well, then,"—she spoke slowly, as if it might help her,—"I was so foolish as to dream that because Harwarrenden lay close to Crendleton, and because it is such a beautiful old place—"

("A ruin!")

"That you would consider a purchase—at a sacrifice."

He picked up as much of himself as he could, and "Let's have a look at it," he said briskly; at which she brightened considerably. She was completely in his power, with the property in her hands: ungloved, but soft as snow, they lay folded together on her lap like doves at rest. "Let's look at it—it's an easy thing to find a purchaser, of course. Not a very illuminating look—this!"

"No, Lord Crendleton, very hard; impossible, I might say: there's no shooting—no sport, little woodland, indifferent turf; it's in bad repair—land and castle."

"Bless my soul!" he cut in—"you don't thus itemise your land and chattels to your purchaser?"

"Why not?" she asked, sighing. "They're sure to find it out. I think it's not news to you."

"No, alack!" he said plaintively: "I watch it decay daily from my window."

A vision before her blue eyes of years of anxious struggle against creeping poverty; of heavy bills long unpaid: above all, the delicate fading life of her mother, whom she adored and ached to relieve—things which had matured her beauty and strengthened and saddened her character—made her desperate.

"I came across the park with springing hope," she said. "I dare not tell you with what emotion! I recalled your friendship with my father, our childhood when my sister and I played here with your sons." (He followed her eyes around the room, as though they might catch a glimpse of a shadowy frock, a sunny little head.) "I fancied the proximity of the properties might tempt you—that the ruin of Harwarrenden might be mended by the richness of Crendleton."

As though his nature dreaded sentiment, lest a gentle touch should force open some unlocked door and reveal latent weakness, he shook his head at her, and said brusquely: "There, that's enough! I wish you hadn't come, Mary. It's difficult to do business with a woman. I never allow sentiment to touch my affairs. I can't even discuss them freely with you."

She cried, "Ah, yes, you can! Forget that I am anything but the proprietor of the neighbouring land."

"It's very hard to do so," he complained. "I am sure I don't want to buy Harwarrenden. I don't want to buy, but if it is a real bargain I will consider it."

At her evident joy he interpolated: "By bargain I mean a small sum which in my present straitened finances I shall not miss."

Her face showed her surprise and her disgust. His rent rolls, his dividends were not secrets. He went on:—

"Women have exalted ideas of their possessions. I should not have gone to Eve, but to Adam, for a valuation of

Eden, you know." He chuckled. "I warrant you he would have sold it cheap the day after the fall. Now, what do you consider your land worth?"

Her voice was cold; her dislike under the words froze them. "It has been held of late at thirty thousand pounds."

Lord Crendleton gave a "Hello!" and actually rocked with mirth. "Thirty thousand pounds,—my dear Mary! I told you it was impossible!"

"It is not impossible," she said quietly. "That is its value—our debts are pressing, our interests large . . ."

"My dear Miss Harwarrenden, these reasons do not enter into the question."

She flushed under his cruel rudeness; the stings of misfortune made her tingle, but she must bear them. "They are nevertheless the excuse for my presence," she said with dignity.

"You make me feel a brute—and every man hates that," he said testily.

"I should not have come, Lord Crendleton."

"You frighten me with your price."

"It is simply a valuation."

"You *have* a price, then?" he said eagerly.

"No."

"In that case I would not dare make you an offer."

"Ah, please!" she said warmly. "Lord Crendleton, do! That is, if you have any interest in the land!"

Putting both hands on his stick, he peered over it at her—like an old wizard, transfixing, hypnotising beauty. "You will run from the room when you hear. Every penny and farthing I will give for it is three thousand pounds."

She did not run—her feet instead clove to the floor.

Lord Crendleton nodded, as though to impress the enormity of his avarice, and repeated it to her. "Three thousand pounds."

"Three thousand pounds! What . . ." she softly murmured, and the ice in her voice melted threateningly, "whatever in Heaven's name shall we do?"

"*That*," said her host, "you must not expect *me* to answer."

(It would pay their debts—no more.)

"Why, it will leave us penniless!"

"*That*," he repeated, "is not my affair!"

She started to herself—struck by his repeated cruelties.

"You are right, Lord Crendleton. I did not, I do not appeal to you."

He seemed to exult in her tremulous, startled face. Her hands were at her heart; for a moment they fell.

"Will you give me until to-morrow noon to reflect?"

"Yes, yes, assuredly: reflect! A woman's reflections, my dear"—he smiled shrewdly—"are not up to her instincts; and remember, a bird in the hand . . ."

This bird in the hand was a viper; it seemed to sting her; she felt faint, and hurried to take leave and escape home.

At the terrace foot (she fairly flew past it) she was stopped.

"Mary! I haven't seen you for two years, and you fly so like a bird from Crendleton!—Not a welcome for me? Let me walk home with you!"

Her loathing of all that bore his name was so great that for a moment it included Wilfred too. "No, no, I'm best alone, please."

But he wouldn't believe her, and kept up with his long stride by her hurrying steps. She was absorbed,—seemed utterly to forget him,—and they walked in silence, traversing the park to its gateway. As she passed through to Harwarrenden he said, "Mary, I am going away again—a long journey." He put his hand out to her, and hers scarcely touched it.

"Again? Why, you're just home!"

"Going to seek my fortune this time."

"A rolling stone . . . Wilfred!"

He smiled: "Oh, as for moss, who wants it?" He had the name of good-for-naught, idler, spendthrift, gambler,—there was much abroad about him that did him harm.

"When I've found the fortune, may I at least let you peep into the sacks of gold, Mary?"

The good-humour of his face—the kindliness of it—tempered her bad mood: she smiled, and without direct answer to his question: "Good luck, Wilfred! but"—a gesture, light as wind, touched his arm—"don't care for money so! It's a curse. Fortune is not worth a man's soul. . . ." She gave a glance at Crendleton—then over her shoulder to Harwarrenden. "Plenty and ruin, Wilfred, side by side, and as things are, believe me, I'd rather live amongst the ruins!" She supposed herself enigmatical, and, lest he should question, she turned, and hurrying away



"Don't spring so—I am not a ghost yet!" (see p. 56).

From a drawing by Cyrus Cuneo.

left him standing to his knees in the high grass, watching her go swiftly through it, a pink cloud across an emerald heaven.

He said half-aloud, in answer to her last remark: "As things are? Well, so should I rather live amongst the ruins, Mary!"

Then he went back to Crendleton and packed his things, and in an hour's time was *en route* for London.

The faded figure at the fireside—for even on a June day Lady Harwarrenden shivered—knew nothing of her daughter's errand; and when Mary entered now for tea, and set-to preparing the table, her mother had no disappointment to meet.

"Where have you been, my darling?"

"To Crendleton. I saw Wilfred."

Lady Harwarrenden glanced over at her daughter. "He's back, then?"

"And away again. I bade him good-day and good-bye at once."

"He loves you, Mary."

The girl shook her dark head. "No," she said, "he is a Crendleton: he loves money."

At the fatal word the lady clasped her hands. "I hate to annoy you, dearest, but what is to be done! Our payments are so long overdue. . ."

Mary made the tea, and when her mother had finished her cup, and the girl, herself fasting, watched until the warm beverage and the delicious toast had disappeared, she said: "This is what we will do, mother. To-morrow I shall sell Harwarrenden to Lord Crendleton for three thousand pounds. . ."

The owner of the castle gave a cry: "Sell Harwarrenden! *for a song!* Mary—Mary, you are mad!" She threw out her hands, jewelless, despoiled of her dower long ago. "Sell my home, where my husband died and all my little children were born—sell it—for a song—a *song?*" (Ah, Lord Crendleton, your price seems to have been actually recognised at last!)

"It will pay our debts," said the daughter, "and leave us honourably free. We will go to London. I am strong: I will work for you."

Her gentle arms were about the weeping figure, and her own tears fell on the grey bended head.

At noon the next day the nobleman waited with more impatience than he

cared to admit for the reappearance of his handsome neighbour. The ripened property seemed ready to fall into his hands; but, instead, a note did so, in a thick white envelope with the Harwarrenden arms and device: "*Là où je m'attache je meurs*" (I die where I cling).

Not very reassuring for Lord Crendleton!

"Dear Lord Crendleton,—I thank you for your patience. I shall not have to urge the property on you. It appears there is a possible purchaser. He is coming from London; I shall see him to-day and close. . ."

It required time to get the old lord's stiff body on the move; time to get the brougham and horses to the door. It was longer from castle to castle by the high road than 'cross fields by several miles; and when he finally entered Harwarrenden a fly with a businesslike-looking individual was driving out at the gate.

"Stop!"

The driver so hailed drew up short, and the person, no less than Lord Crendleton's own man of affairs, came up to the carriage. "Good Gad, Foxstruthers, what are you here for?"

"A matter of purchase, my lord."

"You've bought Harwarrenden?"

"A client has."

"Who?"

The man closed his lips meaningly and shrugged: "Not at liberty to say."

"Not bought? you mean you have made an offer? Come, I'll double it. It's a ruse, but I am caught."

"I'm sorry, but the contracts are signed, sealed and delivered."

"*Delivered*—by what agency? Then the owner is . . .?"

"Well," said Foxstruthers, "it's an extraordinary purchaser."

"What have you paid?"

"Thirty thousand pounds."

Crendleton fell back on the carriage seat. "The deuce!" he gasped. "*What* a fool! Why, it's not worth the tenth."

"It's very extraordinary. My client is an eccentric benefactor, so it seems,—for he has made over the entire property to Miss Mary Harwarrenden for her life and to her heirs."

"You look plucked! In honour of what saint is this visit to Crendleton?"

Lord Crendleton had not seen his son

for six months, and no observer could have detected the father's delight in the visit. He hid it, as he hid much else. His limbs trembled a little more—his eyes filmed more often, but Wilfred put it down to age and disease. The young man had lounged over to the window, that which gave toward Harwarrenden. He drew the red curtain back and stepped into the deep alcove. A delicate winter mist held Ireland under a mysterious veil; through it, the holly burned on the hedges.

"If I'm here in a saint's honour, it's Saint Nicholas, I expect. It's Christmas, you know."

"I have not," said Lord Crendleton, "been permitted to forget it. But you look plucked, Wilfred. Why, pray? And you've a pretty income, even in the three per cents: how are you coming along—or out? Or have you come *through* your thirty thousand pounds?"

"It's at interest," said Wilfred shortly.

"At what dividends?"

"As yet it has not actually paid any."

"It's not all in one venture?"

"Yes, sir."

"Stupid, proverbially! What if I tell you I'm like to double my capital?" He rubbed his hands. "Homburg's a golden goose—an egg an hour! You're not tempted?"

"No."

Crendleton changed the subject. "You appear to be looking at Harwarrenden. What is its Christmas effect?"

"Cheerful," replied Wilfred, with decided life. "It has a kept look now, and the lawns are green still, and there's a hedge of holly like a line of fire against the lower wall."

"Indeed!" drawled his father. "I'm afraid you *are* a poet. You read like a Christmas card."

Wilfred went on, as if to himself: "They've thinned the oaks too; one sees the tower, and there seems to be a light in the west room; it shines like a Christmas star."

To this there was no mocking response. Instead, when the old voice spoke again it was gentler than Wilfred had ever heard it. "Before Greg went to that cursed war he had a fancy to change his room. He took the blue room; it looks, do you recall, Harwarrendenward. It's in direct line to the tower,—that light you see is in Mary's room, I suppose you know?"

Wilfred left his post and came out into the study.

"... Greg loved her, and he would have married her if she had not been such a fool..."

"As to what?" reminded Wilfred, for his father mused.

At the words Crendleton started; his neck fairly snapped with his jerk of head. "As to refuse him."

"I did not know what you tell me," Wilfred said. "I thought she mourned my brother still. Are you sure of what you say, sir?"

Crendleton glanced up at his son. "I'm no poet, and if I have imagination I do not weave fables about my dead son. You've no tact, Wilfred. He asked her the night he left Ireland. I've always chosen to feel that her refusal cost his life. He was desperate; he rushed into fire. I have never forgiven her."

Wilfred paced to and fro in the twilight. His father stealthily studied him. There was a striking likeness to his brother about him to-night. His face was grave and pale.

"What shall you do until your clever investment pays, Wilfred?"

Wilfred stopped in his walk. "I have been thinking of going to America."

His father's reply was not so quick as usual. "Where?" he said. "To do what, may I ask?"

"To work—to try to make a living."

Crendleton's stick traced before him a pattern on the rug—continents possibly, or a pathless ocean's waving line, or surveying a property.

He looked suddenly up. "Crendleton is your home, my boy. The investment is still open to you. Other funds I have none."

"Thank you, father."

"You won't?"

"No. I think-not."

"You don't like shady money transactions?" questioned the peer. "What do you think of the deed of Harwarrenden to Mary? She's too good, I daresay—too rustic, at all events, to see the conventional view. Now, it's extraordinary for a man to dare thus to dower a woman! *What* is she to him? He to her?"

If Wilfred had lacked life, his enemy could not now so reproach him, for he flew to fire. "By heavens, sir! You mean—you *dare* . . .?"

Lord Crendleton shook his head a little in the air :

"There—there—cool down, sir. If you are planning to go to the New World to recoup some folly you have lately indulged in and to return and marry Mary Harwarrenden, I warn you, sir, that unless the woman makes over Harwarrenden stone for stone, mile for mile, to the man who has so strangely dowered her, you and she may beg your bread till I die. You inherit—but until I die you shall not see my face."

Mary Harwarrenden—a bard of her emerald isle would have found it difficult to set her name to music, however sweetly she would have sung it to her harp—sat before the graceful instrument, her hands on it and her head forward on them. Had the room been so light as to permit the observation, you would have seen traces of tears on her face, but only her outline and the figure of the harp were distinguishable in the cold shadows of the twilight.

She did not hear, at first, a shuffling step that came haltingly over the skins on the floor, but the tap of a stick caught her ear and she lifted her head.

"Lord Crendleton !"

"Yes; don't spring so,—I am not a ghost yet. Please sit quiet, as you were. I have a chair. Women do not spring up for men, even for old ones: it makes one feel decrepit. No candles, nor tea—thanks. What is there so odd in the fact of a neighbourly visit, that you look as though I were a ghost?"

"Nothing, Lord Crendleton. I did not mean to show fright."

"You thought it was a younger Crendleton? I am a disappointment? We do not *always* come back after our *congés*, Miss Harwarrenden! I passed Wilfred as I came: he was leaving Harwarrenden. He did not see me, however. You were singing? Sing me something."

His visit was, as he saw, an utter surprise. Her astonishment delighted him.

"I can't sing to-night—you must excuse me. Another time."

He accepted then: "Another time—remember! When I saw you last you were not so secure in Harwarrenden." He tried to peer through the twilight at her lovely cold face. "You came most suddenly into the inheritance—it must have surprised you?"

As she said nothing, he continued: "Your bargain was better than the one I offered you. Tell me," he blurted, with no attempt at courtesy, "did it never occur to you to try and discover its donor?"

He fascinated her, and, instead of taking umbrage, she replied, "It was hopeless to ask—the person is too well concealed."

Here, seeing her good faith, even if he had doubted it, he asked abruptly, "Why is my son leaving Ireland?"

"Why do you ask me this? Why do you question me like this, Lord Crendleton? Once—not six months ago—you spoke cruelly to me. I still shrink at the memory. Why are you here now?"

"To know why my son is leaving home and me to tramp like an outcast to the New World. He is my only son. I have him only in the world. He is leaving Ireland to-morrow. Why?"

"I do not know, sir!"

"You have refused to marry him?"

She held her harp with both hands, as though it should steady her. "Oh, what gives you such right to question? . . ."

"You refused his brother." The nobleman's voice was pitiless. "You broke his heart—he rushed to his death from it. That was Christmas just four years ago—"

Here he was interrupted by the girl's voice, tremulous with anger. She had risen. She interrupted him with an exclamatory "Oh! Harwarrenden owes you courtesy, but I must ask you to let me leave you. I will send my mother. . ."

He caught her fluttering dress as she passed. "*You shall not rob me of another son, madam.*"

The cold, sharp tone of the old man was, even in her angry ears, edged with pain.

She flashed her blue eyes upon him as he forcibly detained her. "I have never robbed you of Wilfred: he has never asked me to marry him."

Now Crendleton rose as well, unsteadily and so shattered that involuntarily she extended her white hand. He caught it.

"I thank you. It's a strong hand—let me lean on it! I've not leaned on a woman's hand since before you were born." She could not withdraw now: he held her at his mercy. "The day on which I made my offer for Harwarrenden I gave my son the sum of thirty thousand

pounds. The same week he was too poor to pay his current bills. He is penniless." And now he let her go, as though he anticipated the force with which she would seek to withdraw.

"What are you saying? What do you mean to imply?"

He leaned over his stick, silently looking at her.

"Speak to me," she commanded. "I seem to feel—that you think—Wilfred has given me Harwarrenden."

He cackled a little dry laugh.

"I 'think' I 'seem' to *know it*, my dear Mary!"

He tottered across the floor towards the *portières* of the wide entrance-doors. His mission fulfilled, his haste was now to be gone and leave his venom—or his wisdom—to work.

Quite motionless, his hostess watched him. The *portières* opened as he parted them, admitting a little line of light from the candle-lit hall without, then dropped and left her in deeper darkness than Crendleton had found her.

Whatever likeness to the merry Christmastide the servitors could impart had decked and garlanded Crendleton. Logs lay fragrant sacrifices in the wide chimney-pieces, wreaths of holly hung in the windows, sweet and pungent odours mingled with the warm fragrance of the house.

Wilfred, his back to the fire, once more faced his father, whose pretended jaunt to the nearest town had tired him.

"To-morrow, then, at this time you will be gone?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Christmas day—a time to leave home!"

"Oh," shrugged Wilfred, "Christmas! it's only for children."

"As you are too old for its cheer, then, I shan't fill your stockings, sir!" His parent chuckled. "I recall," he said, meditating, "when your ridiculous hose hung there behind you, and Greg's too—I recall that all the little Harwarrendeners used to come for the tree. God bless my soul, what a racket! And to think there is not one of ye—not one of ye left."

Wilfred, intensely surprised at his sentiment, said: "Not one of us left? Do I count for nothing?"

Crendleton pooh-poohed. "You! Non-

sense—you are too tall, you're monstrous. I'm speaking of children."

Just here a parcel was brought for Wilfred—a long thick envelope tied with red tape. As he lifted it, wondering, from the salver, his father said: "A Christmas gift, Wilfred, no doubt."

At the breaking of seals and envelope, papers, documents, contracts fell out. He stared—flushed furiously crimson; his eyes glanced at his father, and the papers trembled in his hands.

"Father!" The voice was tense and hard.

Lord Crendleton put out his authoritative hand. "Stop! no outburst: take your time. *I told you last night that it was to be the Lady and the Property.*"

His son's eyes were riveted on the old man, and the waxen, fragile hand in its extreme paleness for a moment seemed like death itself.

"I need scarcely tell you to go to her," he continued sarcastically, "since it is what you have been doing every day since you came. But I advise you now to go at once, or she will disappear. She's a woman of spirit."

As though he too felt the extreme likelihood of a proud, instant flight, Wilfred had already started across the floor.

"A moment"—his father stayed him. "Tell her for me I will double her Christmas gift as a dower." He nodded at the packet in Wilfred's hands. "As for your moral comfort, let me tell you that Homburg is a myth, at least as far as a Crendleton is concerned! It's not a bad thing to consider just how we regard the machine whose wheels our vices oil." ("A Crendleton running a gambling hell!" he chuckled.) For an instant his eyes grew stern as they gleamed out of his pale face. "You've sown a Sahara of wild oats, but I'm not afraid of the inheritance: you've proved better than I hoped, at the crisis." He raised his hand. "Now go."

As Wilfred bent over the hand, which he clasped with warm affection, there came to them from without the sweet and plaintive sound of voices singing in the night at the castle doors.

"Hark!" nodded Lord Crendleton, "it's the Christmas waits. . . . They are, I believe, singing something about a Child."



Church steps and street, Haworth.

After a drawing by M. Greiffenhagen.

LITERARY GEOGRAPHY.

THE BRONTË COUNTRY.

BY WILLIAM SHARP.

WHAT a lot of wholly irrelative and uninteresting detail has been cobwebbed round the Brontë family and its sayings and doings: what exultant energy to prove or disprove facts or suppositions which, now at least, are of no interest proved, and obtrusively uninteresting disproved! Mrs. Gaskell began it. Her delightful biography, one of the most fascinating books of its kind in the language, is dying of slow decay, not from lack of inherent worth and interest, not because in so much disproved or modified or amplified, not even because Charlotte and Emily Brontë have largely lost their hold on those who love the things of imagination and beauty, but primarily because it is so surcharged with minor detail and irrelative particulars. The effect upon the reader of to-day is a surprised distaste, and at last a more or less frank boredom. It is recorded that an American visitor to Haworth, on being

asked if he had read Mrs. Gaskell's *Life*, replied, "Yes, sir, I have. I may say, *of course* I have," . . . adding oracularly, "She is a Hebrew prophet." One cannot be certain as to the true inwardness of this dark saying. I take it, however, that the speaker meant that Mrs. Gaskell ranked with Plutarch, Boswell, and Lockhart: great biographers to be read once, and thereafter to be shelved to the cold eminence of the often enthusiastically alluded to but seldom disturbed "Classics." In this sense possibly Mrs. Gaskell is not yet a Hebrew prophet. I believe that the "Life" in the delightful "Haworth Edition," edited by Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mr. Clement Shorter, was "widely appreciated," as the phrase runs. But, after all, these library editions do not tap the interest of the vast mass of the reading world: they are the hothouse peaches for the few, not the fruiterer's ordinary produce for the many. One well-known

retailer of second-hand books told me the other day, in answer to my query, that he doubted if any Brontë books sold at all well except *Jane Eyre*, and that while he could always depend on a soon or late sale of a copy or two of Mrs. Gaskell's *Life*, a dozen copies would be a drug in his market.

And if too much of the superfluous has been extravagantly lavished about every petty detail not only of the Brontë home-circle but of every one connected with any and every member of the family, how much more has been written about Haworth, "that shrine of genius set in beauty among the eternal hills and lonely solitudes"! . . . a dreary village, with a steep street ascending a dull slope, with little of a "shrine" left, set in ungainly bleakness, with mill-studded uplands criss-crossed with roads, and not a hill proper, eternal or otherwise, within sight.

The real Brontë country is to be sought in two places: the West Riding of Yorkshire, in those windy uplands and wide reaches of sombre moor which lie away from Haworth, away from the highways where excursion-drag and motor-car corrupt: and . . . in the Brontë books.

A friend, who has never been north of the great shoulder of Sir William in Upper Derbyshire, and who read this summer for the first time, at a remote moorland farm, *Wuthering Heights* and *Shirley*, told me that he knew the Brontë country as thoroughly as any one not a native—"and a native in love with it, at that"—could do. For, he added, "a north-country moorland-track is the same wherever the whaup calls, the kestrel hovers and the heather-bee hums, and it

matters little whether 'tis in Peakland, or the West Riding, or where Carlyle first drew breath, or up by the Eildons or beyond Ochil." And, to no small extent, that is true, I think. Certainly one can understand *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* and *Wuthering Heights* without even a glimpse of Haworth Parsonage or Cowan Bridge School or any other of the much-visited buildings or sites or localities: certainly, for some at least, these books will seem far more near and intimate when dissociated from these and all the paraphernalia of tradition, when read or pondered with only the wide dun or purple moorlands around, with cloud and wind, the lapwing, the floating kestrel and the wild bee for company.

Neither familiarity nor love blunted Charlotte Brontë's own perspicacity in this respect, where, if allowable to any, surely some exaggeration might be pardoned in her. She herself wrote of this home-tract of Haworth, "Mills and scattered cottages chase romance from these valleys; it is only higher

up, deep in among the ridges of the moors, that Imagination can find rest for the sole of her foot, and even if she finds it there, she must be a solitude-loving raven—no gentle dove."

Nevertheless, Haworth is still the goal of a number of wayfaring enthusiasts, drawn thither by a genuine love of or keen interest in the Brontë novels and their authors. Some quarter of a century ago, Sir Wemyss Reid, in his most sympathetic monograph on Charlotte Brontë,* wrote as follows:

No other land furnished so many eager and enthusiastic visitors to the Brontë



Charlotte Brontë.

From an engraving after the portrait by George Richmond, R.A.

* It is from this volume, published by Messrs. Macmillan, that some of our illustrations are taken.

shrine as the United States, and the number of Americans who found their way to Haworth during the ten years immediately following the death of the author of *Jane Eyre* would, if properly recorded, astonish the world. The bleak and lonely house by the side of the moors, with its dismal little garden stretching down to the churchyard, where the village dead of many a generation rest, and its dreary outlook upon the old tower rising from its bank of nettles, the squalid houses of the hamlet, and the bare moorlands beyond, received almost as many visitors from the other side of the Atlantic during those years as Abbotsford or Stratford-on-Avon.

The same could not be written to-day.

in better roads and accommodation for bicyclists, or in the enhancement of public interest through the many Brontë essays, reminiscences, and other writings which have appeared of late, or in all three equally, multiplied by that great factor, a convenient and interesting goal for a fresh-air spin or week-end holiday, need not be disputed.

By the way, let the unwary visitor not be allured by the many glowing descriptions of the moorland weather and moorland beauty at all seasons of the year and at all times. The West Riding moorland and most of the moorlands of Derbyshire are sombre beyond any other regions of



Haworth Church.

By permission of Messrs. Macmillan.

The number of visitors would "astonish the world" in another sense. But even as it is, the American element, at any rate during the late summer and early autumn, prevails. As, in reply to a comment, an old weaver caustically remarked, "Aye, we Haw'rth folk doan't speäk West-Riding waäy no more: 'tis aäll good New-England naow, they saäy." As for Abbotsford and Stratford-on-Avon, if the comparison were ever just, it is so no longer. But, it is said, and assuredly at Haworth certain statistics corroborate, that the last three years have seen the turn in the long gradual ebb. Whether the cause is in greater railway facilities,

the kind in England; in stormy and cold weather they may be impressive, but in the prevailing dull greyness and ever recurring rains they have neither the spell of "lovely solitude" nor "a grave beauty all their own," but often are simply wide dreary stretches of waste land, without the wildness and glow and beauty of Exmoor, or of the highlands of Wales and Cumberland, or of the great moors of Scotland, or even of the heath-covered rolling heights about Danby, between the York plain and Whitby above the sea. There are hours in spring, and many days in summer, and sometimes weeks in early autumn, when they are to be seen in beauty and enjoyed



The Old Parish Church Tower.

After a drawing by M. Greiffenhagen.

with deep delight by all who love solitude and great spaces and the breath and freedom of the desert. But ordinarily the country is sombre and depressing, and all the more so (as in so many parts of Derbyshire) from the frequent signs of discarded or failing human industries, shafts of deserted mines, stacks of forsaken mills, smokeless cottages, and rude unkempt villages on their downward way to become still ruder and more unkempt hamlets. As to the spring climate, about which biographers who have not been at Haworth at that season are apt to become dithyrambic, here is one from many incidental allusions in Charlotte Brontë's delightful letters to Miss Ellen Nussey. It is in a letter from Haworth in the late spring of the year in which she was engaged upon *Jane Eyre*. "I wish to know whether about Whitsuntide would suit you for coming to Haworth. We often have fine weather just then. At least I remember last year it was very beautiful at that season. Winter seems to have returned with severity on us at present, consequently we are all in the full enjoyment of a cold. Much blowing of noses is heard, and much making of gruel goes on in the house." About the middle of May she writes again, "I pray for fine weather, that we may be able to get out while you stay." There we have the weather-burthen of many letters: the "just then" that so rarely comes off, the "at least I remember" that qualifies too flattering retrospection. In a word, if one were to spend nine months of the year at Haworth, he or she would soon come to understand the gloom and depression which often weighed so heavily on Charlotte and Emily Brontë, loving daughters of the moorlands though they were.

But of course they of all people knew and loved the remoter regions of the West Riding as none who have written of the sisters can do. It is their love of the lonely moorlands, their understanding of their fascination, of their spell upon the imagination, which has given the most enduring beauty to certain pages of *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. If one remembers Charlotte's famous "Necropolis" passage (that has so much of the monumental solemnity and slow impressive cadence of the De Quincey of the *Suspiria*), in *The Professor*, one will recollect how the writer took with her this phantom of Death, this image of

Melancholia, out into the lonely solitudes. ". . . She lay with me, she ate with me, she walked out with me, showing me nooks in woods, hollows in hills, where we could sit together, and where she could drop her drear veil over me, and so hide sky and sun, grass and green tree." If one remembers this, and a hundred kindred passages in Charlotte's books and vivid letters, one also will recall other passages in these and in her sister Emily's wonderful pages, as full of charm and loveliness seen and recreated as in this from *Wuthering Heights* :—

He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. That was his most perfect idea of heaven's happiness. Mine was rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throshles and black-birds and linnets and cuckoos, pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance broken into cool dusky dells; but close by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water; and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace. I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee. I said his heaven would be only half alive; and he said mine would be drunk. I said I should fall asleep in his; and he said he could not breathe in mine.

Or, again, this passage by Charlotte, wherein (as Lowood) she alludes to Cowan Bridge, where she was at school, when a terrible outbreak of typhus "transformed the seminary into a hospital":—

Pleasure in the prospect of noble summits, girdling a great hill-hollow, rich in verdure and shadow; in a bright beck full of dark stones and sparkling eddies. . . . A bright, serene May it was: days of blue sky, placid sunshine, and soft western or southern gales filled up its duration. And now vegetation matured with vigour; Lowood shook loose its tresses; it became all green, all flowery; its great elm, ash and oak skeletons were restored to majestic life; unnumbered varieties of moss filled its hollows; and it made a strange ground-sunshine out of the wealth of its wild primrose-plants. . . . Have I not described a pleasant site for a dwelling, when I speak of it as bosomed in hill and wood, and rising from the verge of a stream? Assuredly, pleasant enough;

but whether healthy or not is another question. The forest-dell where Lowood lay was the cradle of fog and fog-bred pestilence, which, quickening with the quickening spring, crept into the Orphan Asylum, breathed typhus through its crowded school-room and dormitory, and ere May arrived, transformed the seminary into an hospital.

Into all of Patrick Brontë's children something of the moorland character seems to have entered. The note of wildness is in all, the note of stern silence, the aloofness. There is no "dying" tragedy in literature to surpass the slow indomitable decline of Emily Brontë, fearless, silent,

sordid tragedy of Branwell Brontë's life, showed the same dauntless courage as made Branwell die standing, as made Emily refuse all comfort or aid when day by day Death plucked at the tearing strings of her life, as enabled Charlotte to endure in noble patience when, at Emily's death following Branwell's, and at Anne's following Emily's, and at her own failing health and broken hopes, and, above all, bitter suffering through her father's savage derision and driving away of the one lover to whom her own heart turned, that too familiar "horror of great darkness fell upon me."



Haworth parsonage and graveyard.

By permission of Messrs. Macmillan.

almost unnaturally implacable to the end. Even the gentle Anne shared this indomitableness so characteristic of the whole family. Crude in knowledge of life and crude in art as is *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, it was a heroic moral effort on the part of a sensitive and shrinking nature to depict what was, to that delicate self, in the last degree painful and indeed repulsive. It is said that some frail physiqes will endure the mental and bodily torture of surgical operation far better than the more robust, and it has always seemed to me that Anne Brontë, in this pitiful and, it must be added, intolerably weary and superfluous fictitious rendering of the

The proud aloofness, the almost arrogant independence, so characteristic of the moorlanders, was seen to the full in the Brontë family, and stands revealed in their published writings and letters. A single instance of an ordinary kind will suffice. Here is one, from Charlotte's correspondence in the spring of 1850, shortly after her return from London subsequent to the publication of *Shirley* :—

I believe I should have written to you before, but I don't know what heaviness of spirit has beset me of late, made my faculties dull, made rest weariness, and occupation burdensome. Now and then the silence of the house, the solitude of the room has

pressed on me with a weight I found it difficult to bear, and recollection has not failed to be as alert, poignant, obtrusive, as other feelings were languid. I attribute this state of things partly to the weather. . . . I have ere this been warned of approaching disturbance in the atmosphere by a sense of bodily weakness, and deep, heavy mental sadness, which some would call presentiment. Presentiment indeed it is, but not at all supernatural. . . . I have had no letters from London for a long time, and am very much ashamed of myself to find, now that that stimulus is withdrawn, how dependent upon it I had become. I cannot help feeling something of the excitement of

feiture of esteem. I was aware, I intimated, that some persons thought proper to take exceptions at *Jane Eyre*, and that for their own sakes I was sorry, as I invariably found them individuals in whom the animal largely predominated over the intellectual, persons by nature coarse, by inclination sensual, whatever they might be by education and principle.

Nor was Charlotte ever to be won by presumption or flattery. In that lonely Haworth parsonage, where in their childhood she and Emily and Anne, and Branwell too in his own irregular way, as



Withens, the original of *Wuthering Heights*.

After a drawing by M. Greiffenhagen.

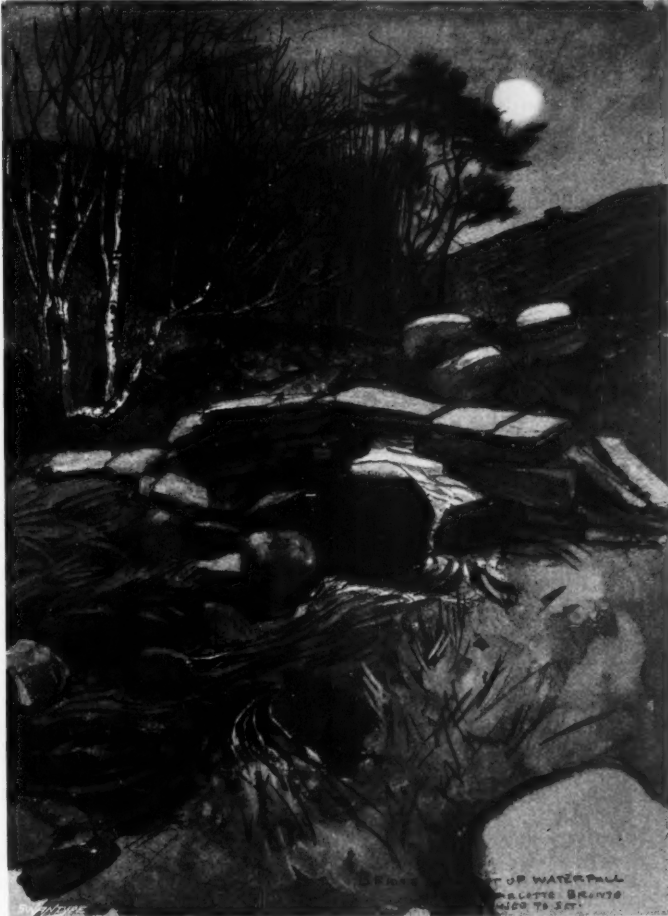
expectation till post-hour comes, and when day after day it brings nothing I get low. This is a stupid, disgraceful, unmeaning state of things. I feel bitterly enraged at my own dependence and folly. However, I shall contend against the idiocy. . . . I had rather a foolish letter from Miss — the other day. Some things in it nettled me, especially an unnecessarily earnest assurance that in spite of all I had gone and done in the writing line I still retained a place in her esteem. My answer took strong and high ground at once. I said I had been troubled by no doubts on the subject, that I neither did myself nor her the injustice to suppose there was anything in what I had written to incur the just for-

again in youth and maturity, had written so much and so significantly achieved, she ever preferred her obscurity and isolation. Had she been able, with due regard to herself and others, to maintain an absolute isolation from "Currer Bell" and that mysterious individual's writings, I do not doubt she would have so decided. To many, perhaps to most people, this has ever seemed, and seems, a foolish and illogical attitude. There are, nevertheless, a few writers who share with Charlotte Brontë the deep desire to be left alone in their private life, and to be known and judged solely by their writings,

irrespective of "the personal equation," of sex, or circumstance. "Of late," she writes on one occasion, "I have had many letters to answer; and some very bothering ones from people who want opinions about their books, who seek acquaintance, and who flatter to get it;

interviewers, in the Haworth days: did Charlotte Brontë write to-day she would probably, being Charlotte Brontë, take still "higher and stronger ground."

What a wonderful family, this Brontë clan! One wonders—so potent was the strain transmitted to each of Patrick



Bridge by the waterfall where Charlotte Brontë used to sit.

After a drawing by M. Greiffenhagen.

people who utterly mistake all about me. They are most difficult to answer, put off, and appease, without offending; for such characters are excessively touchy, and when affronted turn malignant. Their books are too often deplorable." There were fewer books—deplorable and other—and fewer autograph-scribes and would-be

Brontë's children—if the two elder sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, had lived to womanhood, what they too would have achieved. Certainly the elder, at any rate, showed herself in her short life "a true Brontë"—"a true Prunty" would have been the right phrase, if Mr. Prunty had never left his native Ireland, and, at the request of his

vicar, de-Celticised his name on coming to his English incumbency. Imagine for a moment if the Shakespeare family had been as united in genius as that of the Brontës, imagine the torch-flame at the close of the sixteenth century! But neither Shakespeare's sister, Joan Hart, nor his daughter, Susanna Hall, nor Judith (who became Mistress Thomas Quiney in her thirty-first year, a month before her father's death), can for a moment wear the steady light of Charlotte Brontë or the tragic flare of Emily or the mild glow of Anne. As for Hamnet, Shakespeare's son, he died long before he could emulate either the youthful vices or other wandering fires of Branwell.

But to the Brontë country. Where is really the literary geography we associate with this name? It is not only around Haworth, of course, though that bleak place is its heart, because of all lived and suffered and done there, of so many ambitions and hopes come to naught there, of so much there achieved, of all the passion and energy of five strenuous lives confined to this bare, unattractive house, restricted to these horizon-meeting moors. Roughly, it may be said to extend from Thornton, four miles to the west of Bradford, to Scarborough on the eastern sea. At the one, Branwell Brontë and his three younger sisters were born; at the other, and at Filey, Charlotte knew some of the darkest (and yet for literature some of the most memorable) hours of her life—days, too, of consolation and peace, days wherein *Villette* matured; and here, too, Emily came when nearing death, and here Anne died, and rests.

Thornton is certainly worth a visit for any who would trace and imaginatively relieve the experiences of the Brontë sisters. It is easily reached by train from Bradford—in fact, Thornton and Haworth can now both be visited easily in the space of a day, from and back to Haworth: though, almost needless to say, that is not the way to make the pilgrimage, nor any other of the kind.

Charlotte and Emily were too young, when their father and his family of six moved from Thornton parsonage across the upland region between it and Haworth, to leave us any literary association of direct experience in connection with this thriving little town—in the Rev. Patrick's day a mere hamlet of some fifty scattered cottages. It is not of much interest to

look at a house where a noted person was born, unless thinking and significant experience began there, or events of import occurred. Pilgrims do go to visit the Old Bell Chapel (or what is left of it); but why, it is a little difficult to understand. There's an inscription:—"This chapel was beautified, 1818. P. Brontë, incumbent." This might more appropriately have been adapted for an inscription at Haworth: "This House is beautified because of the genius of Charlotte and Emily Brontë."

In other respects times have not changed much. The old vehement note of religious bigotry is still emphatic in these regions of the West Riding. Not that bigotry is worse there than elsewhere. The Cornish Plymouth-Brother, the Welsh Methodist, the Highland Free-Churchman might even consider the Haworth variety lax. But in the Rev. Patrick Brontë's day it was rigorous indeed. Mr. Erskine Stuart tells an anecdote sufficiently illustrative. One Sunday morning Mr. Brontë was descried at his bedroom window apparently in the dire act of shaving. A spiritual volcano shook Thornton. The incumbent was approached, and upbraided. The amazing thing is that a man of so violent and often uncontrollable temper did not by word or action show his contemptuous indignation: there could be no more convincing comment on the bitter religiosity of the period than the fact that he earnestly explained to a member of his congregation: "I never shaved in all my life, or was ever shaved by any one else. I have so little beard that a little clipping every three months is all that is necessary." Ah, that was in 1820: such things do not happen now. Perhaps. A few years ago a Glasgow minister was seriously reproved by his elders because, in order to reach his church in time to conduct the service, he (having suddenly been summoned to the side of a dying parishioner, and so having left himself no time to walk to the church) took a cab. This summer a friend of the writer was in Ross, and told him that in a particular parish three members of the Free Kirk congregation were "refused the tokens" (*i.e.* prohibited from public participation in the Communion) for no other reason than that, during a holiday abroad, "they had stayed too long in Paris!"

The best way to see the Brontë country,

the country of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* and *Wuthering Heights*, is to view it afoot, and to start from Thornton, either direct or by a detour to visit Cowan Bridge, a charming neighbourhood, though associated with no little suffering on the part of the Brontë girls and especially Charlotte. Mrs. Gaskell's description is due either to the disillusioning effect of a visit in dull or wet weather at the wrong season, or to prejudice derived from passages in Charlotte's writings, letters, or conversation.

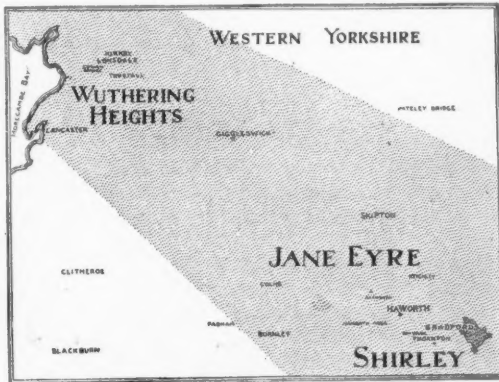
Perhaps the thing best worth remembering in Charlotte's childhood is the anecdote (by at least one biographer "located" at Thornton) to be found in the third chapter of Sir Wemyss Reid's delightful and sympathetic memoir, where, and with obvious exactitude, he says the Brontë family were already at Haworth.

There is a touching story of Charlotte at six years old, which gives us some notion of the ideal life led by the forlorn little girl at this time, when, her two elder sisters having been sent to school, she found herself living at home, the eldest of the motherless brood. She had read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and had been fascinated, young as she was, by that wondrous allegory. Everything in it was to her true and real: her little heart had gone forth with Christian on his pilgrimage to the Golden City, her bright young mind had been fired by the Bedford tinker's description of the glories of the Celestial Place; and she made up her mind that she too would escape from the City of Destruction, and gain the haven towards which the weary spirits of every age have turned with eager longing. But where was this glittering city, with its streets of gold, its gates of pearl, its walls of precious stones, its streams of life and throne of light? Poor little girl! The only place which seemed to her to answer Bunyan's description of the celestial town was one which she had heard the servants discussing with enthusiasm in the

kitchen, and its name was Bradford! So to Bradford little Charlotte Brontë, escaping from that Haworth Parsonage which she believed to be a doomed spot, set off one day in 1822. Ingenious persons may speculate if they please upon the sore disappointment which awaited her when, like older people, reaching the place which she had imagined to be Heaven, she found that it was only Bradford. But she never even reached her imaginary Golden City. When her tender feet had carried her a mile along the road, she came to a spot where overhanging trees made the highway dark and gloomy; she imagined that she had come to the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and, fearing to go forward, was presently discovered by her nurse cowering by the roadside.

The country between Thornton and Denholme, a slow ascent of about two

miles, is dreary at all times save on a radiant day of spring, when every ditch is a glory, and the birds sing as though truly birds of Paradise. From waste-land Denholme to low-lying Potovens farm, and thence across a lonely and fascinating



The Brontë Country.

expanse of true moorland, the wayfarer (following the track of the Brontë family on their laborious migration, in 1820, from their first Yorkshire home across Thornton Heights) will pass Old Allen, Flappit Spring, and Braemoor, and will come at last upon Worth Valley, from which, by a steep street, Haworth climbs and lies like an exhausted lizard along the summit. As the comparison has struck several observers, it is no fanciful image.

Cowan Bridge, it may be added, is not on the Bradford high road. It lies near Kirkby Lonsdale, on the Leeds and Kendal road; and can most easily be reached by the cyclist *via* Keighley or Skipton. Thence on to Giggleswick and Ingleton, below the vast and bare rise of Ingleborough, till the banks of the little

Leck are reached and Cowan Bridge is seen at the entrance to the pleasant valley of the Lune. "Lowood," as Charlotte names the seminary of Cowan Bridge, was where the Yorkshire Penny

If one had to choose any single tract at once for its own beauty and charm and its literary association, it might be that delightful reach of upland from Cowan Bridge to Tunstall, with its fine old



Haworth.

After a drawing by M. Greiffenhagen.

Bank now stands. Later, Charlotte went to Roe Head School, on the Leeds and Huddersfield road, and here we are in the heart of the Brontë country, and pre-eminently of the country of *Shirley*.

battlemented church, where both Charlotte and Emily often worshipped, and its lonely ruin of Thurland. Though not true moorland, it is a lovely country—a windy, grassy, tree-enlivened region such

as the author of *Wuthering Heights* had her joy in.

But it is not the Haworth region, or the wider regions of *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, and *Wuthering Heights*, that is exclusively the Brontë country. It is there the two most famous of a truly remarkable family lived from childhood and wrote their books and spent the greater part of their days. But the greater had a genius which won other dominions.

No lover of *Villette* would think of excluding London from the country of Charlotte Brontë. In a sense she made London uniquely her own on that night when Lucy Snowe for the first time slept in the great city—alone, friendless, aimless, unknowing even in what neighbour-

old inn by Ludgate Hill! "My reader, I know, is one who would not thank me for an elaborate reproduction of poetic first impressions; and it is well, inasmuch as I had neither time nor mood to cherish such; arriving as I did late, on a dark, raw, and rainy evening, in a Babylon and a wilderness, of which the vastness and the strangeness tried to the utmost any powers of clear thought and steady self-possession with which, in the absence of more brilliant faculties, Nature might have gifted me.

"When I left the coach, the strange speech of the cabmen and others waiting round, seemed to me odd as a foreign tongue. . . . How difficult, how oppressive, how puzzling seemed my flight! In London for the first time; at an inn for



Haworth Village in the Brontë days.

By permission of Messrs. Macmillan.

hood she was. "I wet the pillow, my arms, and my hair, with rushing tears. A dark interval of most bitter thought followed this burst [. . . till at last I became sufficiently tranquil. . . .] I had just extinguished my candle and lain down, when a deep, low, mighty tone swung through the night. At first I knew it not; but it was uttered twelve times, and at the twelfth colossal hum and trembling knell, I said: 'I lie in the shadow of St. Paul's.'"

The secret spell of London is there, more than in any elaborate phrasing of emotion and effect. How admirable, too, the reticence and the veracity of the brief account of her first impressions on that wet February night when, after a fifty-mile run, the North coach left her at the

first time; tired with travelling; confused with darkness; palsied with cold; unfurnished with either experience or advice to tell me how to act, and yet . . . to act obliged."

After that, the deep colossal boom of the great cathedral's bell, and "I lie in the shadow of St. Paul's," come as with the sound of solemn benediction.

That first night of London, Charlotte Brontë, as Lucy Snowe, has made her own. With the same powerful reserve she etches for us impressions of the first morning. "The next day was the first of March, and when I awoke, rose, and opened my curtain, I saw the risen sun struggling through fog. Above my head, above the housetops, co-elevate almost with the clouds, I saw a solemn, orbéd mass, dark



*Howorth to-day. Evening mist rising from the valley.
After a drawing by M. Greiffenhagen.*

blue and dim—THE DOME. While I looked, my inner self moved; my spirit shook its always-fettered wings half loose; I had a sudden feeling as if I, who never yet truly lived, were at last about to taste life. In that morning my soul grew as fast as Jonah's gourd."

In truth this first experience of London is that of an innumerable company of brave and fine youths and girls who in hope or despair come up alone to this Metropolis of Hopes and Despairs. It is not that of Lucy Snowe only, child of genius, but of her obscure brothers and sisters of actual life. Of these, many have come with literary aspirations, with young hearts astir with the foam of enthusiasm for names and places sacred by cherished associations. What young dreamer of literary fame has not thrilled when, knowingly or unknowingly, he has for the first time found himself suddenly in Paternoster Row? But let Lucy Snowe stand for all of us: her London-at-first-sight is that of the obscure many.

Having breakfasted, out I went. Elation and pleasure were in my heart: to walk alone in London seemed of itself an adventure. Presently I found myself in Paternoster Row—classic ground this. I entered a bookseller's shop, kept by one Jones; I bought a little book—a piece of extravagance I could ill afford. . . . Mr. Jones, a dried-in man of business, stood behind his desk: he seemed one of the greatest, and I one of the happiest of beings.

Prodigious was the amount of life I lived that morning. Finding myself before St. Paul's, I went in; I mounted to the dome; I saw thence London, with its river, and its bridges, and its churches; I saw antique Westminster, and the green Temple gardens, with sun upon them, and a glad blue sky of early spring above, and between them and it, not too dense, a cloud of haze.

Descending, I went wandering whither chance might lead, in a still ecstasy of freedom and enjoyment; and I got—I know not how—I got into the heart of city life. I saw and felt London at last: I got into the Strand; I went up Cornhill; I mixed with the life passing along; I dared the perils of crossings. To do this, and to do it utterly alone, gave me, perhaps an irrational, but a real pleasure. Since those days, I have seen the West End, the parks, the fine squares; but I love the city far better. The city seems so much more in earnest: its business, its rush, its roar, are such serious things, sights, and sounds. The city is getting its living—the West End but enjoying its pleasure. At the West End you may be amused, but in the city you are deeply excited.

Both in its vividness and its crudeness that stands for a multitude.

As for that wonderful tiny etching of the Thames by night, which stands out in this famous "London" chapter of *Villette*, it is as unforgettable as anything in *Bleak House* or *Great Expectations*; as "brazen and imperishable" as that horrible stewardess on board the *Vivid*, who made miserable poor Lucy's first night on the river. And what a touch of the real Charlotte Brontë—of the whole fearless, indomitable Brontë clan, from the upright and intolerant and sometimes all but intolerable incumbent of Haworth, to the broken Branwell, unworthy brother of the dauntless Charlotte and the heroic Emily, who, despite all his sins and weakness, had yet strength to defy nature and die standing—in the last words of this passage:—

Down the sable flood we glided; I thought of the Styx, and of Charon rowing some solitary soul to the Land of Shades. Amidst the strange scene, with a chilly wind blowing in my face and midnight clouds dropping rain above my head; with two rude rowers for companions, whose insane oaths still tortured my ear, I asked myself if I was wretched or terrified. I was neither.

Then is not Brussels for ever associated with *Villette* . . . surely the greatest and most enduring of all the Brontë books?

My own last sojourn in the Brontë country was on a day of autumnal beauty, a day so serene amid so great a richness of earth-born purple and suspended rose and azure, that it almost reached unrest because of its radiant but poignant peace. It was at lonely Tunstall, under the shadow of the time-blackened walls of Thurland, and I was thinking, not of the elder and greater sister, but of that stormier, less controlled, less mature spirit who, from what all students of life would call an impossible basis, and with architecture and ornament justly condemnable as unreal or trivial, reared in *Wuthering Heights* one of the great edifices in the realms of the imagination. But, as I rose to leave, and gave one farewell glance at the glowing solitudes beyond, the words that suddenly came upon me in a vivid remembrance were of the more powerful and steadfast genius of the author of *Villette*—*Villette*, whose very name sounded so remote, here in this silent upland of the West Riding. But they fitted the hour, the place, and the mood.

A MATTER OF HONOUR.

BY R. NEISH.

"Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus, another thing to fall."

"IS that your only answer, Mélanie?"

"Yes, Ralph. It's impossible: I can't leave him—I can't!"

He bent pleadingly over her. "My love, my poor little pale-faced love, have you no pity for me or yourself?"

She shook her head. "I can't leave him," she reiterated.

"Why not?" he asked bitterly. "Why should you spoil your life—tied to a drunkard? It's not fit even for you to remain here: only the other day he tried to kill you." Suddenly he seized her hands. "My love, my love," he murmured brokenly, "look!"—he pointed to the sea beyond the windows, where his yacht lay waiting, a white speck on the blue waters on which the sun shone with a thousand glistening lights—"look, it's waiting for us, for you and for me, my darling; it will take us away to where we can forget and be happy." He drew her for a moment unresisting into his arms. "My beloved," he whispered gently, "my poor little loved one."

As he spoke a hoarse shout came harshly from the room above them. "Mélanie! Mélanie! where are you? and why the devil can't you come up?"

She disengaged herself. "I must go: he is calling me, Ralph. Dear," she added gently, "it's no use—I can't leave him. He can't stop drinking; it's a disease now, and he can't help himself, and as I am the only one who can quiet him, my duty is here. It is not as though he did not want me."

"Duty!" echoed the man: "it's no duty. It's sacrilege, not duty, that compels a pure woman to live with a drunkard."

She smiled questioningly at him. "A pure woman, Ralph?"

He raised her hand to his lips. "Never purer in my sight, my sweet. Dearest," he urged passionately, "think

how you are wrecking both our lives. What for? Surely only a mockery of a duty."

"Lives are not so easily wrecked, Ralph. You will soon forget."

"Never, Mélanie, never: you are more to me than life itself; you are always in my thoughts. I hear your gentle voice all day, and dream that I am holding you in my arms only to awaken and find them empty. People laugh at love. Good God! those who laugh at it have never lived; they don't know even the meaning of the word Life. Listen, child! you stop here in seclusion with this drunkard until I feel almost mad sometimes at the thought of your life. Will you send me away, when happiness and love are crying out to us every conscious hour to be together? My life is empty when I am away from you. I only live on the memory of your sad little face. Won't you trust yourself to me, and let me comfort you for all you have gone through? Say 'yes,' Mélanie dear—say you will come."

She shook her head hopelessly. "A woman, even a bad woman, doesn't leave a man who needs her," she said slowly.

He knelt suddenly at her feet and buried his face in her white gown. "Oh! my love, have pity—for God's sake have pity on me!"

"Mélanie! Mélanie!" shouted the harsh voice again.

She turned away, and he rose slowly to his feet and glanced at the set, determined face.

"Must it be never?" he asked hoarsely.

"Never is a long day, Ralph."

He seized her hand. "Dear, wait a moment, one moment, then you can go if you must. I will leave you since you send me away, Mélanie; but I will wait for you, my sweet, wait and hope; and

if—if ever you are free I shall come back to you."

For a moment she clung to him. "Good-bye, Ralph, dear Ralph," she whispered brokenly.

"My darling, I can't part with you—I can't."

She wrenched herself free. "Go," she cried, as a heavy, straggling footstep sounded suddenly: "for Heaven's sake go, Ralph; he will kill you if I don't go up to him."

It was nearly three years since Ralph Barrington had left Mélanie. It was a warm June day, and London was full of the rush of life known as the Season. He was strolling aimlessly down Piccadilly, extremely bored, and undecided whether to go on to the "function" at which he was due or to his club. Deciding in favour of the club, he turned slowly into Pall Mall, and as he did so he ran up against an old friend whom he had not seen for some months. He greeted him almost effusively. It was nice in the height of the season to meet some one he had not already met an endless number of times.

"Hullo, Fenton, how are you? and where have you been? Abroad, cutting all this rot, eh? Well, you're just the man I want. I'll take you on to an 'At Home' as a penance for your sins."

Lord Fenton shook his head resolutely. "No, you don't," he said with emphasis. "Come on into the club, old chap, and have a drink. Whew! isn't it a scorching day? I'm very nearly melted."

Ralph Barrington, nothing loth, followed him into the club. "Well, what's your news, Fenton?"

"None. I've been fishing in Norway for the last three weeks; it's been delightful, and doubly good to feel what one was missing. However, I promised my sister I'd be back by the end of the month, so here I am."

"Ah! and here are the drinks and ice," said Ralph. "Capital!" And he dropped a large piece of ice gently into his whisky-and-soda. "How is Lady Fenton?"

"The mater—oh! she's all right, going strong since she's been at Biarritz. By the way, she wrote me this morning, and told me a bit of news about a quondam friend of yours."

"A friend of mine?"

"Well, judging by what I heard." Lord Fenton laughed, and then grew serious again. "It's about Lady Vernon, poor little woman. That drunken husband of hers is dead at last—tried to kill her first, I believe, and then shot himself in a fit of D.T. Poor little soul! She paid dearly both for the title and the money, didn't she? Lord! what fools women are! But I suppose he's left her everything. She'll re-marry—she's sure to. You might pick up an old thread and go in and win, now, Barrington. I always fancied you admired her, eh?"

Ralph Barrington made some light and chaffing reply, and presently rose to go. "Well, if you won't come on to the Stauntons' I must go by myself, I suppose," he said. "I'm very late; but I had better look in. Good-bye for the present, Fenton: we must have an evening out soon."

He nodded to his friend, and went into the crowded streets again. Hailing a hansom, he got in and drove back to his chambers in Jermyn Street, and seating himself in his armchair, lit a cigar and determinedly faced the situation. So she was free, free at last, and the time had come when he could fulfil his promise to her.

It was with a strange sinking at his heart that Ralph Barrington realised that not only was he not keenly anxious to rush abroad and claim the woman he had adored, but that he was not even keen at all.

Three years is a long time in a man's life, and not only had he to a great extent forgotten Mélanie, but he was actually more than half in love with another woman. He was quite sure, at any rate, that another woman loved him, even if he was not sure of himself, and he had intended speaking to her to-day. For a long time he sat there, slowly revolving the situation in his mind, and thinking about the woman he had loved three years ago and the woman he was beginning to love to-day.

There was only one course open to him—whether he had forgotten or not he must go over to Mélanie at once and offer to marry her; and if, perhaps, there was something lacking in his ardour, he knew she would set him free. He never doubted this, for she had always been proud—prouder even than loving. Such are the complications of the human

mind when thrown into sudden chaos that Ralph Barrington was hardly sure of himself, and hardly knew whether he wanted her to set him free or not. He was almost in love with another woman—at least until to-day he had fancied himself in love with her—yet, when he remembered the scene of three years ago, one only of many such scenes, he felt a sudden wave of the old passion for Mélanie, whom he thought he had forgotten.

In any case, he said finally to himself, apart from inclination he had a duty to fulfil. He had promised to go to her directly she was free; that much was certain, and go he must. He might be making a mistake, and he might regret it, but he would at any rate have fulfilled his word of honour. Putting aside all other women, he must make her his wife—that was clearly his duty.

He would go at once, and he determined to start that very evening. It was only right he should console Mélanie for all she had suffered without him. Poor little soul! how she loved him, and how glad she would be to be free to come to him at last!

He caught the night mail, feeling he was a man of faith and honour, and realising how many men would have ignored the past, whereas he was ready to fulfil the promise he had made to the woman who was awaiting him.

It was late in the afternoon when Ralph Barrington drove up to the villa where he and Mélanie had parted. The feeling that he was a man of honour, so great as to be almost quixotic, faded slightly as he went slowly up the well-known steps.

"Yes, miladi was in," they assured him; "but they were not sure miladi was receiving—would he wait?" They left him in the boudoir overlooking the sea, her own little white room, where he had seen her last. In a few moments she came down to him, and he turned to greet her eagerly. "Mélanie!" he cried, and paused a moment eloquently. "You see I have come," he added simply.

She was more beautiful than when he had seen her last, yet she was changed: she was more brilliant, but less tender, and he found it difficult to resume the old footing.

Greeting him with grace and charm, she parried all love questions cleverly,

and led him against his will to talk of his life and his interests in London.

She was, he felt sure, merely full of a natural womanly coquetry, and it was only in keeping with the restraint of her character—yet it somehow reawakened his love more than anything else could have done, and he felt he must know his fate at once.

He rose, and going over to her, stood looking down at her. "Mélanie," he said gently, "dear, have you forgotten?"

She smiled up at him. "Forgotten what, Sir Serious?"

He seated himself on the low couch at her side and took her hands in his, the little warm hands whose touch had always thrilled him, and his voice grew a shade less steady: "I have come to ask you to be my wife, Mélanie," he said gravely.

She disengaged her hands, still smiling, and drew slightly away from him.

"I am so sorry," she said gently, "so sorry, Ralph, but—I—I have changed my mind."

Ralph Barrington sprang to his feet. He could hardly believe he had heard aright. He was refused—Mélanie refused to marry him, the woman who had once clung sobbing to him. With a sudden revulsion of feeling, due to wounded pride and man's nature, he felt the old feeling of mad adoration for her rising up within him. He had pictured her loving and tender, even grateful—and she had refused him, lightly and carelessly, as though it were a matter of little moment either to him or to her. She must be merely trying him; she could never mean to refuse him again as she had refused him before, when it was shame instead of honour he had offered her. He felt a violent revulsion of the feelings he had undergone when he first heard she was free. No longer lukewarm, he felt his whole happiness depended on her, and on her alone; but it was in vain that he pleaded. She was charming, conventional, even witty; but never for a moment tender or emotional.

He reminded her of their parting and the promise she had made him, but she told him lightly that she had developed meanwhile.

"Mélanie, don't play with me," he urged at last, still only half convinced that her refusal was an earnest one. "Don't play with me. I want you—I can't leave you again, dear. Say you will be my wife."

She made him a sign to take the chair beside her.

"Sit down, Sir Serious, and let me talk to you," she said, with a gentle gaiety that almost maddened him. "No, you are too big and overpowering to stand! Sit here; I want to speak to you."

He sat down obediently, making an effort to restrain himself, and said gently: "What is it you wish to say to me, Mélanie?—is there any one—else!"

She leant back, and taking up a little bunch of charms that hung from the slender gold chain about her neck, played idly with them.

"Well, you see, it's this way, Ralph. I——"

He interrupted her almost harshly: "Mélanie, I asked you a question. Is there any one else?"

She laughed lightly, a little laugh that jarred infinitely on his wounded feelings. "How funny you men are!" she said, sighing: "I wonder why you always think women must be in love with some one." She looked for a moment gravely at him. "We're not all as emotional as you think, Ralph—nor as full of sentiment."

Ralph Barrington frowned. Greatly as she had changed, he felt that he loved her more than ever now that she was out of his reach.

"I believe there's only one person I really love, Ralph," she continued whimsically, "and that's Mélanie!"

"It doesn't sound like you," he replied gloomily. "You were never selfish; you revelled at one time in self-sacrifice—self-immolation—it was nothing else, the life you led with that——"

She put up her hand. "*De mortuis*," she murmured—"I need not finish the quotation."

"You sacrificed yourself daily and hourly for him," he said, bitterly; "and you sacrificed all that would have made your life beautiful; and now"—he broke off suddenly—"now that you are free you want to sacrifice yourself again. Why? I can't understand you, Mélanie: are you going to be faithful, even after death, to a man whom you never loved, and throw away your happiness for a mere shadow?"

She shook her head. "To tell the

truth," she said gravely, "I'm looking for real happiness this time. It is good and kind of you to redeem your promise to me, of course, but——"

"Pah!—I love you."

"I know," she said gently; "but you see, Ralph, I'm going to live my own life now and make my own happiness, and although I appreciate your offer, and the honour a man always confers on the woman to whom he would give his name and home, still——"

He would have interrupted her again, but she put out her hand deprecatingly to stop him.

"No; do hear me out. You know it's three years, Ralph, and three years are very long and go very slowly, even in the modern rush of life. I've changed. I know exactly what you offer me, but I can't face it."

He stared dumbly at her.

"It's no use, Ralph. I can't give up my liberty again. No man's love would make up for the dead level of matrimonial happiness. I can't face either its duties or its pleasures again—the dull routine of dinners and balls and the eternal treadmill of pleasure, and the country-house parties at the end of the season—they are the worst. You would be happy shooting and fishing or hunting, but I—I should be bored to extinction." She leant suddenly towards him, and gave his hand a little friendly pat. "It would be very nice to be adored for a month or so, Ralph; but it is the dull Hereafter of matrimony I can't face. It's no use trying to alter me, *mon ami*: I know all you would say—all the protestations of undying love"—she smiled dreamily—"the poor passion-flower that fades almost as soon as it is plucked. I know all your vows of eternal devotion; but I don't want either a husband or a lover—I want to be my own mistress." She rose and held out her hand. "Good-bye, Ralph; that is all I have to say. I thank you very much for coming and for your offer, but I am going to get a female companion whom I can dismiss at a moment's notice if she bores me, and I am going to travel and see the beautiful world, and be happy, quite happy, Ralph, because—I—shall—be—free."



OR,

THE SIX YEARS' TRAGEDY.

BY MAURICE HEWLETT.

BOOK THE SECOND.

MEN'S BUSINESS.

CHAPTER V.

MIDNIGHT EXPERIENCES OF JEAN-MARIE-BAPTISTE DES-ESSARS.

ON that wild appointed night of Saturday, the 9th of March—a blowy, snowy night, harrowing for men at sea, with a mort of vessels pitching at their cables in Leith Roads—Des-Essars was late for his service. He should have come on to the door at ten o'clock, and it wanted but two minutes to that when he was beating down the Castle hill in the teeth of the wind.

Never mind his errand, and expect fibs if you ask what had kept him. Remember that he was older at this time than when you first saw him, a French boy "with smut-rimmed eyes," crop-headed, pale, shrewd and reticent. That was a matter of three years ago: the Queen was but nineteen and he four years younger. He was eighteen now, and may have had evening affairs like other people, no concern of yours or mine. Whatever they may have been, they had kept him unduly; he had two minutes and wanted seven. He drew his bonnet close, his short cape about him, and went scudding down the hill as fast as the snow would let him, in shoes

dangerously thin for the weather, but useful for tiptoe purposes. The snow had been heaped upon the cawsey, but in the street trodden, thawed, and then frozen again to a surface of ice. From it came enough light to show that few people were abroad, and none lawfully, and that otherwise it was infernally dark. A strangely diffused, essential light it was, that of the snow. It put to shame three dying candles left in the Luckenbooths and the sick flame of an oil lamp above the Netherbow Port. After passing that, there was no sign of man or man's comforts until you were in the Abbey precincts.

Des-Essars knew—being as sharp as a needle—that something was changed the moment he reached those precincts; knew by the pricking of his skin, as they say. A double guard set; knots of men-at-arms; some horses led about; low voices talking in strange accents,—something was altered. Worse than all this, he found the word of the night unavailing; no manner of entry for him.

"My service is the Queen's, honourable sir," he pleaded to an unknown sentry, who wore (he observed) a steel cap of unusual siltape.

The square hackbutter shook his head. "No way in this night, Frenchman."

By whose orders, if you please?"

"By mine, Frenchman."

Here was misfortune! No help for it, but he must brave what he had hoped to avoid—his superior officer, to wit.

"If it please you, sir," he said, "I will speak with Mr. Erskine in the guard-room."

"Mr. Airrskin!" was the shocking answer—and how the man spoke it!—"Mr. Airrskin! He's no here. He's awa'. So now off with ye, Johnny Frenchman." The man obviously had orders: but whose orders?

Des-Essars shrugged. He shivered also, as he always did when refused anything—as if the world had proved suddenly a chill place. But really the affair was serious. Inside the house he must be, and that early. Driven to his last resource, he walked back far enough for the dark to swallow him up, returned upon his tracks a little way so soon as the hackbutter had resumed his stamping up and down; branched off to the right, slipping through a ruinous stable, blown to pieces in former days by the English; crossed a frozen cabbage garden which, having been flooded, was now a sheet of cat-ice; and so came hard upon the Abbey wall. In this wall, as he very well knew, there were certain cavities, used as steps by the household when the gateways were either not convenient or likely to be denied: indeed, he would not, perhaps, have cared to reckon how many times he had used them himself. Having chipped the ice out of them with his hanger, he was triumphantly within the pale, hopping over the Queen's privy garden with high-lifted feet, like a dog in turnips. To win the palace itself was easy. It was mighty little use having friends in the kitchen if they could not do you services of that kind.

He had to find the Queen, though, and face what she might give him, but of that he had little fear. He knew that she would be at cards, and too full of her troubles and pains to seek for a new one. It is a queer reflection that he makes in his Memoirs—that although he romantically loved the Queen, he had no scruples about deceiving her and few fears of being found out, so only that she did not take the scrape to heart. "She was a goddess to me," he says, "in those days, a remote point of my adoration. A young man, however, is compact of

two parts, an earthly and a spiritual. If I had exhibited to her the frailties of my earthly part it would have been by a very natural impulse. However, I never did." This is a digression: he knew that she would not fret herself about him and his affairs just now, because she was ill, and miserable about the King. Throwing a kiss of his hand, then, to the yawning scullery-wench, who had had to get out of her bed to open the window for him, he skimmed down the corridors on a light foot, and reached the great hall. He hoped to go tiptoe up the privy stair and gain the door of the cabinet without being heard. When she came out she would find him there, and all would be well. This was his plan.

It was almost dark in the hall, but not quite. A tree-bole on the hearth was in the article of death; a few thin flames about the shell of it showed him a company of men in the corner by the privy stair. Vexatious! They were leaning to the wall, some sitting against it; some were on the steps asleep, their heads nodding to their knees. He was cut off his sure access, and must go by the main staircase—if he could. He tried it, sidling along by the farther wall; but they spied him, two of them, and one went to cut him off. A tall enemy this, for the little Frenchman; but luckily for him it was a case of boots against no boots where silence was of the essence of the contract. Des-Essars, his shoes in his hand, darted out into the open and raced straight for the stair. The enemy began his pursuit—in riding-boots. Heavens! the crash and clatter on the flags, the echo from the roof! It would never do: hushed voices called him back; he went tender-footed, finally stopped. By that time the page was up the stair, pausing at the top to wipe his brows and neck of cold sweat, and to wonder as he wiped what all this might mean. Double guard in the court—strange voices—the word changed—Mr. Erskine away! No sentry in the hall, but, instead, a cluster of waiting, whispering men—in riding-boots—by the privy stair! The vivacious young man was imaginative to a fault; he could construct a whole tragedy of life and death out of a change in the weather. But here was a fateful climax to the tragedy of a stormy night! First, the stress of the driving snow—whirling,

solitary, forlorn stuff!—the apprehension of wild work by every dark entry. Passing the Tollbooth, a shriek out of the blackness had sent his heart into his mouth. There had been fighting, too, in Sim's Close. He had seen a torch glare and dip, men and women huddled about two on the ground; one grunting, "Tak' it! 'Tak' it!" and the other, with a strangled wail, "Oh, Jesus!" Bad hearing all this—evil preparation. Atop of these apparitions, lo! their fulfilment: stroke after stroke of doom. Cloaked men by the privy stair—*Dieu de Dieu!* His heart was thumping at his ribs when he peeped through the curtain of the Queen's cabinet and saw his mistress there with Lady Argyll and the Italian. "Blessed Mother!" he thought, "here's an escape for me. I had no notion the hour was so late." What he meant was, that the rest of the company had gone. He had heard that Lord Robert Stuart and the Laird of Criech were to sup that night. Well, they had supped and were gone! It must be on the stroke of midnight.

The Queen lay back in her elbow-chair, obviously suffering, picking at some food before her, but not eating any. Her lips were chapped and dry; she moistened them continually, then bit them. Lady Argyll, handsome, strong-featured and swarthy, sat bolt upright and stared at the sconce on the wall; and as for the Italian, he did as he always did, lounged opposite his Queen, his head against the wainscot. Reflective after food, he used his toothpick, but no other ceremony whatsoever. He wore his cap on his head, ignored Lady Argyll—half-sister to the throne—and when he looked at her Majesty, as he often did, it was as a man may look at his wife. She, although she seemed too weary or too indifferent to lift her heavy eyelids, knew perfectly well that both her companions were watching her: Des-Essars was sure of that. He watched her himself intensely, and only once saw her meet Davy's eye, when she passed her cup to him to be filled with drink, and he, as if thankful to be active, poured the wine with a flourish and smiled in her face as he served her. She observed both act and actor, and made no sign, neither drank from the cup now she had it; but sank back to her wretchedness and the contemplation of it, being in that pettish, brooding habit of mind

which would rather run on in a groove of pain than brace itself to some new shift. As he watched what was a familiar scene to him, Des-Essars was wondering whether he should dare go in and report what he had observed in the hall. No! on the whole he would not do that. Signior Davy, who was a weasel in such a field as a young man's mind, would assuredly fasten upon him at some false turn or other, never let go, and show no mercy. Like all the underlings of Holyrood he went in mortal fear of the Italian, though, unlike any of them, he admired him.

The little cabinet was very dim. There were candles on the table, but none alight in the sconces. From beyond, through a half-open door, came the drowsy voices of the Queen's women, murmuring their way through two more hours' vigil. Interminable nights! Cards would follow supper, you must know, and Signior Davy would try to outsit Lady Argyll. He always tried, and generally succeeded.

The Queen shifted, sighed, and played hasty tunes with her fingers on the table: she was never still. It was evident that she was at once very wretched and very irritable. Her dark red gown was cut low and square, Venetian mode; Des-Essars could see quite well how short her breath was, and how quick. Yet she said nothing. Once she and Lady Argyll exchanged glances; the Mistress of the Robes inquired with her eyebrows, the Queen fretfully shook the question away. It was an unhappy supper for all but the graceless Italian, who was much at his ease now that he had unfastened some of the hooks of his jacket. The French lad, who had always been in love with his mistress and yet able to criticise her—as a Protestant may adore the Virgin Mary—admits that at this moment of her life, in this bitter mood, he found her extremely piquant. "This pale, helpless, angry, pretty woman!" he exclaims upon his page. He would seldom allow that she was more than just a pretty woman; and now she was a good deal less. Her charms for him had never been of the face—she had an allure of her own. "Mistress Seton was lovely, I consider, my Lady Bothwell most beautiful, and Mistress Fleming not far short of that: but the Queen's Majesty—ah! the coin from Mr. Knox's mint rang true. Honey-pot! Honey-pot! There you had her essence: long, slow, soft sweetness, with



Ruthoen.

After a drawing by A. S. Hartrick.

a sharp aftertaste, for all that, to prick the tongue and set it longing."

More than nice considerations, these, which the stealthy opening of a door and a step in the passage disturbed. Des-Essars would have straightened himself on that signal, to stand as a page should stand in the view of any one entering. Then he saw, out of the corner of his eye, the King go down the little stair. It must be the King, because—to say nothing of the tall figure—small-headed as it was,—he had seen the long white gown. The King wore a white quilted-silk bedgown, lined with ermine. At the turning of the stair Des-Essars saw him just glance backwards over his shoulder towards the cabinet, but, being stiff within the shadow of the curtain, was not himself seen. After that furtive look he went down the privy stair, his hand on the rope. Obviously he had an assignation with some woman below.

Before he had time to correct this conclusion by the memory of the cloaked men in the hall, he heard returning steps—somebody, this time, coming up the steps; no! there were more than one—two or three at least. He was sure of this—his ears had never deceived him—and yet it was the King alone who appeared at the stair-head with a lighted taper in his hand, which he must have got from the hall. He stood there for a moment, his face showing white and strained in the light, his mouth open, too; then, blowing out his taper, he came directly to the curtain of the Queen's cabinet, pulled it aside and went in. He had actually covered Des-Essars with the curtain without a notion that he was there; but the youth had had time to observe that he was fully dressed beneath his gown, and to get a hot whiff of the strong waters in his breath as he passed in. Urgent to see what all this might mean, he peeped through the hangings.

Lady Argyll rose up slowly when she saw the King, but made no reverence. Very few did in these days. The Italian followed her example, perfectly composed. The Queen took no notice of him. She rested as she had been, her head on the droop, eyebrows raised, eyes fixed on the disordered platter. The King, whose colour was very high, came behind her chair, stooped, and put his arm round her. His hand covered her bosom. She did not avoid, though she did not relish this.

"Madam, it is very late," he said, and spoke breathlessly.

"It is not I who detain you," said she.

"No, Madam, no. But you do detain these good servants of yours. Here is your sister of Argyll; next door are your women. And so it is night after night. I think not of myself."

She lifted her head a little to look up sideways—but not at him. "You think of very little else, to my understanding. Having brought me to the state where now I am, you are inclined to leave me alone. Rather, you *were* inclined; for this is a new humour, little to my taste."

"I should be oftener here, believe me," says the King, still embracing her, "if I could feel more sure of a welcome—if all might be again as it was once between you and me."

She laughed, without mirth; then asked, "And how was it—once?"

The King stooped down and kissed her forehead, by the same act gently pushing back her head till it rested on his shoulder.

"Thus it was once, my Mary," he said; and as she looked up into his face, wondering over it, searching it, he kissed her again. "Thus it was once," he repeated in a louder voice; and then, louder yet, "Thus, O Queen of Scots!"

Once more he kissed her, and once more cried out, "O Queen of Scots!" Then Des-Essars heard the footsteps begin again on the privy stair, and saw men come into the passage—many men.

Three of them, in cloaks and steel bonnets, came quickly to the door, and passed him. They went through the curtain. These three were Lord Ruthven, Ker of Fawdonsyde, and Mr. Archibald Douglas. Rigid in his shadow, Des-Essars watched all.

Seeing events in the Italian's eyes, rather than with her own—for Signior Davy had narrowed his to two threads of light—the Queen lifted her head from her husband's arm and looked curiously round. The three stood hesitant within the door; Ruthven had his cap on his head, Fawdonsyde his, but Archie showed his gray poll. Little things like these angered her quickly; she shook free from the King and sat upright.

"What is this, my Lord Ruthven? You forget yourself."

"Madam——" he began; but Douglas nudged him furiously.

"Your bonnet, man, your bonnet!"

The Queen had risen, and the fixed direction of her eyes gave him understanding.

"Ah, my knapsall! I do as others do, Madam," he said, with a meaning look at the Italian. "What is pleasant to your Majesty in yonder servant should not be an offence in a councillor."

"No, no, Ma'am, nor it should not," muttered Fawdonsyde, who, nevertheless, doffed his bonnet.

The King was holding her again, she staring still at the scowling man in steel. "What do you want with me, Ruthven?" she said. She had very dry lips.

He made a clumsy bow. "May it please your Majesty," he said, "we are come to rid you of this fellow Davy, who has been overlong familiar here, and overmuch for your Majesty's honour."

She turned her face to the King, whose arm still held her—a white, strong face.

"You," she said fiercely, "what have you to do in this? What have you to say?"

"I think with Ruthven—with all of them—my friends and well-wishers. 'Tis the common voice: they say I am betrayed, upon my soul! I cannot endure—I entreat you to trust me——" He was incoherent.

She broke away from his arm, took a step forward and put herself between him and the three. She was so angry that she could not find words. She stammered, began to speak, rejected what words came. The Italian took off his cap and watched Ruthven intently. The moment of pause that ensued was broken by Ruthven's raising his hand, for the Queen flashed out, "Put down your hand, sir!" and seemed as if she would have struck him. Fawdonsyde here cocked his pistol and deliberately raised it against the Queen's person. "Treason! treason!" shrieked Des-Essars from the curtain, and blundered forward to the villain.

But the Queen had been before him; at last she had found words, and deeds. She drew herself up, quivering, went directly towards Fawdonsyde, and beat down the point of the pistol with her flat hand. "Do you dare so much? Then I dare more. What shameless thing do you here? If I had a sword in my hand——" Here she stopped, tongue-tied at what was done to her.

For Ruthven, regardless of majesty,

had got her round the middle. He pushed her back into the King's arms; and, "Take your wife, my lord," says he; "take your goodwife in your arms and cherish her, while we do what must be done."

The King held her fast in spite of her struggles. At that moment the Italian made a rattling sound in his throat and backed from the table. Archie Douglas stepped behind the King, to get round the little room; Ruthven approached his victim from the other side; the Italian pulled at the table, got it between himself and the enemy, and overset it: then Lady Argyll screamed, and snatched at a candlestick as all went down. It was the only light left in the room, held up in her hand like a beacon above a tossing sea. Where was Des-Essars? Cuffed aside to the wall, like a rag doll. The maids were packed in the door of the bedchamber, and one of them had pulled him into safety among them.

All that followed he marked: how the frenzied Italian, hedged in between Douglas and Ruthven, vaulted the table, knocked over Fawdonsyde, and then, whimpering like a woman, crouched by the Queen, his fingers in the pleats of her gown. He saw the King's light eyelashes blink, and heard his breath come whistling through his nose; and that pale, disfigured girl, held up closely against her husband, moaning and hiding her face in his breast. And now Ruthven, grinning horribly, swearing to himself, and Douglas, whining like a dog at a rat-hole, were at their man's hands, trying to drag him off. Fawdonsyde hovered about, hopeful to help. Lady Argyll held up the candle.

Douglas wrenched open one hand, Ruthven got his head down and bit the other till it parted.

"*O Dio! O Dio!*" long shuddering cries went up from the Italian as they dragged him out into the passage, where the others waited.

It was dark there, and one knew not how full of men; but Des-Essars heard them snarling and mauling like a pack of wolves; heard the scuffling, the panting, the short oaths—and then a piercing scream. At that there was silence; then some one said, as he struck, "There! there! Hog of Turin!" and another (Lindsay), "He's done."

The King put the Queen among her maids in a hurry, and went running out

into the passage as they were shuffling the body down the stair. Des-Essars just noticed, and remembered afterwards, his naked dagger in his hand as he went out helter-skelter after his friends. Upon some instinct or other, he followed him as far as the head of the stair. From the bottom came up a great clamour—howls of execration, one or two cries for the King, a round of welcome when he appeared. The page ran back to the cabinet, and found it dark.

It was bad to hear the Queen's laughter in the bedchamber—worse when that shuddered out into moaning, and she began to wail as if she were keening her dead. He could not bear it, so crept out again to spy about the passages and listen to the shouting from the hall. "A Douglas! a Douglas!" was the most common cry. Peeping through a window which gave on to the front, he saw the snowy court ablaze with torches, alive with men, and against the glare the snowflakes whirling by, like smuts from a burning chimney. It was clear enough now that the palace was held, all its inmates prisoners. But what seemed more terrifying than that was the emptiness of the upper corridors, the sudden hush after so much riot—and the Queen's moan, haunting all the dark like a lost soul.

It was so bad up there that the lad, his brain on fire, felt the need of any company—even that of gaolers. No one hindering, he crept down the privy stair,—horribly slippery it was, and he knew why,—hoping to spy into the hall; and this also he was free to do, since the stair-foot was now unguarded. He found the hall crowded with men; great torches smoking to the rafters; a blaze of light on shields and blazonry, the banners and achievements of dead kings. In the stir of business the arras surged like the waves of the sea. A furious draught blew in from the open doors, to which all faces were turned. Men craned over each others' backs to look there. Des-Essars could not see the King; but there at the entry was the Earl of Morton in his armour, two linkmen by him. He was reading from a bill: in front of him was a clear way; across it stood the Masters of Lindsay and Ruthven, and men in their liveries, halberds in their hands.

"Pass out, Earl of Atholl," he heard

Lord Morton say; "Pass out, Lord of Tullibardine": and then, after a while of looking and pointing, he saw the grizzled head and square shoulders of my Lord Atholl moving down the lane of men, young Tullibardine uncovered beside him.

"Pass out, Pitcur; pass out, Mr. James Balfour; pass out, the Lord Herries." The same elbowing in the crowd: three men file out into the scurrying snow—all the Queen's friends, observe.

Near to Des-Essars a man asked of his neighbour, "Will they let by my Lord Huntly, think you?"

The other shook his head. "Never! He'll keep company with the Reiver of Liddesdale, be sure."

The Reiver was Lord Bothwell, of course, whom Des-Essars knew to be in the house. "Good fellow-prisoners for us," he thought.

"Pass out, Mr. Secretary, on a good errand."

There was some murmuring at this; but the man went out unmolested, with a sweep of the bonnet to my Lord Morton as he passed. Des-Essars saw him stop at the first taste of the weather and cover his mouth with his cloak—but he waited for no more. A thought had struck him. He slipped back up the puddled stair, gained the first corridor, and, knowing his way by heart, went in and out of the passages until he came to a barred door. Here he put his ear to the crack and listened intently.

For a long time he could hear nothing on either side the door; but by-and-by somebody with a light—a man—came to the farther end of the passage and looked about, raising and dipping his lantern. That was an ugly moment! Crouched against the wall, he saw the lamp now high now low, and marked with a leaping heart how nearly the beams reached to where he lay. He heard a movement behind the door, too, but had to let it go. Not for full three minutes after the disappearance of the watchman did he dare put his knuckles to the door, and tap, very softly, at the panel. He tapped and tapped. A board creaked; there was breathing at the door. A voice, shamming boldness, cried, "Qui est?"

Des-Essars smiled. "C'est toi, Paris?"

His question was answered by another. "Tiens, qui est ce drôle?"

Paris, for a thousand pound! Knocking again, he declared himself.

"Monsieur Baptiste, your servant," said Paris.

"My lord is a prisoner, Paris?"

"Not for the first time, my dear sir."

"How many are you there?"

"Four. My lord, and Monsieur de Huntly, myself, Jock Gordon."

"Well, you should get out—but quickly, before they have finished in the hall. They are passing men out. Be quick, Paris—tell my lord."

"Bravo!" says Paris. "We should get out—and quickly! By the chimney, sir? There is no chimney. By the window? There is but one death for every man, and one neck to be broke."

"You will break no necks at all, you fool. Below these windows is the lions' house."

Paris thought. "Are you sure of that?"

"Sure! Oh, Paris, make haste!"

Again Paris appeared to reflect; and then he said, "If you are betraying a countryman of yours, M. Des-Essars, and your old patron also, you shall never see God."

Des-Essars wrung his hands. "You fool! you fool! Are you mad? Call my lord."

"Wait," said Paris. In a short time, the sound of heavy steps. Ah, here was my lord!

"'Tis yourself, Baptiste?"

"Yes, yes, my lord."

"Have they finished with Davy?"

"My God, sir!"

"What of the Queen?"

"Her women have her."

"Now, Baptiste. You say the lion-house is below these windows. Which windows? There are four."

"The two in the midst, my lord. My lord, across the Little Garden—in a straight line—there are holes in the wall."

"Oho! You are a brave lad. Go to your bed."

Jean-Marie-Baptiste Des-Essars went back to the Queen's side. At the door of the cabinet he found Adam Gordon in a fit of sobs. "Oh, my fine man," says the French lad, stirring him with his foot, "leave tears to the women. This is men's business."

Adam lifted up his stricken face. "Where have you been cowering, traitor?"

Jean-Marie laughed grimly. "I have been saving Scotland," he said, "whilst you were blubbering here."

Adam Gordon, being up by now, knocked Jean-Marie down.

"I excused him readily, however," he writes in his Memoirs, "considering the agitation we all suffered at the time. And where he felled me there I lay, and slept like a child."

CHAPTER VI.

VENUS IN THE TOILS.

SIR JAMES MELVILL, whom readers must remember at Saint Andrews as a shrewd, elderly courtier, expert in diplomacy and not otherwise without humours of a dry sort, plumed himself upon habit—"Dear Mother Use-and-Wont," as he used to say. A man is sane at thirty, rich at forty, wise at fifty, or never; and what health exacts, wealth secures, and wisdom requires, is the orderly, punctual performance of the customary. You may have him now putting his theory into severest practice: for though he had seen what was to be seen during that night of murder and alarm, though he had lain down asleep in his cloak no earlier than five o'clock in the small hours, by seven, which was his Sunday time, he was up and about, stamping his booted feet to get the blood down, flacking his arms, and talking encouragement to himself—as, "Hey, my bonny man, how's a' with you the morn?" Very soon after you might have seen him over the ashes of the fire, raking for red embers and blowing some life into them with his frosted breath. All about lay his snoring fellows, though it was too dark to see them. Every man lay that night where he could find his length, and slept like the dead in their graves. There seemed no soul left in a body but in his own.

He went presently to the doors, thinking to open them unhindered. But no! a sitting sentry barred the way with a halberd. "May one not look at the weather, my fine young man?" says Sir James.

"'Tis as foul as the grave, master, and a black black frost. No way out the now."

Sir James, who intended to get out, threw his cloak over his shoulder and gravely paced the hall until the chances

should mend. One has not warred with the Margrave, held a hand at cards with the Emperor Charles at Innsbruck, loitered at Greenwich in attendance upon Queen Elizabeth, or endured the King of France in one of his foaming rages, without learning patience. He proposed to walk steadily up and down the hall until nine o'clock. Then he would get out.

The women said afterwards that the Queen had quieted down very soon, dried her eyes, gone to bed, and slept almost immediately "as calm as a babe newborn." However that may be, she awoke as early as Sir James, and, finding herself in Mary Fleming's arms, awoke her too in her ordinary manner by biting her shoulder, not hard. "My lamb, my lamb!" cooed the maid; but the Queen in a brisk voice asked, "What's o'clock?" The lamp showed it to be gone seven.

The Queen said: "Get up, child, and find me the page who was in the cabinet last night. I saw him try the entry, and he ran in when—when . . . It was Baptist, I think."

She spoke in an even voice, as if the occasion had been a card party. This frightened Mary Fleming, who began to quiver, and to say, "Oh, Ma'am, did Baptist see all? 'Twill have scared away his wits." And then she tried coaxing. "Nay, *ma ReINETTE*, but you must rest awhile. Come, let me stroke your cheek"—a common way with them of inviting sleep to her.

But the Queen said, "I have had too much stroking—too much. Now do as I bid you." So the maid clothed herself in haste and went out with a lamp.

Outside the door she found the two youths asleep—Des-Essars on the floor, Gordon by the table—and awoke them both. "Which of you was on the door last night?"

"It was I, Mistress Fleming," said the foreigner. "All the time I was there."

"Come with me, then. You are sent for."

He followed her in high excitement into the Queen's bedchamber. There he saw Margaret Carwood asleep on her back, lying on the floor; and the Queen propped up with pillows, a white silk shift upon her—or half upon her, for one shoulder was out of it. She looked

sharper, more like Circe, than she had done since her discomforts began: very intense, very pale, very black in the eyes. And she smiled at him in a curiously secret way—a beckoning, fluttering of the lips, as if she shared intelligence with him, and told him so by signs. "She was as sharp and hard and bright as a cut diamond," he writes of this appearance; "nor do I suppose that any lady in the storied world could have turned her face away from a night of terror and blood, towards a day-to-come of insult, chains and degradation, as she turned hers now before my very eyes."

She did not say anything for a while, but considered him absorbingly, with those fever-bright eyes and that cautious smile, until she had made up her mind. He, of course, was down on his knee; Mary Fleming, beside him, stood—her hand just touching his shoulder.

"Come hither, Jean-Marie."

Approaching, he knelt by the bed.

"No," said she, "stand up—closer. Now give me your hand."

He held it out, and she took it in her own, and put it within her shift, against her side. He simply gazed at her in wonder.

"Tell me now if you feel my heart beating."

He waited. "No, Madam," said he then, whispering.

"Think again."

He did. "No, Madam. Ah! pardon. Yes, I feel it."

"That will do."

He whipped back his hand and put it behind him. It had been the right hand. The Queen watched all, still smiling in that wise new way of hers.

"Now," she said, "I think you will serve me, since you have assured yourself that I am not so disturbed as you are. I wish you to find out where they have put him."

He felt Mary Fleming start and catch at her breath; but to him the question seemed very natural.

"I will go now, Madam."

"Yes. Go now. Be secret and speedy, and come back to me."

He bowed, rose up and went tiptoe out of that chamber of mystery and sharp sweetness. Just beyond the door Adam Gordon pounced on him and caught him by the neck. He struggled fiercely, tried to bite.



Sir James Melvill.

After a drawing by A. S. Hartrick.

"Let me go, let me go, you silly fool, and worse! I'm on service. Oh, my God, let me go!"

"How does she? Speak it, you French thief."

"*Dieu de Dieu!*" he panted, "I shall stab you."

At once his hands were pinned to the wall, and he crucified. He told his errand—since time was all in all—with tears of rage.

"I shall go with you," says Adam. "We will go together."

In the entry of the Chapel Royal, near the kings' tombs, they found what seemed to be a new grave. A loose flagstone—scatter of gravel all about—the stone not level: one end, in fact, projected its whole thickness above the floor.

"There he lies," says Adam. "What more do you want?"

Des-Essars was tugging at the stone. "It moves, it moves!" He was crimson in the face.

They both tussled together: it gave to this extent, that they got the lower edge clear of the floor.

"Hold on! Keep it so!" snapped Des-Essars suddenly.

He dropped on to his stomach and thrust his arm into the crack, up to the elbow.

"What are you at? Be sharp, man, or I shall drop it!" cried Adam in distress.

He *was* sharp. In a moment he had withdrawn his hand, jumped up and away, and was pelting to the stairs. Adam let the great stone down with a thud and was after him. He was stopped at the Queen's door by a maid—Seton.

"Less haste, Mr. Adam. You cannot enter. Her Majesty is busy."

Des-Essars had found the Queen waiting for him—nobody else in the room.

"Well? You saw it?"

"I have seen a grave, Madam."

"Well?"

"It is a new grave."

"There's nothing in that, boy."

"Monsieur David is in there, Ma'am."

Her quick eyes narrowed. How she peered at him! "How do you know?"

"Madam, I lifted up the stone. No one was about."

"Well?"

"I found something under it. I have it. I am therefore quite sure."

"What did you find? Let me see it."

He plucked out of his breast a glittering thing and laid it on the bed.

"Behold it, Madam!" Folding his arms, he watched it where it lay.

The Queen stared down at a naked dagger. A longish, lean, fluted blade; and upon the bevelled edge a thick smear, half its length.

She did not touch it, but moved her lips as if she were talking to it. "Do I know you, dagger? Have we been friends, dagger, old friends—and now you play me a trick?" She turned to Des-Essars.

"You know that dagger?"

"Yes, Ma'am." He had seen it often, and no later than last night.

"That will do," said she. "Leave me now. Send Fleming and Seton—and Carwood also. I shall rise."

When he was gone her face changed—grew softer, more thoughtful. Now she held out her hand daintily, the little finger high above the others, and with the tips of two daintily touched the dagger. She was rather horrible—like a creature of the woods at night, an elf or a young witch, playing with a corpse. She laughed quietly to herself as she fingered the stained witness of so much terror; but then, when she heard them at the door, picked it up by the handle and put it under the bedclothes. No one was to know what she meant to do.

The women came in. "Dress me, Carwood, and quickly. Dolet, have you my bath ready?" "Mais, c'est sûr, Majesté." They poured out for her a bath of hot red wine. No day of her life passed but she dipped herself in that.

At nine o'clock, braced into fine fettle by his exercise, Sir James Melvill went again to the hall doors. A few shivers were about by this time, for sluggard dawn was gaping at the windows; some knelt by the fire which his forethought had saved for them, some hugged themselves in corners; one man was praying aloud in an outlandish tongue, praying deeply and striking his forehead with his palm. Sir James, not to be deterred by prayers or spies, stepped up to the sentry, a new man, and tapped him on the breast. "Now, my honest friend," he said pleasantly, "I have waited my two hours, and am prepared to wait other two. But he to whom my pressing errand is must wait no longer. I speak

of my lord of Morton—your master and mine, as things have turned out.”

“My lord will be here by the ten o'clock, sir,” says the man.

“I had promised him exact tidings by eight,” replied Sir James; and spoke so serenely that he was allowed to pass the doors, which were shut upon him. Nobody could have regretted more than himself that he had lied: he had no mortal errand to the Earl of Morton. But seeing that he had not failed of Sabbath sermon for a matter of fifteen years, it was not to be expected that the murder of an Italian was to stay him now. Sermon in Saint Giles's was at nine. He was late.

The fates were adverse: there was to be no sermon for him that Sabbath. As he walked gingerly across the Outer Close—a staid, respectable Sunday gentleman—he heard a casement open behind him, and turning sharply saw the Queen at her chamber window, dressed in grey with a white ruff, and holding a kerchief against her neck. After a hasty glance about, which revealed no prying eyes, he made a low reverence to her Majesty.

Sparkling and eager as she looked, she nodded her head and leaned far out of the window. “Sir James Melvill,” she called down, in a clear, carrying voice, “you shall do me a service if you please.”

“God save your Majesty, and I do please,” says Sir James.

“Then help me from this prison where now I am,” she said. “Go presently to the Provost, bid him convene the town and come to my rescue. Go presently, I say; but run fast, good sir, for they will stay you if they can.”

“Madam, with my best will and legs.” He saluted, and walked briskly on over the frozen snow.

Out of doors after him came a long-legged man in black, a chain about his neck, a staff in hand; following him, three or four lacqueys in a dark livery.

“Ho, Sir James Melvill! Ho, Sir James!”

He was by this time at the Outer Bailey, which stood open for him—three paces more and he had done it. But there were a few archers lounging about the door of the Guard House, and two who crossed and recrossed each other before the gates. “Gently doth it,” quoth he, and stayed to answer his name to the long-legged Chamberlain.

“What would you, Mr. Wishart, sir?”

“Sir James, my lord of Ruthven hath required me——” But he got no further.

“Your lord of Ruthven?” cried Sir James. “Hath he required you to require of me, Mr. Wishart?”

“Why, yes, sir. My lord would be pleased to know whither you are bound so fast. He is, sir, in a manner of speaking, deputy to the King's Majesty at this time.”

Sir James blinked. He could see the Queen behind her window, watching him. “I am bound, sir,” he said deliberately, “whither I shall hope to see my lord of Ruthven tending anon. The sermon, Mr. Wishart, the sermon calls me; the which I have not foregone these fifteen years, nor will not to-day unless you and your requirements keep me unduly.”

“I told my lord you would be for the preaching, Sir James. I was sure o't. But he's a canny nobleman, ye ken; and the King's business is before a'.”

“I have never heard, Mr. Wishart, that it was before that of the King of kings,” said Sir James.

“Ou, fie, Sir James! To think that I should say so!”—Mr. Wishart was really concerned—“Nor my lord neither, whose acceptance of the rock of doctrine is well known. I shall just pop in and inform my lord.”

“Do so. And I wish you a good day, Mr. Wishart,” says Sir James in a stately manner, and struck out of the gates and up the hill.

He went directly to the Provost's house, and what he learned there seemed to him so serious, that he overstepped his commission by a little way. “Mr. Provost,” he said, “you tell me that you have orders from the King. I counsel you to disregard them. I counsel you to serve and obey your sanctified anointed Queen. The King, Mr. Provost, is her Majesty's right hand, not a doubt of it; but when the right hand knoweth not what the left hand is about, it is safer to wait until the pair are in agreement again. What the King may have done yesterday he may not do to-day—he may not wish it, or he may not be capable of it. I am a simple gentleman, Mr. Provost, and you are a high officer, steward of this good town. I counsel not the officer in you, but the sober burgess, when I repeat that what may have been open to the King yesterday may be shut against him to-day.”

"Good guide us, Sir James, this is dangerous work!" cried the Provost. "Who's your informant in the matter?"

"I have told you that I am a simple gentleman," said Sir James, "but I lied to you. I am a Queen's messenger: I go from you to meet her Majesty's dearest brother, the good Earl of Moray, who should be home to-day."

It must be owned that, if he was an unwilling liar, he was a good one. He lied like truth, and the stroke was masterly. The Provost set about convening the town; and when Sir James Melvill walked back to Holyrood—after sermon—all the gates were held in the Queen's name.

He did not see her, for the King was with her at the time; but Mary Beaton received him, heard his news and reported it. She returned shortly with a message: "The Queen's thanks to Sir James Melvill. Let him ride the English road and meet the Earl of Moray by her Majesty's desire." He was pleased with the errand, proud to serve the Queen. His greatest satisfaction, however, was to reflect that he had not lied to the Provost of Edinburgh.

Now we go back to Queen Mary. Bathed and powdered, dressed and coifed, her head full of schemes and heart high in courage, she waited for the King, being very sure in her own mind that he would come if she made no sign. Certainly, certainly he would come: she had reasoned it all out as she lay half in bed, smiling and whispering to the dagger. "He has been talked into this, by whom I am not sure, but I think by Ruthven and his friends. They will never stop where now they are, but will urge him further than he cares to go. I believe he will wait to see what I do. He is not bold by nature, but by surges of heat which drive him. Fast they drive him—yet they leave him soon! When he held me last night he was trembling—I felt him shake. And yet—he has strong arms, and the savour of a man is upon him!"

She sat up, with her hands to clasp her knee, and let her thought go galloping through the wild business. "I felt the child leap as I lay on his breast! Did he urge towards the King his father, glad of his manhood? So, once upon a day, urged I towards the King my lord!"

She began to blush, but would be

honest with herself. "And if he came again to me now, and took me so again in his arms—and again I sensed the man in him—what should I do?"

She looked wise, as she smiled to feel her eyes grow dim. But then she shook her head. "He will come, he will come—but not so. I know him: oh, I know him like a thumbed old book! And when I bring out that which I have here"—her hand caressed the dagger—"I know what he will do. Yes, yes, like an old book! He will rail against his betrayer, and in turn betray him. Ah, my King, my King, do I read you aright? We shall see very soon."

She looked out upon the snowy close, the black walls and dun pall of air; she saw Sir James Melvill set out upon his pious errand, and changed it, as you know. Then she resumed her judging and weighing of men,

Odd! She gave no thought to the wretched Italian; her mind was upon the quick, and not the dead. Ruthven, a black, dangerous man—scolding-tongued, impious in mind, thinking in oaths—yes: but a man! Archie Douglas, supple as a snake, Fawdonsyde and his foolish pistols, she considered not at all; but her mind harped upon Ruthven and the King, who had each laid rough hands upon her—and thus, it seems, earned her approbation. Ruthven had taken her about the middle and pushed her back, helpless, into the other's arms; and she had felt those taut arms, and not struggled; but leaned there, her face in his doublet. *Pardieu*, each had played the man that night! And Ruthven would play it again, and the King would not. No, no; not he!

Ruthven, by rights, should be won over. Should she try him? No, he would refuse her; she was sure of it. He was as bluff, as flinty-cored as—Ranging here and there, searching Scotland for his parallel, her heart jumped as she found him. Bothwell, Bothwell! Ha, if he had been there! It all began to re-enact itself—the scuffling, grunting, squealing business, with Bothwell's broad shoulders steady in the midst of it. Man against man: Bothwell and Ruthven face to face, and the daggers agleam in the candle-light; Hey, how she saw it all doing! Ruthven would stoop and glide by the wall: his bent knees, his mad, twitching brows! Bothwell would stand

his ground in mid-floor, and his little eyes would twinkle. "Play fairly with the candle, my Lady Argyll!" and he would laugh—yes, she could hear his "Ho, ho, ho!" But she jumped up as she came to that, she panted and felt her cheeks burn. She held her fine throat with both hands until she had calmed herself. So doing, a thought struck her. She rang her hand-bell and sent for Des-Essars once more.

When he came to her she made a fuss over him, stroked his hair, put her hand on his shoulder, said he was her young knight who should ride out to her rescue. He was to take a message from her to the Earl of Bothwell—that he was on no account to stir out of town until he heard from her again. He should rather get in touch with all of her friends and be ready for instant affairs. Des-Essars went eagerly but discreetly to work. She then had just time to leave a direction for Melvill, that he should be first with her brother Moray, when they told her that the King was coming in.

"Of course he is coming," she said. "What else can he do?"

Her courage rose to meet him more than half-way. If Des-Essars had been allowed to feel her heart again he would have found it as steady as a man's.

"I will see the King in the red closet," she said. "Seton, Fleming, come you with me."

When he was announced he found her thus in company, sitting at her needle-work on a low coffer by the window.

The young man had thickened rims to his eyes, but else looked pinched and drawn. He kept a napkin in his hand, with which he was for ever dabbing his mouth; seeming to search for signs of blood upon it, he inspected it curiously whenever it had touched him. As he entered the Queen glanced up, bowed her head to him and resumed her stitch-work. The two maids, after their curseys, remained standing—to his visible perturbation. It was plain that he had expected to find her alone; also that he had strung himself up for a momentous interview—and that she had not. He grew more and more nervous, the napkin hovered incessantly near his mouth; half-turning to call his man Standen into the room, he thought better of it, and came on a little way, saying, "Madam, how does your Majesty?"

She looked amused at the question, as she went on sewing.

"As well, my lord," she told him, "as I can look to be these many months more. But women must learn such lessons, which men have only to teach."

He knew that he was outmatched. "I am thankful, Madam——"

"My lord, you have every reason."

"I say, I am thankful; for I had a fear——"

She gave him a sharp look. "Do you fear, my lord? What have you to fear? Your friends are about you, your wife a prisoner. What have you to fear?"

"The tongue, Madam."

She had goaded him to this, and could have had him at her mercy had she so willed it. But she was silent, husbanding her best weapon against good time.

He went headlong on. "I had words for your private ear. I had hoped that by a little intimacy, such as may be looked for between—— But it's all one."

She affected not to understand, pored over his fretful scraps with the pure pondering of a child. "But——! Converse, intimacy between us! Who is to prevent it? Ah, my poor maids afflict you! What may be done before matrons must be guarded from the maids. Indeed, my lord, and that is my opinion. Go, my dears. The King is about to discuss the affairs of marriage."

They went out. The King immediately came to her, stooped and took her hand up from her lap. She kept the other hidden.

"My Mary," he said—"My Mary! let all be new-born between us."

She heard the falter in his voice, but considered rather his fine white hand as it held her own, and judged it with a cool brain. A frail hand for a man! So white, so thinly boned, the veins so blue! Could such hands ever hold her again? And how hot and dry! A fever must be eating him. Her own hands were cold. New-born love—for this hectic youth!

"New-born, my lord?" she echoed him, sighing. "Alas, that which must be born should be paid for first. And what the reckoning of that may be now, you know as well as I. May not one new birth be as much as I can hope for, or desire? I do think so."

Fully as well as she he knew the peril she had been in, she and the load she carried. He went down on his knee

beside her, and, holding her one hand, sought after the other which she hid.

"My dear," he said earnestly, "oh, my dear, judge me not hardly. I endeavoured to shield you last night—I held you fast—they dared not touch you! Remember it, my Mary. As for my faults, I own them fairly. I was provoked—anger moved me—bitter anger. I am young. I am not even-tempered: remember this and forgive me. And, I pray you, give me your hand.—No, the other, the other! For I need it, my heart—indeed and indeed." That hand was gripped about a cold thing in her lap, under her needlework. He could not have it without that which it held; and now she knew that he should not. For now she scorned him—that a man who had laid his own hands to man's work should now be on his knees, pleading for his wife's hands instead of snatching them—why, she herself was the better man! Womanlike, she played with what she could have killed in a flash.

"My other hand, my lord? Do you ask for it? You had it once, when you put rings upon it, but let it go. Do you ask for it again? It can give you no joy."

"I need it, I need it! You should not deny me." He craved it abjectly. "Oh, my soul, my soul, I kiss the one—let me kiss the other, lest it be jealous."

Unhappy conceit! Her eyes paled; and you might have thought her tongue a snake's, darting, forked, flickering out and in as she struck hard.

"Traitor!" thus she stabbed him—"Traitor, son of a traitor, take and kiss it if you dare." She laid above her caught hand that other, cool and firm, and opened it to show him the handle of his own dagger. She took the blade by the point and held the thing up, swinging before his shocked eyes. "Lick that, hound!" she said: "you should know the taste of it better than I."

He dropped her one hand, stared stupidly at the other; but as his gaze concentrated upon the long smear on the blade you could have seen the sweat rising on his temples.

She had read him exquisitely. After the first brunt of terror, rage was what he felt—furious rage against the man whom he supposed to have betrayed him. "Oh, horrible traitor!" he muttered by the window, whither he had betaken himself for refuge,—“Oh, Archie Douglas,

if I could be even with thee for this! Oh, man, man, man, what a curious, beastly villain!" He was much too angry now to be tender of his wife—either of her pity or revenge; he turned upon her, threatening her from his window.

"You shall not intimidate me. I am no baby in your hands. This man is a villain, I tell you, whom I shall pursue till he is below my heel. He has laid this, look you, for a trap. This was got by theft, and displayed by malice—devilish craft of a traitor. And do you suppose I shall let it go by? You mistake me, by God, if you do. Foul thief!—black, foul theft!"

She pointed to the smear on the blade. "And this?" she asked him: "what of this? Was this got by theft, my lord? Was this dry blood thieved from a dead man? Or do I mistake, as you suppose? Nay, wretch, but you know that I do not. The man was dead long before you dared touch him. Dead and in rags—and then the King drove in his blade!" Her face—Hecate in the winter—withered him more than her words. Though these contained a dreadful truth, the other chilled his blood. He crept aimlessly about the room, feeling his heart fritter to water, and all the remains of his heat congested in his head. He tried to straighten his back, his knees: there seemed no sap in his bones. And she sat on, with cold critical eyes, and her lips hard together.

"My Mary," he began to stammer, "this is all a plot against my life—surely, surely you see it. I have enemies, the worse in that they are concealed—I see now that all the past has been but a plot—why, yes, it is plain as the daylight! I entreat you to hear me: this is most dangerous villainy—I can prove it. They swore to stand my friends—fast, fast they swore it. And here—to your hand—is proof positive. Surely, surely, you see how I am trapped by these shameful traffickers!"

Her eyes never left his face, but followed him about the room on his aimless tour; and whether he turned from the window or the wall, so sure as he looked up he saw them on him. They drove him into speech. "I meant honestly," he began again, shifting away from those watchful lights; "I meant honestly indeed. I have lived amiss—oh, I know it well!

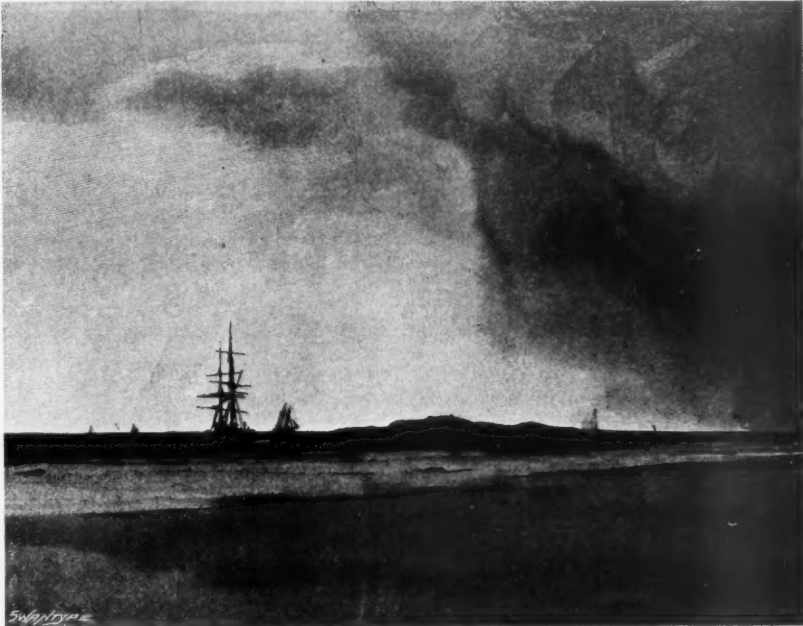
A man is led into sin, and one sin leads to another. But I am punished, threatened, in peril. Let me escape these nets and snares, I may do well yet. My Mary, all may be well! Let us stand together—you and I" he came towards her with his hands out, stopped, started back. "Look away—look away; take your eyes from off me—they burn!" He covered his own. "O God, my God, how miserable I am!"

"You are a prisoner as I am," said the Queen. "We stand together because we

It was, or it might have been, ludicrous to see his dismay. He stared, with dots where his eyes should have been; he puffed his cheeks and blew them empty; in his words he lost all sense of proportion.

"Beastly villain! Why, it is a plot against me! Why, they may murder me! Why, this may have been their whole intent! Lord God, a plot!"

He pondered this dreadfully, seeing no way of escape, struggling with the injury of it and the pity of it. Consideration that she was in the same plight, that he



After a drawing by D. Y. Cameron. Inchkeith, from Leith.

are tied together. And as for my eyes, what you abhor in them is what you have put there. But since we are fellow-prisoners, methinks——"

He looked wildly. "Who says I am prisoner? If I am—if I am—why, I am betrayed on all hands. My kinsmen—my father—no, no, no! That is foolishness. Madam," he asked her, being desperate, "who told you that I was a prisoner?"

She glanced at the dagger. "This tells me. Why, think you, should Archie Douglas have laid that in the grave, except for me to find it there?"

had plotted against her, and now himself was plotted against: there was food for humour in such a thought, but no food for him. Of the two feelings he had, resentment prevailed, and brought his cunning into play. "By heaven and hell," he said, "but I can counter shrewdly on these knaves. Just wait a little." He cheered as he fumbled in his bosom. "You shall see, you shall see—now you shall see whether or no I can foil and parry with these night-stabbers. Oh, the treachery, the treachery! But wait a little—now, now, now!"

He produced papers in a gush—bonds,

schedules, signatures, seals—all tumbled pell-mell into her lap. She read there what she had guessed beforehand: Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, Douglas, Maitland—ah, she had forgotten this lover of Mary Fleming's!—Boyd—yes, yes, and the stout Kirkaldy of Grange. Not her brothers? No: but she suspected that Maitland's name implied Moray's. Well, Sir James would win her Moray, she hoped. She did not trouble with any more. "Yes, yes, your friends, my lord. Your friends," she repeated, lingering on the pleasant word, "who have made use of you to injure me, and now have dropped you out of window. Well! And now what will you do, fellow-prisoner?"

At her knees now, his wretched head in her lap, his wretched tears staining her, he confessed the whole business, sparing nobody, not even himself; and as his miserable manhood lay spilling there it staled—like sour milk in sweet—any remnants of attraction his tall person may have had for her. She could calculate as she listened—and so she did—to what extent she might serve herself yet of this watery fool. But she could not for the life of her have expressed her contempt for him. The thing had come to pass too exactly after her calculation. If he had been a boy she might have pitied him, or if, on entering her presence, he had laid sudden hands upon her, exulting in his force and using it manfully; had he been greedy, overbearing, insolent, snatching—and a man!—she might, once more and for ever, have given him all her heart. But a blubbing, truth-telling oaf—heaven and earth! could she have wedded *this*? Well, he would serve to get her out of Holyrood; and meantime she was tired and must forgive, to get rid of him.

This was not so easy as it sounds, because at the first word of human toleration she uttered he pricked up his pampered ears. As she went on to speak of the lesson he had learned, of the wisdom of trusting her for the future and of being ruled by her experience and judgment, he brushed his eyes and began to encroach. His tears had done him good, and her recollected air gave him courage; he felt shriven, more at ease. So he enriched himself of her hand again, he edged up to share her seat; very soon she felt his arm stealing about her waist. She allowed these things because she had decided that she must.

He now became very confidential, owning freely to his jealousy of the Italian—surely pardonable in a lover!—talking somewhat of his abilities with women, his high-handed ways (which he admitted that he had in excess: "a fault, that!"), his ambitions towards kingship, crowns-matrimonial, and the like trappings of manhood. She listened patiently, saying little, judging and planning incessantly. This he took for favour, advanced from stronghold to stronghold, growing as he climbed. The unborn child—pledge of their love: he spoke of that. He was sly, used double meanings; he took her presently by the chin and kissed her cheek. Unresisted, he kissed her again and again. "*Redintegratio amoris!*" he cried, really believing it at the moment. This very night he would prove to her his amendment. Journeys end in lovers' meeting! If she would have patience she should be a happy wife yet. Would she—might he hope? Should this day be a second wedding day? Her heart was as still as freezing water, but her head prompted her to sigh and half smile.

"You consent! you consent! Oh, happy fortune!" he cried, and kissed her mouth and eyes, and possessed as much as he could.

"Enough, my lord, enough!" said she. "You forget, I think, that I am a wife."

He cursed himself for having for one moment forgotten it, threw himself at her knees and kissed her held hands over and over, then jumped to his feet, all his courage restored. "Farewell, lady! Farewell, sweet Queen! I go to count the hours." He went out humming a tavern catch about Moll and Peg. She called her women in, to wash her face and hands.

By riding long and changing often Sir James Melvill had been able to salute the Earl of Moray on the home side of Dunbar. The great man travelled, *primus inter pares*, a little apart from his companions in exile—and without Mr. Maitland. The fact is that Mr. Maitland was as much distrusted by his friends as by Lord Moray himself, and had been required at the last moment to stay in town. Sir James, thanks to that, was not long in coming to close quarters with the Earl; and frankly told him that he had been sent by the Queen's Majesty to welcome him home. Lord Moray was bound to confess to himself that, certainly,

he had not looked for that. He had expected to come back a personage to be feared, but not one to be desired. The notion was not displeasing—for if you are desired it may very well be because you are feared. So all the advantage at starting lay with Sir James.

He went on to say how much need her Majesty felt in her heart to stand well with her blood relations. As for old differences—ah, well, well, they were happily over and done with. My lord would not look for the Queen to confess to an error in judgment, nor would she, certainly, ever reproach him with the past. There was no question of a treaty of forgiveness between a sister and her brother. Urgency of the heart, mutual needs, were all! And her needs were grievous, no question. Why, the very desire she had for his help was proof that the past was past. Did not his lordship think so?

His lordship listened to this tolerant chatter as became a grave statesman. Without a sign to betray his face he requested his civil friend—"worthy Sir James Melvill"—to rehearse the late occurrences—"Of the which," he said, "hearing somewhat at Berwick, I had a heavy heart, misdoubting what part I might be called upon to play in the same."

Whereupon Sir James, with the like gravity, related to his noble friend all the details of a plot which nobody knew more exactly than the man who heard him. It added zest to the comic interlude that Sir James knew quite well that my lord had been one of the conspirators.

At the end his lordship said: "I thank you, Sir James Melvill, for your tender recital of matters which may well cause heart-searching in us all. Happy is that Queen, I consider, who has such a diligent servant! And happy also am I, who can be sure of one such colleague as yourself!"

"All goes well," thinks Melvill. "I have my old sow by the lug."

If he had one lug, the Queen got the other. For when my Lord of Moray reached Edinburgh that night, he was told that her Majesty awaited him at Holyroodhouse. Prisoner or not, she received him there, smiling and eager to see him—and her gaolers standing by! And whenas he hesitated, darkly bowing before her, she came forward in a pretty, shy way; and, "Oh, brother, brother, I am glad you

have come to me," she said, and gave him her hands, and let him kiss her cheek.

He murmured something proper—his duty always remembered, and the rest of the phrases,—but she, as if clinging to him, ran on in a homelier speech. "Indeed, there was need of you, brother James!" she assured him, and went on to tell him that which moved the stony man to tears. At least, it is so reported, and I am glad to believe it.

She walked with him afterwards in full hall, talking low and quickly—candour itself. Her tones had a throbbing note, and a note of confidence, which changed the whole scene as she recited it. I repeat, the hall was full while she walked with him there, up and down in the flickering firelight—full of the men whose plots he had shared, and hoped to profit by. Fine spectacle for my lords of the Privy Council, for Mr. Archie Douglas and his cousin Morton, fine for Mr. Maitland! Before she kissed her brother good-night, before she went to bed, she felt that she had done a good day's work. And now, with her triumph as good as won, she was ready for the crowning of it.

There she was out-generalled: there she was beaten. Match for all these men's wit, she was outwitted by one man's sodden flesh. They undressed her, prepared her for bed. She lay there in her pale, fragrant beauty, solace for any lord's desire, and conscious of it, and more fine for the knowledge. She took deep breaths and draughts of ease; she assured herself that she was very fair; she watched the glimmering taper and read the shadows on the pictured wall as she waited for the crowning of her toils. The day had been hers against all odds: the day is not always to Venus, but the night is her demesne. So she waited and drowsed, smiling her wise smile, secure, superb, and at ease. But King Harry Darnley, very drunk, lay stertorous in his own bed; nor dared Forrest, nor Standen, nor any man of his household, stir him out of that. The Queen of Wine and Honey had digged a pit of sweetness and hidden a fine web all about it, and was fallen into the midst of it herself.

And so, it is like enough, if the boar had not timely rent the thigh of Adonis, might Dame Venus herself have writhed, helpless in just such toils.

(To be continued.)

MASTER WORKERS.

X.—SIR OLIVER LODGE,

M.Sc., F.R.S., D.Sc. Lond., Oxon. and Vict., LL.D. St. Andrews and Glasgow,
Principal of the University of Birmingham.

BY HAROLD BEGBIE.

Science, when she has accomplished all her triumphs in her order, will still have to go back when the time comes, to assist in the building up of a new creed by which man can live.—JOHN MORLEY.

SOME fifty years ago there was a gentleman of power and position, one Oliver Lodge, living at Penk-hull, Stoke-upon-Trent, engaged in the Potteries. His eldest son, also an Oliver, at the age of fourteen, passed from the grammar school to his father's works, and for six or seven years devoted himself to what we cheerfully call the business of life. But it chanced while the little boy was working in the Potteries he stumbled upon a copy of the *English Mechanic*, and found himself of a sudden, breathless and wondering, in a new world. Afterwards he heard a short course of lectures by Tyndall, and learned that there was such a thing as Science, that there were men in the world who toiled neither for money nor for fame, but who gave up all their energies to the solving of beautiful riddles. It was a kind of palingenesis for the boy, and henceforth his pocket-money was devoted to acquiring such guides to knowledge as the *Penny Cyclopadia*, and his hours of leisure were wholly given up to strenuous study in subjects other than the classics he had learnt at school.

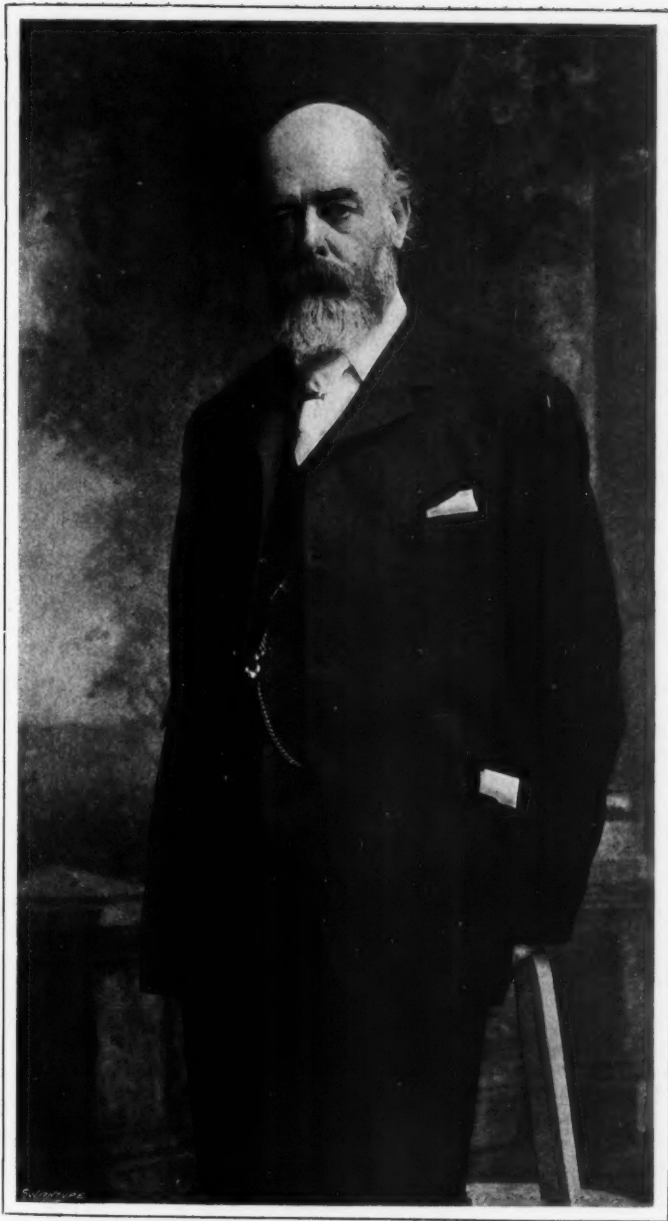
Fortunately for the boy Oliver, his father, after the seven years of business, recognising that his son had a genius for science, allowed him to turn his back upon the Potteries and seek a further education in London. In all the romances written about the awakening of genius in boys, and of their setting out to London to push their fortunes, few, I think—in the light of the result—are so captivating and encouraging as the story of Oliver Lodge. But for that copy of the *English Mechanic* turning up by chance in the Potteries, he might now be bending over the ledgers of a counting-house; and if that had been the case the name of Marconi would very probably have been unknown to the world, while our knowledge of electricity would be vastly less.

It is impossible in this article to trace the fortunes of the boy in London, to

remark the eternal influence upon his character of the good but Calvinistic aunt with whom he lodged in the Metropolis—not even, I fear, to note the effect upon his life which followed a fortunate meeting with Frederic Myers. All these things must be left out, since it is my purpose to make this article the corollary of the article dealing with Mr. John Morley in the last number of our Magazine, and to carry the subject of man and his destiny from the slough of despond in which the philosopher left it, to the hill on which Science is already building her altar to God. The quotation at the head of this sketch, considering its authorship and the place of the present article in the sequence, is almost an invitation to me to adopt this course. If other excuse be needed, I may plead Mr. Morley's perplexing unacquaintance with modern science, and the extraordinary number of requests which I have received, since the beginning of this series of articles, from all quarters of the world, to state as exactly as I can the position of Oliver Lodge to the mystery of personality and our relationship with God.

It is not wholly presumptuous for me to undertake such a task, for a man in familiar fireside chat will often utter sentiments and give speech to convictions which he himself, either from his position or the medium in which he works, can never quite deliver to the world. And I believe that it is what men of science are thinking, rather than what they are saying, that is of most importance to the world. But in all this paper contains, it is I who am saying what I believe Dr. Lodge thinks, and to him attaches no responsibility for my interpretation of our many talks. Be it remembered, too, that the quotation marks represent Sir Oliver's chit-chat only as I remember it, and with no refreshment from a scribbled note-book.

Let me first venture to describe this man,—unquestionably the greatest, as he



Sir Oliver Lodge.
From a photograph by Kay, Southport.

is the most fearless, man I have ever met. If you look at the picture illustrating this article you will be struck at the first glance with its remarkable resemblance to the great Lord Salisbury. The likeness is extraordinary. But there are points of difference. Lord Salisbury—I saw him frequently—suggested a great but slow and ponderous intellect. His eyes were tired, his brows were weary. All his movements were laborious. He gave one the impression, even when he rose from the reading of a French novel at the Junior Carlton and shuffled to his solitary luncheon,* of a man with no business to do, one whose thoughts ran willy-nilly into channels which rather bored him, certainly never interested him.

Lodge, on the other hand, is a man broad awake. The most striking character in his face is the deep line of concentration which runs from between the eyebrows into the forehead. It suggests sternness, and in a soldier might indicate an iron mind; in reality it is the line of swift and earnest thinking in a mind extraordinarily agile and fertile. The brow is higher than Lord Salisbury's, and suggests Matthew Arnold's splendid tribute to Shakespeare—

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which
bow,

Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

It is the forehead of tremendous power. Then, too, the eyes are larger than Lord Salisbury's, and the line of the lid is more rigid and alert. They are the eyes of a man who has made up his mind to see life steadily, and to see it whole; and, though I have seen them clouded at the mention of human anguish (especially the pain of little children), they clear quickly and become serene with the steady faith that guides and controls his life.

Oliver Lodge was once described by a child as "the great big lion with the white satin heart." It is an excellent figure. The hugeness of the man—he is many inches over six feet,—the almost brusque voice, the rigid line in the brows, and the mouth which occasionally hints

at a sort of giant petulance, all tend to impress one at the first glance only with the idea of conscious strength and crouching power. But acquaintance with him reveals a character singularly gentle and lovable, and a temper wonderfully sweet and attractive. To see him sitting at his own crowded table, watching his children with amusement and open delight, is to get a glance through the windows of his eyes into the soul behind. He retains, as so many men engaged in University life do retain, much of the joyous youthfulness of life. He is a brother to his sons, and enters into the healthy chaff of a large family quietly but with relish. He is most human and most simple; a real man, sincere in all things, honest in every phase of his mind, and entirely without affectation of any kind. Friendship with him speedily transforms reverence into warm affection, and I can think of no really great man whose influence on those about him is so entirely that of character rather than that of intellect. One is always, I mean, much more conscious of the man than of his knowledge and power.

I was staying at Edgbaston the other day, soon after I had written my sketch of Mr. Morley. After dinner on the day of my arrival, and after some delightful experiments with radium, Sir Oliver and I retired to his study to smoke a last cigarette. But I happened to mention Mr. Morley's views, and then—well, the last cigarette burned on till half-past one! I have discussed the problem of man and his relation to God, fragmentarily, on many occasions with Dr. Lodge—standing on the roof of his house looking towards the hills, at the dinner-table, and even whilst watching his peacocks on the lawn at Edgbaston!—but it is the memory of this single midnight conversation which lives hardest in my mind. Perhaps it is that one talks more freely when the day is quite burned out, or perhaps there was a condition of mind favourable to telepathy, and the questions hammering for answers on my own consciousness awoke their answers in his; certain is it that in the small hours of that particular night I obtained a clearer view of his attitude

* Lord Salisbury used to eat his luncheon at the Junior Carlton, rather than the Carlton, because he wanted to escape button-holders. I once saw him addressed at the Junior Carlton on the subject of the weather, by an ambitious gentleman sitting at his side at the next table. The effect of the remark on Lord Salisbury's face was ludicrous in the extreme. His jaw dropped, his eyebrows went high into his forehead, and he looked blankly into space for a second or two with a loaded fork half-way to his mouth. The conversation ended where it began.

towards life than ever before or ever since.

He was not amazed to know that Herbert Spencer shrank from the thought of infinite space which, long before either creation or evolution, has existed for ever and ever. He saw nothing to wonder at in Huxley's horror at the reflection that in 1900 he would know no more than he knew in 1800. Nor was he troubled by the news that Mr. Morley showed no very lively interest in the forward march of science. He merely smiled and nodded his head. Far from thinking that the wave of agnosticism had spent itself, he expected to see—indeed, he rather welcomed—the coming of a wider, louder, and a more blinding flood of agnosticism.

"It seems rather cruel," he said, "to stand on one side of a pit, and to look on unmoved at other people toppling in from the farther side, into the very blackness from which one has only just escaped oneself. But agnosticism is the pioneer work of a larger science and a nobler interpretation of religion. Men must learn to doubt before they learn the desire to know, and it is only the misery of agnosticism—Spencer's shrinking, and all that—which will drive them into other fields of inquiry, fields which some of us think may lead men from faith to knowledge. People do not fully realise even yet the splendid work of Huxley. The agnostics were not building, they were destroying; they were clearing the ground, are clearing it still, that other hands may build other temples on the places they have laid waste.

"This shrinking and horror," he went on, "are to be welcomed, not deplored. It is good for a man to discover before he goes Upstairs that he has not learned all there is to know in the universe. It does not do," he added, smiling, "to go into the next world too cock-a-hoop! Men who make a study of evolution, and nothing else, are apt to find out before the end that there is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in their philosophy. An expert, we are told, is one who knows nothing else. And so it comes about that agnosticism harrows men's souls and prepares the soil for other seed. When they have dug deep enough into physics, and have cropped sufficient electrons, they will turn away from a full granary and begin to scratch the lighter soil of psychics. That is quite

evident; but it will come slowly, and there is no reason why we should hurry it."

This is his view. Slowly but certainly science uses up one field of inquiry and passes on into others. Alchemy went before chemistry, astrology went before astronomy; mysticism goes before psychics. Materialism covers only a grain of sand in the universe, and the universe is less than a grain of sand in comparison with infinite space.

"But shall we ever know that the individuality persists after death?" I asked.

"Some of us," he replied, "have proofs on that head which are as certain as proof can be. I know of nothing which satisfies my own mind that I would care to take before the Royal Society, but the fault may not be so much in the nature of the proof as in the nature of our present methods of testing evidence. The laborious documents of the Psychical Research Society are there for all the world to see, and while we have exposed much fraud and discredited much spiritualism, we have collected evidence of the possibility of communication between this and other worlds which deserve consideration. We are publishing shortly remarkable examples of automatic-writing, which some of us believe to be a communication from Frederic Myers. I believe this document will prove to be of great importance." What followed here, I do not feel myself at liberty to make public; but some day, when the story of Oliver Lodge comes to be written, his own personal reasons for faith in continuance after death will be set out in full. Suffice it to say that he has good reason to believe in the possibility of communication between this and other worlds.

"What we *can* take before the Royal Society," he continued, "and what we can challenge the judgment of the world upon, is telepathy. Here is the beginning of a wider conception of science. Directly men see and admit, as they must do from the overwhelming evidence, that it is possible to transmit ideas direct from brain to brain, without the intermediaries of speech and hearing, they are looking into and gaining admission to new fields of exploration. Mind you, it is a dangerous field; I have described it as the borderland of physics and psychology, and admitted that the whole region

appears to be in the occupation of savages abandoned to the grossest superstition. But I say we have got to take the country, and rule it for the advantage of mankind. Galileo, you remember, funk'd teaching the Copernican theory and abandoning the Ptolemaic, because he was not quite firmly seated in his University chair. It is exactly the same thing to-day. Men are too nervous, and not unnaturally, to avow any interest in a study which has so long been left in the hands of quacks and impostors. But some of them are bound to study it. Everything in the world has to be examined. As Huxley said, speaking of science and commerce—I wonder if he guessed how his words might be used!—"Great is the rejoicing of those who are benefited thereby, and, for the moment, science is the Diana of all the craftsmen. But even while the cries of jubilation resound, and this flotsam and jetsam of the tide of investigation is being turned into wages of workmen and the wealth of capitalists, the crest of the wave of scientific investigation is far away on its course over the illimitable ocean of the unknown." That is very well put: illimitable, unknown. Not, you remark, unknowable."

I have collected a few brief extracts of Sir Oliver Lodge's views on telepathy, and give them here in his own words. On the subject of communication between mind and mind, he says—

A prearranged code called language, and a material medium of communication, are the recognised methods. May there not also be an immaterial (perhaps an ethereal) medium of communication? Is it possible that an idea can be transferred from one person to another by a process such as we have not yet grown accustomed to, and know practically nothing about? In this case I have evidence. I assert that I have seen it done; and am perfectly convinced of the fact. . . . Why must we speak of it with bated breath, as of a thing of which we are ashamed? What right have we to be ashamed of a truth?

He professes himself prepared to assert that—

. . . The distance between England and India is no barrier to the sympathetic communication of intelligence in some way of which we are at present ignorant; that, just as a signalling key in London causes a telegraphic instrument to respond instantaneously in Teheran, which is an everyday occurrence, so the danger or death of a

distant child, a brother, or husband, may be signalled, without wire or telegraph clerk, to the heart of a human being fitted to be the recipient of such a message.

Now, to get rid of the idea of distance—which appears to be the manifest trend of telepathy—is to lead one naturally to a distrust of another and an even more dominant idea of the finite mind,—the idea of Time. What is Time? Does each day come to us new and vacant from the womb of infinity, and is it buried at nightfall in an eternal grave? Is each day a thing separate, alone, by itself?

Lodge has a figure to express his view on this subject which is very graphic. He likens us to passengers in a slow train who look out from the windows at the country through which we are passing. Now, to the passengers each field must appear a thing separate and distinct. We see the end of one field, begin another, and go slowly past it till we reach something else—a cottage, a river, a mill, perhaps a town. But in reality, if we would but put our heads out of the window, we should see that the whole country is one, that each part of it belongs, that instead of this field coming suddenly out of the exhaustion of another, and itself disappearing in a certain time, all the fields—those behind and those before—exist as one wide scene, whole and complete.

The train represents the physical senses which we now employ, and which some of us are stupid enough to regard as perfect instruments for apprehending all there is to see and all there is to hear and all there is to understand in the whole universe. But, even if we get a few smuts in our eyes, we must learn to put our heads out of the window, and see whether we can find a larger interpretation of life. The senses as we know them are wonderful, and can be made to do extraordinarily fine work; but they are not perfect, and we may be possessed of others, greater and infinitely more wonderful, but now in a rudimentary state.

Remember this, science is entirely ignorant of the mystery of cohesion. Dr. Lodge's little boy once asked him why both ends of a stick came up from the ground when he only pulled at one. The professor could not answer. Neither is there any answer to the still greater question of a child of five,—“Could God

make a stone so big that He could not lift it Himself?" We are still stammering over the a, b, c of science.

The discovery of the electron reveals a sort of solar system in every atom. The distances dividing atoms, relative to their size, are enormous. The whole universe may present to real sight a single solid.

By the application of X rays we see that opaque bodies are in fact transparent. We know that our world passes through the ether without disturbing it, as a tag of net goes through the sea. To real vision matter may be non-existent. To real knowledge time may be a delusion.

We are influenced by the past: may we not be "controlled by the future"? On this subject hear Dr. Lodge:—

A vulnerable spot on our side seems to be the connection between life and energy. The conservation of energy has been so long established as to have become a commonplace. The relation of life to energy is not understood. Life is not energy, and the death of an animal affects the amount of energy no whit; yet a live animal exerts control over energy which a dead one cannot. Life is a guiding or directing principle, disturbing to the physical world but not yet given a place in the scheme of physics. The transfer of energy is accounted for by the performance of work; the guidance of energy needs no work, but demands force only. What is force? and how can living beings exert it in the way they do? As automata operated on by preceding conditions—that is, by the past—say the materialists. Are we so sure that they are not controlled by the future too?—in other words, that the totality of things, by which every one must admit that actions are guided, may not include the future as well as the past, and that to attempt to deduce those actions from the past only will prove impossible? In some way matter can be moved, guided, disturbed, by the agency of living beings; in some way there is a control, a directing-agency active, and events are caused at its choice and will that would not otherwise happen.

How, then, does Lodge himself—holding these large views—regard the universe and its mystery, or rather, how is he tempted to think about it in his own mind? In answering this question I must first venture to correct a popular error concerning the great concept of Frederic Myers,—an error which some of the leading critics of "Human Personality" only helped to perpetuate even in the best reviews!

The idea that man has two selves, a subliminal and a supraliminal consciousness, the one antagonistic in a greater or less degree to the other, and both operating in the physical organism, is not the axiom of Myers. Myers' idea is this, that the Ego or the soul exists spiritually, moves and has its being, that is to say, on the spiritual plane, and that, functioning there as the subliminal consciousness, it detaches from itself a certain portion of its own consciousness which accretes matter, and becomes the supraliminal consciousness with which we are alone familiar. At death the atom of supraliminal consciousness, which we now call Me, rejoins the subliminal, which is the larger Me, carrying with it the fruits of its experience, adding to the whole Ego fresh knowledge, and retaining in perfectness its own memory of the earthly or material life. The subliminal consciousness, that is to say, is not an earthly consciousness, and we, as we know ourselves here, are only fragments of our whole self striving to acquire experience through a physical medium.

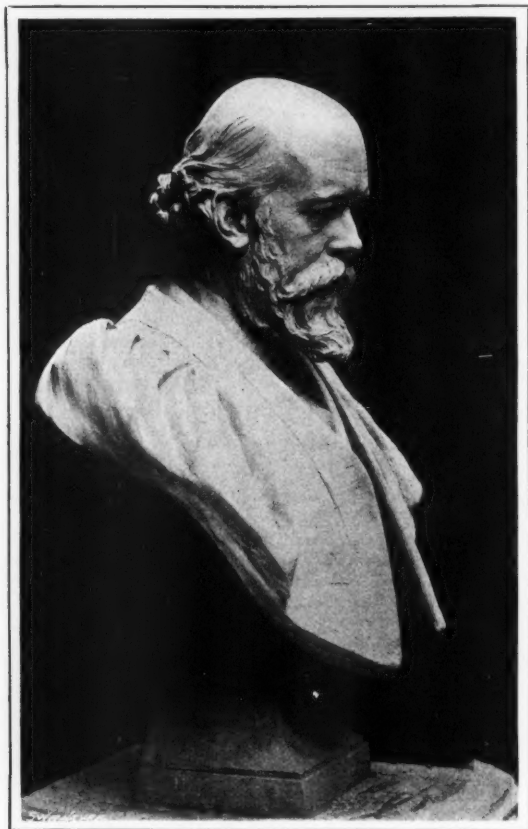
Lodge is inclined to hold this creed. He says:—

The mystery of incarnation and of gradual development, of the persistence of existence beyond bodily death and decay, and even some glimmerings of the possible meaning of the vague dream of so-called re-incarnation, all become in some sort intelligible on a basis of this kind—the basis of a full and never wholly manifested persistent self, from which periodically sprouts a terrestrial manifestation, though never twice the same. Each terrestrial appearance flourishes and assimilates mental and moral nutriment for a time, and the result of each is incorporated in the constant and growing memory of the underlying, supporting, but inconspicuously manifesting, and at present barely recognised, fundamental self.

For one moment let me pause to remark how this theory, to take an example, explains the painful problem of lunacy. One of the leading alienists in London told me the other day that the brain of insane people is often *larger and healthier* than that of the sane. A feeble terrestrial appearance of the real self helps to explain, it seems to me, this paradox—this fumbling at the strings of the mind, this discord on the keys. Strange, too, how it justifies the old vulgar phrase concerning an insane person that "he is not all there."

Now, Lodge's view of God and the universe, as I understand it—or at any rate, his feeling towards the mystery—lies in a development of Myers' theory of man. We are mortal atoms of an immortal consciousness. May not God, as manifested in this universe—so far as we are able to apprehend Him—be a finite God? * Elsewhere, if you will, infinite,

expressed, is the great thought which I fancy underlies the philosophy of Oliver Lodge. He sees a marvellous universe of amazing workmanship, all but perfect, but not quite perfect. Laws of sublime conception work with inhuman precision, but not quite perfectly. Stars crash into stars; worlds burn out and float like wreckage in the ether; even the winds of



A bust.

omniscient, and omnipotent; but here, looking at Him through physical eyes, studying Him in His terrestrial appearance, for us a finite God. This, clumsily

our own little star break loose and bring ruin and destruction to mankind. There is hunger, there are tears, and cruelty, and selfishness, and heavy sorrow of the

* Sir Oliver Lodge seemed to hint at this faith in one of the famous articles in the *Hibbert Journal*: "We must blink nothing; evolution is a truth, a strange and puzzling truth; 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together'; and the most perfect of all the sons of men, the likeliest God this planet ever saw, He to whom many look for their idea of what God is, surely He taught us that suffering, and sacrifice, and wistful yearning for something not yet attainable, were not to be regarded as human attributes alone."

soul. These things are not perfect; and though they may produce virtue and art and history, even science itself, yet they obstinately block the path to man's realisation of a God of Love, and after thousands of years of religion and philosophy have lost none of their poignancy, none of their mutinous effects.

Lodge, as I fancy, holds that God has set us here to help Him—left us here to perfect His plan, while He is conquering and working out His monstrous fabric through the inconceivable tracts of infinite and eternal space. We are here, he told me, to interfere with nature; our business lies in the improvement of the conditions which we find about us, and in a steady uplifting of ourselves to greater heights. We are not to spend too much time in praying, though prayer has its effect, but rather are we to pray by our work for God in making the world better. We are not to be disheartened by sin. Sin is a phase. It is unknown among animals; the highest men have already grown beyond it. Sin is merely a reversion to type, a throwing back; in remembering this, he would also have us remember that the race may throw forward, and with this light in our minds he would have men study the life of Jesus, and the lives of the saints, with new reverence, and with a greater determination to ascertain the truth. Science is accused of stealing the Christ from religion; but Science may yet give back to the churches a greater and a more wonderful Christ than they have yet apprehended.

He has boldly expressed his faith in the power of prayer:—

If we are open to influence from each other by non-corporeal methods, may we not be open to influence from beings in another region or of another order? And if so, may we not be aided, inspired, guided, by a cloud of witnesses,—not witnesses only, but helpers, agents like ourselves of the immanent God? How do we know that in the mental sphere these cannot answer prayer, as we in the physical? It is not a speculation only, it is a question for experience to decide.

I know that his own faith in the power of prayer is great. He told me that we had not yet even begun to find out what is possible through the medium of prayer. Only it must be prayer with the whole soul behind it, convinced of its own strength, and perfect as knowledge.

"It is no use praying like the dear old lady," he laughed, "who had been so moved by a sermon on the efficacy of prayer—the power of prayer to remove mountains—that she went home determined to try the effect of prayer on an obstructing hill in front of her cottage. She prayed for a long time, and then went to bed. In the morning, trembling with excitement, she tiptoed across the room, drew the blind an inch or two aside, and peeped out. 'There!' she exclaimed, with disgust, dropping the blind and stalking to her bed: '*just what I expected!*' It's a simple story, but after all, isn't that the kind of spirit in nearly all the prayers of the world?"

At the back of Lodge's mind, perhaps the mainspring of his amazing energy, is the thought of human suffering. I have heard him exclaim suddenly that it would be better to be living in the simpleness and quiet of the twelfth century than in the midst of overcrowded and sweated slums and the refinements of torture which civilisation has developed out of time. But, instantly, he has checked, and smiled; and declared that the battle is best, and that it is only in working to make the world better that life, in the long run, can be endurable and pleasing. "Do the best you can for your fellows," he said, "work hard to the last, and then go Upstairs to rule a planet." It is characteristic of him that, full as his days are, every hour packed with work, the thought of the pain endured by children in learning arithmetic has set him to write a new arithmetic book, making that study at once easy and interesting.

I spoke of Dr. Lodge's theory that it is man's prime business to interfere with nature. It is not known among the public, I think, that the man who began for us wireless telegraphy has also made experiments which prove that man, in some measure at least, can control the weather. He has filled a bell-jar with smoke, both dry smoke and damp smoke, and then by electrifying the clouded atmosphere has seen the smoke coagulate and fall. He has filled a room with dense smoke, electrified it, and cleared the air completely. His invention is now patented, and ships might be believed to be fitted with an instrument for electrifying the air, whereby they will be able to drive back the heaviest of sea-fogs on

either side of them. He sees no reason why the clouds should not be made to discharge their rain under certain conditions. It is only a matter of experimentation and improvement of invention. He tells you that if he was not so busy he would experiment on a large scale, but that experiments of that kind cost money. He does not easily take what he calls the commercial-traveller view of science.

To conclude, Sir Oliver Lodge is a man devoted heart and soul to Science, because he believes Science is at the present moment the best servant of humanity. He regrets the clash of party conflicts in our political life, because it is a dissipation of national energy which should be devoted to nobler ends. He regrets the tremendous sums of money wasted in luxurious living, because it could be given to endow national laboratories, where men of science might work towards truth unfretted by the necessity for making daily bread. All things which lower the dignity of man, which obscure his high end, and which waste his faculties, have a strenuous and uncompromising enemy in this man. He would have the nation make up its mind and announce its policy to be the acquisition of Truth, and shape its energies and ambitions to that end. That is to say, he would have Science influencing legislation, so that slums would become impossible, the present abominable and utterly unnecessary atmosphere of our towns an illegality, and the whole of our present system of primary education rendered rational and useful to the State. He would have our prisons in the hands of scientific men, our workhouses and reformatories conducted in a saner and therefore a more humanitarian fashion; and he would also have our theologians and ethicists study physical and psychical science with the same reverence as that which they now give to religion in the one case and to philosophy in the other. For, as he says, all are but parts of one stupendous whole.

He is a man of many interests. He is the greatest educationist in the Midlands, the President of the Psychical Research Society, the moving spirit in the association which is turning the Black Country into a green country, a keen golfer, a disciple of Ruskin, and a lover of poetry. His speeches are dignified and impressive,

and he holds an audience of working-men spell-bound. His books are lucid and straightforward, the simplicity of the diction having that kind of solemn dignity which impresses mankind more lastingly than any graces of style. In some of his books, such as the popular "Pioneers of Science," his style is at once brilliant and captivating, and the book is something of a romance.

Turn up his name in the Directory of the *Electrician*, and you find yourself confronted by columns of his attainments. How he has crowded so much work into his life is something of a miracle, especially when he tells you that most of his thinking out of mechanical inventions is done in "odd moments." So much work accomplished, so great a position attained, and he is only fifty-two years old! Nothing so helps me to hope for wonderful discoveries in science in the near future as the remembrance that this man, who has already done so much, and whose faith in the reality of spiritual existence is so confirmed and scientific, is only in middle-age, and still belongs to what is called the younger School of Physicists.

Materialism, it may be, has more work to do, and will be active for some years yet, but the quarrelsome and dogmatic spirit which once animated its work of destruction is passing away, and men are beating at new doors. To no man living does this more reasonable and more hopeful spirit owe so much as to this man, who, over and over again, has shown himself unafraid of the orthodoxy of science, and who has asked the British Association what right they have to be ashamed of a truth.

At first (he says) things look mysterious. A comet, lightning, the aurora, the rainbow—all strange, anomalous, mysterious apparitions. But scrutinised in the dry light of science, their relationship with other better-known things becomes apparent. They cease to be anomalous; and though a certain mystery necessarily remains, it is no more a property peculiar to them—it is shared by the commonest object of daily life.

The operations of a chemist, again, if conducted in a haphazard manner, would be an indescribable medley of effervescences, precipitations, changes in colour and in substance; but, guided by a thread of theory running through them, the processes fall into a series, they all become fairly intelligible, and any explosion or catastrophe that may occur is capable of explanation too.

Now I say that the doctrine of ultimate intelligibility should be pressed into other departments also. At present we hang back from whole regions of inquiry and say they are not for us. A few we are beginning to grapple with. The nature of disease is yielding to scrutiny with fruitful result: the mental aberrations and abnormalities of hypnotism, duplex personality, and allied phenomena, are now at last being taken under the wing of science after long ridicule and contempt. The phenomena of crime, the scientific meaning and justification of altruism, and other matters relating to life and conduct, are beginning, or perhaps are barely yet beginning, to show a vulnerable front over which the forces of science may pour.

. . . The possibilities of the universe are as infinite as is its physical extent. Why should we grope with our eyes always downward, and deny the possibility of everything out of our accustomed beat?

If there is a puzzle about free-will, let it be attacked: puzzles mean a state of half-knowledge; by the time we can grasp something more approximating to the totality of things the paradoxicality of paradoxes drops away and becomes unrecognisable. I seem to myself to catch glimpses of clues to many of these old questions, and I urge that we should trust consciousness, which

has led us thus far, should not shrink from the problem when the time seems ripe for an attack upon it, and should not hesitate to press investigation and seek to ascertain the laws of even the most recondite problems of life and mind.

What we know is as nothing to that which remains to be known. This is sometimes said as a truism; sometimes it is half doubted. To me it seems the most literal truth, and that if we narrow our view to already half-conquered territory only, we shall be false to the men who won our freedom and treasonable to the highest claims of science.

Ultimate intelligibility. What we know is as nothing to that which remains to be known. Life does not end with death. These are not the words of a wild dreamer, the aspiration of a discursive soul. They are the measured utterances of a trained man of science, a profound mathematician, the author of "Signalling Without Wires," a Rumford Medallist of the Royal Society, and the Principal of the most modern of all Universities.

And he belongs to the younger School of Physicists.

CAPTIVES.

MY thought is like a honey-bee,
It seeks your lips to drouse and swoon;
Ah . . . rendering the sweets to me
Soon!

My thought is like a bird to nest,
It seeks your heart with pinions fleet;
Ah . . . let it find a home and rest
Sweet!

My thoughts would claim no liberty,
Bound to your love while time endures;
Ah . . . keep them in captivity
Yours!

V. V.



THE WILDERNESS.

BY H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON.

THE moon was rising over the bare elms of the drive, and the upper part of the manor garden was in light, a thin faint light that yet won through the Tudor window and fell upon the carpet. A little jet of light over the mantelpiece added to the shadows of the room, as Rose Heseltine entered it. From the big chamber on the other side of the hall streamed a flare and warmth, and the sound of cheerful voices. She paused for a moment, and leaning across the sofa looked out of the window, her bare arms singularly white in the blackness of her evening gown. The fall of feet came up the terrace, and she leaned a little closer, waiting until the strollers passed. They were full in the moon's glory, and stayed to look down towards the park. Then they moved on.

Rose hesitated, then got up suddenly, pulled her dark wrap about her, and went swiftly into the hall. She emerged upon the terrace a little later, and stood, a still tall figure, as though in contemplation of that flooded beauty. From the farther end of the terrace the steps approached, and she rested an arm on the stone coping and waited. The man and the woman came to a pause beside her.

"Ah! here is someone else not afraid of the cold," said the man, with an air of pleasant welcome.

"Is it cold?" she asked; and added

quickly, "What do you think, Miss Taunton?"

"I?" said the girl, laughing. "Oh, I'm never cold."

"Well, I was just going to complain," said he. "You see the advantage of youth, Mrs. Heseltine."

"You should address Miss Taunton," said she.

"I address both," he replied amiably. "But if in deference to my age and infirmities you will kindly consent to adjourn to the conservatory, we can see the moon from there."

Mildred Taunton moved off with him, but he seemed to linger, and, after a momentary hesitation, Rose joined them. The conservatory was warm and well lighted, and they sat, the man sinking somewhat heavily into his chair. Miss Taunton's white-shrouded form contrasted with Rose's black, and it appeared to strike him as he gazed from one to the other with the deliberation characteristic of him. Rose Heseltine let a glance float to both her companions, as if she would speculate as to what had happened since they tramped the terrace; but the man's tranquil face and the girl's amiable placidity revealed nothing.

"Did you enjoy your walk this afternoon?" she asked.

"Did we?" said he, turning with a smile to Miss Taunton.

"It was delightful," she replied, with frank enjoyment.

Her handsome face, capable and pleasant, smiled at Rose: she had the air of as much ease and satisfaction as he. His gaze rested on her now with some admiration, and also some scrutiny; and, becoming conscious of it, the girl turned, encountered it, and laughed faintly and without embarrassment. But if these two were placid, so was not the third. The pallor of her face was heightened by the moonlight.

"What is it you have there?" he asked presently, indicating a book in Rose's hand.

She displayed it.

"Prayer-book?" he said, opening his eyes.

"I was thinking of going to the watch service," she replied.

"Dear me! it is years since I saw the old year out that way. I think I'll go too. Will you come, Miss Taunton?"

"I'm quite game," she said at once.

Mrs. Heseltine rose.

"Please don't go," he pleaded. "It's not time yet. Read us something—a collect."

"Thank you, that will wait, as you are going to church, Mr. Combermere," said Rose shortly; and then she added softly, "But I will leave you the book if you will promise to study it. Can you find your way about in it, Miss Taunton? Some people can't, you know—not even in the Marriage Service."

"Oh, I haven't had any need to—yet," said the girl, with her good-natured smile.

"You will better that some day," was the retort.

Mildred's white teeth rested prettily on her underlip, as she made the appearance of considering.

"Shall I, Mrs. Heseltine?" asked Combermere, fatuously smiling.

"I have no doubt whatever," she replied, smiling back very sweetly. "So I will leave the book, that you may begin your studies at once."

He opened it indifferently. "A man may not marry his—" He broke off quickly. "Why, Mrs. Heseltine's gone, and I particularly wanted to speak to her."

Mildred Taunton looked at him with her charming smile. "I'll fetch her back," she said.

"No, we'll follow her," he said, in his

way of taking all things for granted; "I think we've had enough of this moon."

Before they reached the hall they overtook her, for she was gazing out of the window at the terrace. She did not move as they appeared.

"I beg your pardon," said Combermere, with elaborate playfulness, "would you be so good as to direct us to the dining-room? We are strangers here, and——"

"Oh, you can't miss it," said Rose, with a tiny laugh, but not turning her head. "Follow your noses."

"If I follow yours——" said he doubtfully to the girl.

She put back her head and laughed loudly, her delicate nose tiptilted towards the ceiling. "If it were a question of following noses," she retorted, "after all yours goes down."

"Then we will follow Mrs. Heseltine's instead," he decided.

"Indeed you will do nothing of the sort," said Rose: "I'm going to get ready. You must thread the labyrinth alone, or rather together," she added.

"I will lead you as far as the hall, Miss Taunton," said Combermere; "then we will bid each other a last goodbye, and——"

Rose Heseltine's shoulders shrugged in the darkness. A man's voice broke in on them.

"Hulloa! what are you people doing here?"

"We are going to church, Dauntry," said Combermere.

"Church!" echoed their host, and stared. "By Jove, the watch service, you mean. I'm hanged if I don't come; and some of the others will too. I know my wife won't."

"You see what it is to have one good soul," said Combermere: "Mrs. Heseltine's influence over us all."

"If we go by the Wilderness, it isn't more than three-quarters of a mile," went on Dauntry, "and it's a lovely night. I'll tell 'em all."

He vanished, and when Combermere looked round Mrs. Heseltine had gone also. His glance met Mildred Taunton's, and both smiled.

"I want you to walk with me," said he: "I am going to say something to you."

"To me!" she echoed, opening her eyes. "Going or coming?"

He considered. "Coming back, I think,"

he said: "my mind will then be attuned to solemn things."

His smile seemed to take away from the importance of the invitation.

"Certainly," she said cheerfully

Combermere examined the Prayer-book which he still held in a muse. "I suppose we should be getting ready," he remarked presently; and it was not till then that she made a movement to leave.

They had made up a party of six or seven, and Dauntry undertook to steer them through the Wilderness. The moon was now high in heaven, and shone on the white gate which gave access from the open park. Dauntry led the way with most of the party, and Combermere was behind with Rose and Miss Taunton. The man talked gaily with the latter, and shortly after they had entered the Wilderness Rose dropped her book and stooped to pick it up. She fumbled for a little in the shadows of the laurels, and when at last she had recovered it she was surprised to find Combermere by her side without the girl. Figures moved on the sandy path in the distance.

"Where is Miss Taunton?" she asked.

"She is a good girl and has gone on without me," he answered in his even way.

"She has been well trained," she said lightly.

"I suppose she has," he replied reflectively, "yet I don't know by whom—not that indulgent father, at any rate. But she is a real good girl, and that's why I like her."

"And that's why you . . ." she hesitated.

"Yes, that's why I want her," he said thoughtfully.

"Oh, you'll get her—you're sure of her," she answered quickly.

He shook his head. "Who knows? She may be romantic."

"Why should she not be?" she asked, with a certain vehemence: "would you deny woman that?"

"Good Lord, no! they often have it," he answered.

"She has better. She has obedience," she said, in another mood. "See how she walked on."

"Oh, she's a real good girl," he assented, "and pretty."

"Ah! that matters too," she said dryly.

"I suppose it does," he agreed. "But it's her freshness that matters most."

"Freshness!" she echoed.

"She's not ignorant, but she's innocent. You can see that. It makes a difference. I hate ignorance, but I take innocence to my heart."

"You wish to crack the egg, like Sir Willoughby Patterne," she said scornfully.

He considered. "Yes, I could not be satisfied with less, I think."

"It is best," said she; and in the little pause that ensued broke out unexpectedly, "I wonder if you've ever heard girls—not at their prayers, not in public, I mean, not in company?"

"Well, no," he said, in surprise.

"No girl ever talked freely before you?" she said sharply.

"Why, no; nor any woman for that matter," he said.

"Except me, who am doing so now," she said bitterly.

"I think I rather like it," he replied, with a little laugh. "Tell me, what should I hear?"

"Oh, you must ask Miss Taunton," she said shortly, and commented abruptly on the laurels which grew along the path.

He paused for a moment as if to regard them, but he was clearly in a muse. "There is one great satisfaction in a woman," said he: "one can talk. A girl can't discuss these matters with the same freedom, or with any freedom—indeed, at all."

Mrs. Heseltine made an impatient movement. "Oh, it is wonderful with what freedom girls *can* talk," she said sharply. "But I accept the compliment. We do our best for you, you see. You can say what you will before us, and we do not blush. We know all. Some virtue has gone out of us. Our ears may safely be tainted."

Combermere glanced at her in frank surprise. His somewhat heavy face expressed doubt and embarrassment. "Oh, come," he said, with a little laugh, "I really meant to pay a compliment."

"That is a man's idea of one," she remarked shortly.

They had begun to walk again deliberately up the sandy path, and now both stopped. The path bifurcated, on each side winding into an irregular close copse.

"This is the way, isn't it?" he inquired, pointing to the left with his stick.

"They cannot have gone that way."

There was no one in sight, and so deeply had they been engrossed by their talk that he had not watched which path



"'Ah, the New Year!' she whispered passionately; 'the New Life!' He pulled out his watch. . . .
'I make them three minutes late,' he said." (See page 111.)

Dauntry took. The woman's alert eyes had followed the party in advance for some time, and now she was aware of an impression made on her mind quite recently. She could see the party wheeling to the right. Had not Dauntry even called back to them? She glanced at Combermere's face and then at the fork in the path.

"I—I don't know quite," she said hesitatingly.

"It must be to the left," said he emphatically. "The curve is towards the valley."

Rose Heseltine said nothing, but again in her mental vision was the picture of the party wheeling to the right. She could almost hear Dauntry's voice. With his habitual self-assurance Combermere stalked forward. They took the left turning. For a moment she would have cried out, but he resumed, as if reluctant to abandon the topic.

"Don't you realise the satisfaction in liberty?"

"In liberty for oneself?" she asked tremulously.

"And in other people's," he added.

"You are constitutionally unable to separate them," she answered, with a nervous laugh.

"Constitutionally!" he echoed, puzzled.

She laughed again, almost desperately. "Oh, well, you must be aware that you are the most self-centred of men."

The puzzled expression vanished slowly, and he became merely thoughtful. "Am I?" he said, without any sign of offence. "I hadn't thought of it."

His mind moved with the deliberation of his body, and from those gross heights of complacency he looked down on her. Something fresh in her face—a timidity, a fear, some undraping of her soul at the moment—arrested him. He stared even beyond the margin of civility.

"We seem to have been walking a long time," she said faintly. Her heart beat fast.

"I believe we have," he agreed. "I wasn't thinking. I suppose we're all right?"

"Oh, it doesn't follow," she said almost irritably, for his imperturbability jarred on her.

"I suppose this is the way," he said, indicating one of the two paths that again met them.

"You are sure to choose right," she said, with some sarcasm.

He threw a look at her, but strode on. "I'm glad you think so," he said next; "I wish I was quite as sure of myself. You see I was thinking of a very important step."

"Marriage?" she asked in a hard voice.

"Yes, marriage. It is time. I am forty-two. There are estates, and my cousin is a shocking bad hat."

"Will you kindly choose again?" she said deliberately, coming to a stop.

"Better try the right this time," he said cheerfully.

She stamped her foot. "Oh, don't you see we are lost?" she cried angrily.

"Lost!" he said, in astonishment at her tone. "Not a bit of it. If we have taken a wrong turning we can easily find our way."

"Oh, don't you know that Mr. Dauntry prides himself on the admirable labyrinth he has constructed here? The paths run everywhere and anywhere."

"Well, let's try this," said Combermere, still complacent.

They began to go on again, Rose feeling a little ashamed of her outburst; and it was some minutes before he spoke. The thread of their discourse was broken, and he did not attempt to pick it up.

"The great point in a matter like this," said Combermere, with indefatigable patience, "is to go by direction. The stars are guides, and the rising moon, and the——"

He came to abruptly. As if in a giddy and whimsical jest, the path took a right angle and went shimmering towards the wooded slopes of the hill.

Rose Heseltine broke out into laughter which was not at all merry. Fear began to take hold of her. While he had been complacent she had sheltered behind that stolid hedge, so to speak. But now, when in his honest features bewilderment, even annoyance, began to stir, she felt frightened. It was like hearing the collapse of a great wall that had fended one from unknown terrors. The terrors now lay open, forbidding, imminent.

"The church must clearly be down there," said Combermere, in a practical voice; "and if so, we'd better give up the paths and go by direction. Do you feel equal to passing through the copse, Mrs. Heseltine?"

"Yes, yes, oh yes," she declared hastily. "Let's get on—let's get out by any means."

He broke an entrance for her through the yews, and they abandoned the easy route of the pathway. Before stretched a dim mass of undergrowth among the firs and pines and bushes. It was this they must penetrate on their way to what Combermere fancied was their goal. Their road was by no means easy. Bushes must be dodged, branches thrust aside, trailing creepers detached from her skirt, and pitfalls stumbled over. Ere she had been walking ten minutes she was weary and bruised and shaken.

Combermere stopped. "Confound it!" he said, "there seem to be no paths at all now. I hope you're not too tired. I must apologise for leading you this dance."

It seemed inadequate in its tone. As an apology it was absurdly below what should have been necessary if it had been he who— Mrs. Heseltine passed him without a word. He appeared actually to be admiring the moon. As a matter of fact, he was endeavouring to find some guidance in the sky. She pushed on feverishly.

The brambles tore her fine feather cloak, scratched her arms, and there was the long r—r—rip of a rent.

"Oh!" she cried, as the front of the cloak flew open, disclosing bare arms and a pretty gleam of dress.

"Good heavens!" he cried in surprise, and checked himself. It had not occurred to him that she had ventured out in evening dress. He swung after her. "It is not necessary to go so fast. You will lose your breath," he called.

But she did not hear. Panic had seized hold of her. Around, so far as the eye could take it in, was the loom of the wood, and overhead the thin and mocking moonlight. The orb of that light swam abruptly into a bank of clouds, and darkness invested the wilderness. Rose Heseltine gave utterance to a hysterical exclamation. "Oh, we are lost—lost!" she cried.

"Oh, we are all right," he assured her.

She plunged in the direction of his voice, and was entangled in the bushes. "Oh, please—please help!" she cried.

Combermere strode forward, and, groping, seized her. She was in the grip of thorns, and as she pulled again he heard the sound of ripping drapery.

Scratched and forlorn and weeping, she was drawn to his side.

"You must not be alarmed. You must not lose your head," he said kindly.

"Miss—Miss Taunton would not," she said, with a sob.

"I wonder," he replied, as if reflecting.

She clung to him, and the moon, emerging, struck upon them. Her cloak had fallen half-way from her, and her bare bosom was visible, in its tumult.

"Keep close by me," he said encouragingly. "We'll be out in no time."

She obeyed him, and now and again put out a hand and clutched his arm. He felt himself leading her and inspiriting her as a child. They began to go down. The small trees here were juniper, and made a black ridge in the night. Suddenly Combermere turned and pointed. "I believe I see a path over there," he cried jubilantly. "See: isn't that a grey ribbon yonder?"

She looked, but could see nothing, for his was the greater height.

"It is," he declared; and, parting the junipers before him, stepped through.

An exclamation burst from him. His figure, for a moment dark against the faint sky, sank out of sight; there was the sound of crackling branches.

Rose Heseltine screamed out. Things rumbled and rumbled in her ears dully. "Oh, what is it? What is it?" she called to the night.

In her agitation she thrust aside the bushes to follow; and, below, the white cliffs of a chalk pit stared up at her. Combermere had gone over.

The cry which was on her lips was stifled. She put her hand to her heart, felt the cloak dropping, and pulled it closer to her mechanically. Then, clinging to the bushes with one hand, she began to clamber along the verge of the precipice. Her haste was almost frantic, but her hold was sure. She missed no step. She passed every foot of the way like a flying nymph of the woods, possessed only of one thought. She had wept before; she could not weep now. Below lay Combermere—dead, or dying? Swiftly she moved along the edge of the quarry, until she reached the outermost point in the arc. The light was white on those white cliffs; they emitted a dull glare at her. It was a ghostly night-piece, which she did not heed. The loom of the chalk seemed to rise under her feet. Down below she thought she detected a shadow—prone. She let go the bush

to which she held, and, with her face to the wall, abandoned herself to chance. The loose chalk slithered under her, and she shot down a dozen feet, and there stayed. Again she launched herself out, and once again travelled with the broken lumps downwards. Then the slide ended, and she went abruptly over a six-foot fall to the bottom of the pit.

Instantly she was on her feet, her arms scraped, her body aching, but scarcely conscious of these things, or of her safety. She ran rather than walked across the quarry.

The light shone sufficiently to determine her steps, and to reveal the form that lay outstretched on the floor of the pit. With a cry, she bent over him, and, lifting his head, put her arms about him, moaning like a dove. "Oh! you are dead—you are dead!" she cried. "My heart, you are dead!"

Combermere uttered a sigh, and lifted his hand to his face. "What?" he said, in a tone of perplexity.

"Oh, you are alive!" she cried, with passionate triumph.

Before answering, he raised himself, thus in the act detaching her arms. "Well, I'm damned!" said he slowly, and blinked at the quarry. Then he turned to her, observing her shredded dress, all soiled with the chalk, and the mark that looked black, but was red, upon her heaving bosom. "Did you fall too?" he asked. "I must apologise for precipitating you. I have led you into the most abominable mischief."

It was his old formal voice, entirely undismayed.

"No, no, you did not," she cried. "You had nothing to do with it."

"But how are you here? I remember falling; and, by the Lord, how my head throbs! Confound Dauntry's ideas of humour in a Wilderness! How came you here, Mrs. Heseltine?"

"I came down—I came down," she cried faintly.

Combermere put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out a cigar-case. "You don't mind?" he asked dully, but politely.

But Rose Heseltine made no answer. She had fainted against him.

When she came to she was conscious of feeling a little cold, and it seemed as if she slept in a great light. Her eyes opened, and fastened on Combermere's

face, which was just above. His cigar was still unlit—indeed, his case had fallen to the ground, and he was gazing down at her thoughtfully. He had opened her corsage at the top, and sheltered her from the chill wind with her cloak. He stared down upon the face of a beautiful woman, with eyes that moved now like dumb and beautiful creatures, imploring him. The black mark that was red on her bosom arrested him; it seemed a savage desecration of that sanctuary.

"Are you awake?" he asked quietly; and when no answer came, save from the eyes—"You came down that wall for me? You thought I was dead? I heard you—I remember now."

A shudder passed through Rose Heseltine, of which he was aware.

"You are cold," he said, and adjusted the cloak. "As soon as you feel a little better we will walk; it will keep the stiffness out. I'm sure I saw the path. I fear your dress is ruined."

"It does not matter," she said faintly, struggling to raise herself. "I was a fool to go off like that."

"Well, we can't help ourselves," he said, with a little laugh. "If it comes to that, I was a fool to be stunned. We are a pair together."

"I can walk now," she said, moving with difficulty.

"No—not yet," he said with authority, and quickly stooped and kissed her full on the lips.

Rose made no movement—she shut her eyes; but into her being ran in a tide all the passion of her pent heart.

"I'll take that for answer," said Combermere, smiling. "Now you shall rest just two minutes longer." He picked up his cigar-case. "Are you quite comfortable? The wind doesn't get you?"

"Yes," she whispered.

He held her hand, his cigar between his other fingers.

"Do you know—it's very odd to think of it," he said presently, with a laugh—"but I had made up my mind to ask Miss Taunton a question to-night."

She stirred. "There is time," she murmured.

He laughed in a satisfied manner. "No, I think not. I don't seem to need to ask questions. I have found a better way. Neither question nor answer, Rose."

He kissed her again, and something

communicable from those lips he touched thrilled through him like fire. He put his arms about her. "You are wonderfully beautiful, dear," he said.

So they rested for a moment, and then he lifted her slowly up. "We must go now. The path is only a little way off."

Rose was too happy to make the comment which her intellect would have otherwise made, that he assumed it was the right path. He was confident always; nothing could shake that confidence. But it was hers now, and she lay wrapped in it, content. However she might find it in the years to come, she rested in it now happily. As they picked their way gingerly, under his guidance, she had no other feeling than that of trust in him. She was his, and he would lead her aright. She committed herself to him.

When they reached the path he turned along it as assured as ever. "Heavens! what a whack that was!" he said. "Dear child, how brave!"

She nestled close to him in that assurance, and he had her hand under his arm in the most loverlike way. Between the laurels, which again set in, he conducted her. She trusted to him.

"You said I was beautiful," she whispered. "Is that true? Am I as beautiful as Miss Taunton?"

He seemed to consider; and then, looking down at her, laughed contentedly. "Lord, a dozen times!"

She laughed also, softly. He was hers; he was always right.

A sound of voices came out of the distance. It was the party returning from church. He had brought her safely back. He was always right.

Combermere came to a pause. "There they are," he said, as if he had been waiting all the time for some stragglers to join them. "I hear Miss Taunton's laugh."

Rose heard it also, and held tighter to his arm. They stood on the pathway between hedges of laurel, and Combermere looked in the direction of the sounds.

"There must be a path there somewhere, and ours joins it," he remarked.

The voices approached, and presently, a dozen paces away, they saw figures moving in the light. Combermere was raising his voice, when Rose whispered, "Oh no—oh no!"

"What is it?" he asked, in perplexity. But he had not called to them.

"These rags—this dress!" she cried, with a weak laugh.

"What does it matter?" he said, smiling. "We must get back some time, and people don't expect you to have wandered in a wood and had accidents and to come back as if out of a band-box. Well, we'll follow behind."

They walked on.

"That was Sir Alan walking with Miss Taunton," she said at last.

"Was it?" He made a pause. "She's a fine-looking girl, but she'll grow too stout," he remarked. He was aware of a deeper clutch on his arm, and looked at her. "Dearest, you are a dozen times more beautiful," he said tenderly.

Rose's heart beat faster. She was safe with him. How unexpectedly had Heaven arrived!

Suddenly, "Hush, listen!" she cried, and stopped.

Away in the valley the bells were beginning.

"The New Year," said he.

"Ah, the New Year!" she whispered passionately: "the New Life!"

"Dear child!" he said, drawing her closer. Then he pulled out his watch, and under the slender moonlight regarded it carefully. "I make them three minutes late," he said.



THE VINEYARD.

BY JOHN OLIVER HOBBS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Away with all those vain pretences of making ourselves happy within ourselves, of feasting on our own thoughts, of being satisfied with the consciousness of well-doing, and of despising all assistance and all supplies from external objects. This is the voice of pride, not of nature.”

DAVID HUME.

FEDERAN remained where he had flung himself on the horsehair sofa, dizzy with heart-sickness. Want of sleep and fatigue had added physical illness to his misery; he seemed to be falling through the air to distant, yawning depths; the room seemed to be melting away, and the floor dissolving. He cursed his fate; he wanted to strike out at his adversaries. He would soon be known as Coolidge's tool, as a rascal, as a fraudulent trustee. What had become of his strength? Could he not show himself on the High Street at any moment, and be pointed out as young Federan, the best rider in the county, the winner of the Challenge Cup, the yeoman who had been given the Victoria Cross for heroic bravery in South Africa? No. The provincial townspeople cared nothing at all for glory unaccompanied by collateral securities. They would merely say that they wondered how he could show his face, and all his achievements would give the cynical material only for the coarsest sarcasm—the sarcasm of men in petty ways of business who envied venomously, not fine reputations, but those who could even find any sums to steal or misappropriate. To see the colour of money showed to them a kind of unjust Providential favouritism. Imaginative minds, or minds warped by the perpetual striving in the meanest ways against the meanest difficulties, regard many temptations as a decided privilege—a distinction. Money gambled away on the Stock Exchange and the merry women of great cities, the credit given to well-known people and the opportunities squandered on those who appear to have already more than they can regard, fill the provincial heart, too often crushed, slighted and misunderstood, with a rage which is not always impotent. Federan had nothing to hope for from his neighbours and fellow-townsmen. He

remembered an incident of disgraced prosperity in the case of the Marchmonts—county people—who, in consequence of unfortunate transactions in company-promoting, had been obliged to leave, at short notice, the mansion which their ancestors had held for three centuries at Cumborough. Federan himself had been a boy of ten at the time, but he remembered the unfortunate Marchmonts being driven down the High Street by the third-rate jobmaster, who wore a shame-faced expression, to the Commercial Inn of Yafford for a night's lodging. They had been refused accommodation at the “Wheatshaf” and the “Bugle.” Once they had spent three hundred pounds a week among the tradespeople of that very town.

“Ah, why didn't I stay out there!” exclaimed Federan, thinking of South Africa. But neither out there nor anywhere was any welcome waiting for a young man, ever so handsome, with an empty purse hanging by never more superb legs.

“It was not empty last year. I had something. I was respected.” Then he cursed his sentimentality—his damnable, senseless, fatal sentimentality. What, in his sober moments, had he always maintained? Beauty cost so much; fastidiousness was a luxury; happiness, peace, the decencies were so expensive. Long after Harlowe had left the office Federan fancied he was still there answering his thoughts and reproaching him for his cowardice.

“I'm a coward. My God! I must be ill or going mad. I have never before been a coward. I'll pull myself together and astonish you yet. I've got the pluck of the very devil. Ask anybody you like. But pluck depends on one's health.”

An unfamiliar rustle in the room made him turn from the wall.

“Who's that?” he called out, as a woman's figure advanced timidly, and took up a position at his feet. The twilight was dim that day; the scent of verbena, which Rachel used, mingled with the musty odour of the deeds and parchments; the dress worn by the figure suggested, in some way, a dress he knew.

"Rachel!" he exclaimed—"dear Rachel!"

"It's me, sir," said Tagg, with an infinite suavity, for she was much flattered. "Miss Tredegar has sent me to you. She's very ill, but she sends you her kindest regards, and hopes you will come to-morrow at any time."

"Here's love!" he thought again, and, as his breast swelled, he felt it was impossible to help being fond of a girl who could show herself so generous. "A true woman," he sighed, burying his face in the hard, crocheted cover of the sofa cushion.

Tagg, in her confidential occupation of lady's-maid in the best families, had seen many men cry, and she knew how to conduct herself. She remained quiet and longed to get home in order to tell her mistress how Mr. Federan was feeling the news of her illness. "He cried like a child," she intended to say; or else, "Great sobs shook his frame,"—a phrase which she encountered frequently in the few novels she could tolerate. Neither phrase was an accurate description of the phenomenon, but she did not rate accuracy above style. During the silent but thrilling interruption caused by Federan's long silence, she decided finally on the "Great sobs shook his frame." His hands alone had moved, and both these were clenched. She thought, therefore, of adding—in order to make her description wholly lifelike—"He threw up his strong arms." Tagg herself had never witnessed this gesture accompanied by weeping, but again her respect for tradition proved stronger than her own knowledge. The "strong arms" episode, therefore, could not possibly be omitted from her future narrative.

"You are quite sure that she is getting better?" said Federan at last, rising.

"She was so afraid, sir, lest you should worry about the bulletin, that she sent me on purpose with a personal message."

Federan, with one hand in his pocket, was pacing the floor.

"No wonder! What a fine, handsome man!" thought Tagg; and he was not unconscious of her reverential admiration.

When he drew his hand out of his pocket it contained two sovereigns for Tagg, which she accepted with the dignity of a queen receiving taxes. He had just been considering whether he could offer it; in the dim light she looked so much

like Rachel, and a few delicacies in judgment still tormented his unconquerable fastidiousness. The encouragement of Tagg's manner was overwhelming. He saw every one of his debts being paid; the little house in Leicestershire assumed the dimensions of Franton Manor; the impertinent doubts of Colonel Howland were already being dismissed with that curtness which they merited so thoroughly. He rang the bell for the housekeeper, who came in with heavy steps. Port wine and cake were ordered for Miss Tagg. Miss Tagg was probably fatigued by the journey from Franton. Miss Tagg might like to hear the playing of the musical box—a curiosity in its way—while he wrote a letter.

Miss Tagg, after partaking of refreshment and noting that the housekeeper was a decent body for one in a small walk of life, made this observation: "What a magnificent specimen of manhood!" and jerked her thumb over her shoulder in the direction of Federan's office.

Federan no sooner found himself alone than he closed his eyes and fell fast asleep in the armchair. An hour later the housekeeper was sent in to say that Miss Tagg would not inconvenience him for worlds—not for worlds—but she was afraid she would lose her train. He lifted his head, and tried to answer, but it seemed as though he would have had to sleep even if a regiment with fixed bayonets stood facing him. The housekeeper left the room on tiptoe, and beckoned to Tagg, who was outside. Tagg, with one finger on her lips, acted on the signal, and the two women stood over the young man, who had sunk again into a deep slumber. The elder of the two murmured a prayer for him; the younger coloured crimson, and sighed; they both reluctantly left him alone.

Tagg, on the landing, said: "That's more moving than any letter, I'm sure. I'll tell Miss Tredegar how pale and worn he looks. My word! I'm not surprised that the ladies are mad to get him. He's one in a lifetime."

All that night Rachel kept Tagg by her side describing again and again, without variation, the interview with Federan.

"How long did he cry? was he really crying? did you see his tears?"

"They glistened on his lashes even when he lay asleep," swore Tagg.

"Was he merely drowsy as men often are, or was it real exhaustion?"

"It was nature asserting itself," said Tagg; "the strongest must yield. It was a sleep like death!"

"Don't say death," said Rachel, whimpering. "What did he say when you gave him my message?"

"It seemed as though he couldn't take it in all at once, but at last he said, in his masterful way, 'Are you sure she is better?'"

"Yes, his way is masterful," said Rachel, who wished to think so; "many would call him arrogant. This makes him enemies. He is never arrogant with me. But was he really crying, Tagg? You are quite sure?"

And so on, all over again once more. Tagg described the colour of the tie he wore, his boots, the pattern of his trousers, the links in his cuffs. Would his hair be called brown or dark brown? would his eyes be considered his finest feature? But what a nose! Like a statue's. And his figure!

"I have seen some figures," said Tagg: "there was Captain Trevelyan, that Lady Montfort ran away with—a very fine man. But Mr. Federan would beat him any day."

"What else did he say when you gave him my message?"

The unwearied faithful Tagg yawned, but began afresh: "He threw up his strong arms, and great sobs shook his frame."

"I can't believe it."

"If it was the last words I uttered!"

"I thought men never cried."

"They all cry—but not before each other if they can help it, or unless they know it's a true friend."

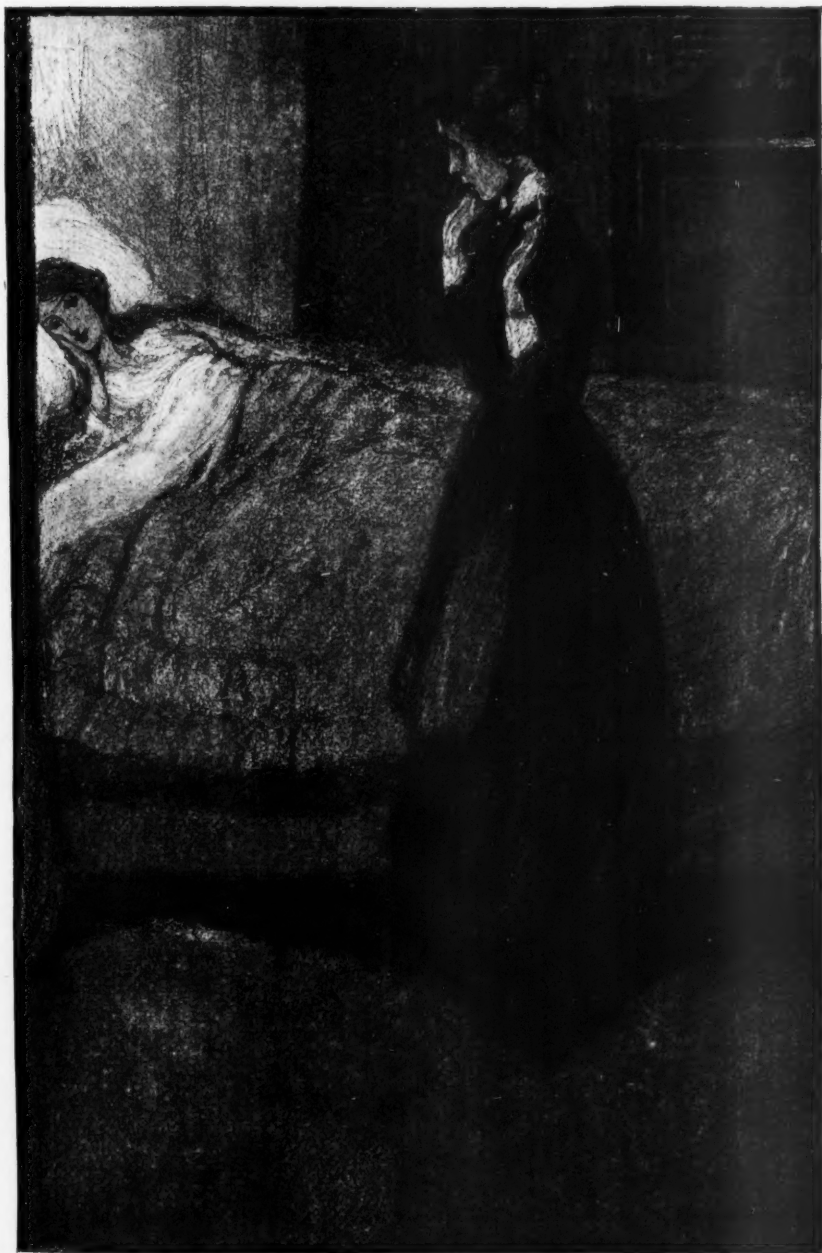
Thus it went on from the rise of the moon till pallid dawn—the eager questions from the feeble, and the drowsy answers from the vigorous, voice. Jennie, who was trying to sleep in the dressing-room, heard the strange murmuring duet, but she could not catch what was said. Once she went in and implored Rachel to rest.

"I am having a good night," said Rachel strangely; "for once it is pleasant to lie awake."

She asked for another pillow—a blue satin one, and, propped up on many cushions because of her beating heart, she fell into a long reverie, watched the

shadows cast on the ceiling by the play of the night-light, heard the fluttering of the silk curtains against the open window, and composed the things she would say to Federan when they met. What if she found any preoccupation in his eyes—the desire that was not for her? What if he tried to excuse himself? She had made far better ones for him than he could ever offer. She would entreat him only to keep silent while she, always smiling, spoke his defence. What had he done? Here she refused to think, lest the vile details of legal business should disturb the supreme, ineffable languor in her soul, or the rush of her troubled senses toward a fuller life. And each time a pang of jealousy made her wince, she tried to soothe the pain as a mother soothes a suffering child—as though it were not her own suffering, but something harder to bear; and each time a suspicion of Federan's honesty broke through her dream she put out her hands, and, affecting to play, added their shadow to those already on the ceiling. Tagg opening her eyes once, and observing this fantastic movement of the dancing figures among the still ones over her head, was terrified; she thought of spirits, and bad signs. But for the supernatural, as she imagined it, she had no courage, so she covered her head with a sheet and said, with many mistakes, the Lord's Prayer backwards till she fell asleep again.

Federan walked up the avenue the next morning asking himself, "What shall I say? how shall I begin?" But he studied the trees and shrubs and plants with new interest, and thought that the raptures of the spring and the treasures of the autumn could be enjoyed to perfection at Franton. How one changed! The continual flux and revolution of one's ideas led to unexpected developments. He rang the house-bell nervously, but he saw, by the old butler's face, that he was welcome. As he mounted the staircase he beheld himself reflected at full length in one of the old French mirrors. The effect was almost as though his own portrait, by a modern master, had been added to those of the Tredegars in the gallery. When he reached the door of Rachel's room his heart began to beat heavily, and he wished he had not come. But she was his last hope, and he blamed himself for his ingratitude.



*"The unwearied faithful Tagg yawned, but began afresh : 'He threw up his strong arms, and great sobs
shook his frame.'"*
After a drawing by C. A. SHEPPERSON.

She was lying on a couch; a white scarf bound, in the classic style, around her head; her hands folded, and her limbs stretched out as though she were a piece of marble carved into a tombstone. She had colour in her cheeks and lips, a red rose in her bosom; she smiled when Federan came in.

"Your illness hasn't changed you," he said. He wanted to add that she looked younger, which was a fact; he gazed at her instead with an admiration which she, at least, had never seen in his eyes before.

She hastened to speak—lest he should utter jarring or imprudent or self-condemnatory words. "They tell me I need solitude and repose," she said; "but I have had both so long."

She explained her views of solitude: how it made every necessary contact with strangers and the world outside more and more difficult; how one preyed upon one's own spirit; how one lost all sense of proportion.

He became very pale, and, drawing his chair nearer to her side, took one of her hands. "But why have you been ill?" he asked. "I am afraid it is all worry." Then, because he found sympathy in her smile, he told his story. "I was never born for business and money-making. My own wants are so simple. Give me a horse and fresh air—I'll sleep under hedges and eat hips and haws, rabbits, anything. There is no squalor in the open. What I hate, what oppresses me, are the small rooms, the odour of a kitchen, household drudgery and the economies. Take the life at my aunt's cottage. They do everything decently, yet one hears too much sweeping, dusting and busting; as you eat one course, you smell the next: that is not roughing it—that is gentility. Gentility is unendurable."

She agreed, and, in order to divert him, asked questions about his life in South Africa during the war.

"Ah, that was a man's life!" he answered. "You did as you were bid; there was camp routine; you shot others, and were shot at; you took care of your horse. I wish now I had stayed there."

Her fingers grasped his more tightly: "Did you like it so much?"

"Better than respectable poverty here, infinitely better than robbing my neighbour." He pointed out the essential dishonesty in all commercial dealings:

"Men of the highest integrity commit themselves to things in business which, in private affairs, would fill them with shame. A chivalrous sense of honour and astuteness in business are irreconcilable terms. The first principle of trading is to buy as cheaply, and to sell as dearly, as possible. The seller is defrauded and the buyer is swindled. Rents are too high, wages are too low. The struggling industrious man cannot get a small loan to save him from ruin, whereas the rich thief can get vast sums at any time."

This bitter prelude fatigued the girl, who cared, and knew, nothing about business. She wished to discuss her emotions.

"You must leave all this," she said softly.

"Ah, but how? At this instant I am a ruined man. A friend"—he referred to Harlowe—"has offered me a berth in the Colonies. I was tempted to go. But your message came, and I am here."

Rachel trembled. She implored him not to explain; she understood enough already, and, as she said this, she drew from under her pillow a sealed envelope which contained the dishonoured cheque. "It is there," she said, and looked away.

Federan, with deliberation, tore it in small pieces, put them in the grate, struck a match and set fire to the heap, which he watched consume away into flaky ashes.

"I'm glad it is destroyed," he said, "but I cannot burn the loss which it represents. That must be made good somehow."

She raised herself on her elbow, and stared at him. "What way occurred to you first?"

"There are not many ways open to one," he answered: "we needn't discuss them."

Then he walked back to her and said, simply enough: "Think what you will of me. I was tempted, and I fell. Other men would not have called the matter a temptation—they would have called it a legitimate speculation. I can but say that to me it seemed horrible. This will show you that I acted against my conscience: I knew better. I am worse, therefore, than Coolidge."

He would not hear a word murmured in condemnation of Coolidge; and Rachel, who seemed fretful under this restraint, secretly admired his loyalty to a scoundrel whom he had loved as a brother.

"Coolidge lost his soul when he married," said Federan; "here, I know all, and therefore I pardon all."

"I can give you the money," exclaimed Rachel: "what is money to me? What has it done for me?"

"I shall never forget your kindness. But I cannot take money from a woman."

"Call it borrowing," she suggested.

He shook his head.

"Why am I not a man?" she cried, bursting into tears. "You would take it from a man. I meant to be a friend to you; whereas, I see, I have hurt your feelings. But why be so proud? I am not proud—at least, with you."

"Ah, be reasonable. Fifteen thousand pounds—how could I accept it, even as a loan?"

"If I lent it, on a mortgage, to an utter stranger, it would be called a good investment. Why, then, can't I lend it to you?"

"I have no securities to offer." He took both her hands. "It is impossible. You humiliate me by pressing the point."

She felt, by this very admission, that they had already become closely intimate.

"I will press the point," she answered; "at any risk—because I am right."

Suddenly, she began to wonder whether he had ever taken Jennie's hands, or kissed them, and a deep flush of jealousy swept over her face.

"My hands are not so pretty as Jennie's—are they?" For the first time that day she studied his expression, and she saw that he did not seem well or happy, but, on the contrary, aged, careworn and wretched.

"Another day," he said huskily, "I'll talk about Jennie."

"No! no! I'll never speak her name again. You were a little in love with her—I know it."

He could bear it no longer. "I have deceived you there, too. We were engaged. She has broken it off now; but we were engaged."

Rachel snatched back her hands, and pressed them both to her heart. This was her chronic gesture—the one she made unconsciously.

"I wish," she said, with a distorted face, "that you had kept on lying about it."

This jealous agitation about a girl seemed to him miserable in contrast with his money troubles.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Why was not I born in that golden age
When gold yet was not known?"

DRUMMOND.

THE first strangeness of the interview with Rachel had worn away, and Federan, during a pause, looked round the room. Old prints in ebony and gold frames, and strips of Florentine embroidery, were hung on the green walls. The furniture, covered with chintz, was simple; there were piles of finely bound books on the tables, and arranged on shelves; the air took its outdoor fragrance from bowls of roses, vases of carnations, and small orange trees in wooden tubs. Below the wide windows a stone terrace led to a flower-garden, and beyond that there were yew-trees curiously cut, clumps of oaks, beech, and spreading cedars, a landscape of fields outlined by low hedges, and at last a ridge of hills. Rain-clouds were gathering in the sky, and the wind howling down the chimney had an echo of the sea beating on the beach. Federan, who, an hour before, had doubted his star, and seen himself disowned and disinherited, denied by his friends, expelled from his club, and persecuted in his native town, came to the conclusion that he was pardoned, adored, and indispensable: he accepted this as certain, and he determined to act upon the certainty of it. Evidences in Rachel, minute but abundant, delicate but effective, had united to bring him to this belief; he, in return, was soothed by her silky charm, which emanated partly from her dress and partly from her manner. He thought: "I won't deceive her any more, or ever again. I will tell her the truth. Treachery kills a woman's love, while jealousy will keep it burning. When men lie to women who love them, they are fools."

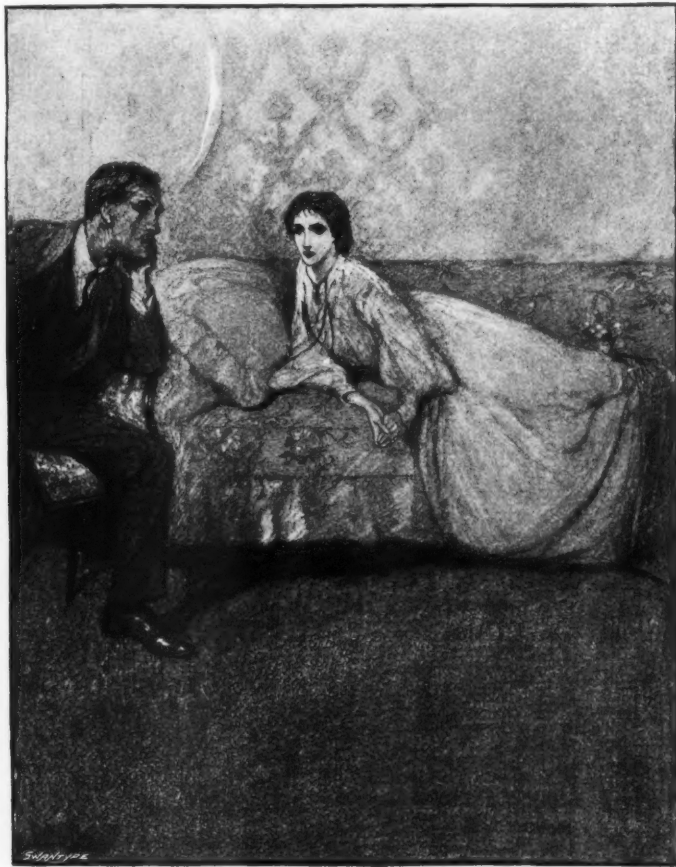
He asked: "Will it disturb you if I walk about? I want to tell you many things."

"This room is a woman's room," said Rachel, blushing faintly: "it must seem like a cage or a cell to you. Please walk about."

He stood up, threw back his head, expanded his chest, and, with one hand in his pocket, paced the floor just as he had paced his own office for the admiration of Tagg. Rachel wished he were less handsome, in order that she might prove the spirituality of her affection.

"It is very easy," said Federan, clearing his throat, "to attach too much importance to love affairs. In every vow we make there is a secret note of perjury, and we can be absolutely certain of our hopes only—because we live more earnestly in the life we imagine than in the life we

His cynicism made the girl's heart as pale as her face; but she forgot his philosophy and her own when, halting abruptly to clasp her hand, he said between his wise reflections: "How can I talk sensibly—as I must—if you have such long eyelashes?"



"Rachel listened with her eyes half-closed."

After a drawing by C. A. Shepperson.

lead. We always know that the life we have must change, whereas we believe our hopes will never change. At least, that has been my idea."

Rachel listened with her eyes half-closed and her lips parted in a smile. Federan's candour and impulsiveness offered two permanent provocations to women: the one by its defiance of their sentimentality, the other by its mastery over their sense.

Making the most of her eyelashes and his softer mood, she whispered: "You'll take that money?"

"My dear, you ask impossibilities."

The sweetness of this "my dear" made her deaf to the rest of his speech. It entered her mind as some lovely phrase of music, and sank into her heart, while he continued the exposition of his views: "But the hopes change too. Obstinacy

or vanity often force us to pretend that they remain. I am not dreaming of denying constancy—isn't constancy the main cause of our dismay when we find our soul undergoing some subtle, irresistible, even unwelcome development? 'If man were constant, he were perfect,' is a false saying. If man were strictly constant, he would be dead. I'm tiring you, but I want you to know me, and understand me."

"I do—without your telling me a word."

"No—no! Every woman will have it that she can read any friend 'like a book.' Men are lazy and allow the delusion to pass. I won't. And my egoism would be inexcusable if——"

He stopped short, and his face grew haggard again; the steely lines which had been slowly forming for several weeks showed plainly.

"My egoism," he repeated, "would be inexcusable in any ordinary friendship. But what you might call your understanding of me would be too flattering. I need, at this moment, not kindness, not pity—but condemnation. By condemning me you will save me. By finding me double-tongued and unreliable you may help me to be sincere."

The prudence which is always ingrained in the true burgess and middle classes was still strong enough in Federan to dictate the only possible terms of his redemption. As a child he had read each morning the following lines, illuminated, framed and hung over the mantel-piece of his nursery:

We must to virtue for our guide resort,
Or we shall shipwreck in our safest port.

He felt secure with Rachel, but where a man of more luxurious education would have been satisfied to have his faults, for the moment, obscured by her fancy, and his punishment, also for the moment, annulled by her fortune, his inherited instincts warned him that, unless her devotion rested on an actual knowledge of his affairs, she too would in the end repudiate him—if not openly by her actions, at least secretly by her scorn. Finally, he knew, as a lawyer, the common error of those in the wrong, who, seeking advice, conceal the very facts which are injurious to their case and alter its whole complexion.

"You must know," he insisted; and although she winced painfully every time

Jennie's name was uttered, and although the fire of life which had burnt so brilliantly in her eyes died out, giving place to a weary sadness and distrust, he told the story of his engagement, adding the smallest details and his most intimate thoughts.

"You love her still," said Rachel, at the end, in a veiled voice; "I can see you do."

"Not in the old way."

"That's only because you are worried. If you were happy, it would soon be in the old way again."

"I think you are wrong. But I won't make foolish protestations. You wouldn't believe them."

"I don't see why you should be so suddenly precise and conscientious," she said; "it bewilders me, and I hate it. You were nicer when you were not sincere."

"Formerly I tried to please you. Now I'm not trying to please you: I am merely trying to speak the truth."

"You want to ease your own mind, and you don't care what I think of you."

"I care so much that I will not have your good or bad opinion of me depend on any illusions."

"I don't care how many illusions you have about me," she said with petulance; and she thought of the rouge on her cheeks and lips, the artificiality of her movements, her talk, and her ideas: the unreality of every one of her feelings—except the passion for him. But this one genuine emotion was, without her knowledge, purifying, simplifying, chastening her whole nature. She wondered: "Do I want him to be happy, or do I want him for myself?" and she hoped that he would soon take her hand again.

"You are too clever for the provinces," she said; "you have no outlet for your ability—no opportunities. I want you to take some position in London. Have you ever thought about politics? My relations have a little influence."

"I have never thought of anything except how best to be idle and contented."

She could scarcely restrain her tears.

"This new candour of yours is another name for selfishness. It hurts me—yet you keep it up because you want to be natural."

"Why should it hurt you to know me in my true colours?"

"I want to be your friend."

"You are my one, my dearest friend."

This assertion, from a man who had just proved himself truthful to the point of barbarity, had more effect on the girl than many hours of honied love-making. Her eyes, which had been as dull as extinguished lights, seemed to catch fire again: they blazed, and softened, and blazed once more when they met his.

"All the same," she said, for fear of betraying herself, "I do not intend to fall in love with you. Your candour is catching."

This stroke, in its way, was as good as his own; it wounded his vanity, but roused his admiration for her spirit.

"I have learnt," he said, "that your friendship is better than the deepest love of any other woman. I haven't dared to think what your love would be."

Thus he slipped back into the old, easy, seductive insincerity. But she was acquiring a taste, under his influence, for downrightness, no matter how crude, and her discernment was now prompt in rejecting mere rhetoric.

"That's all ballroom talk," she answered; "stage talk, book talk, any talk except heaven and hell talk—the two places where everybody has to drop pretences."

"When I marry, I want the talk to be just the thing you describe—heaven and hell talk."

"When you marry!" she exclaimed, lifting herself on her elbows, and turning on her side. The marble pose was therefore lost.

"Yes. You may think it strange that I speak of marriage when you have just said that you cannot love me and I have just told you that I am ruined. But it's a better, more sacred, more hopeful beginning than those conventional lies which people often tell each other when they are contemplating marriage. There is a reckless, self-seeking love—"

"The love I long for," she thought, with a cutting sigh. Yet, not to discourage him, she said exquisitely: "That selfish love of which you speak has its beauty. Don't let either of us blame it, because we are only able to offer each other friendship."

"I can't swear that I do not love you!" said Federan: "I was immensely attracted to you—from the first. The attraction was so strong that it seemed then a sort of disloyalty to Jennie."

Since Rachel had told him that she did not intend to love him, the problem of

wooing her had solved itself. He could now plead his own cause, and, without seeming to take advantage of an affection which he could not in the circumstances pretend to requite fully, he was able to assume, for argument's sake, that the case demanded entreaties on his part and bare tolerance on hers. The tone he used was the tone of one who, conscious of a certain worth, begs to be tolerated. He saw no hope, but . . . He had no position, no future, but . . . He had led a life of which he was now ashamed, but . . . And he was not one to surrender easily. One had to work out one's own salvation. What had Browning written? here, he quoted Browning:

Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems now,—I bid
him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to
find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life, a new
harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who
knows?—or endure!

Why, he asked, try to say and think badly what great poets have thought and said with incomparable clearness, for us?

As a piece of architecture will assimilate, by weathering, to the visible quality of rock and cliff surrounding it, and so become a natural feature of its landscape, a man's constant reading will transmute and colour his ideals although it may not govern his actions. For this reason the charge of hypocrisy, or of a *want of humour*, is inconsiderately made against those who are, by confession, great lovers of noble poetry, and, by their deeds, disreputable or mean. But, to continue the comparison, however much a piece of architecture may grow, by the effect of climate, to resemble exteriorly what it is not, it will be found, on close examination, a faithful tribute to its first vulgar or beautiful design. The design remains; and a man's inherited nature remains—a thing apart from his soul, which, suffering all the shuddering and quiverings of flight, is often bound immovably to some disabled intelligence. Federan was too self-conscious not to see the misapplication of fine sentiments to his particular case.

"The eternal Pecksniff in man!" he exclaimed suddenly, "and especially in me!"

But the quotation had already offered Rachel an inexhaustible source of hopes:

she grew more and more quiet, more and more gentle, graciously sad, and wordless—but for the soft exclamation, "I know! I know!" which she murmured from time to time during his narrative.

He found this dulcet, kind companionship so endearing that, just as she had wished he were less handsome, he, for the same reason, and with equal honesty, forgetting, for a redeeming instant, his own necessities, wished that she were poor. And he now felt convinced that although Jennie and he had seemed designed for each other's admiration, enjoyment, and passionate love, they were inimical in spirit: neither of them had any bent for the bearing of the other's burdens, or any mercy for each other's shortcomings. The man Jennie had imagined him to be needed no compassion, and the woman he had seen in her had nothing homely, except the virtue of obedience. It had all been a mistake; its memory—it had not yet become a memory only—would be a physical ache, and its result, a perpetual regret that what had promised so much had failed so utterly, ended so soon. He wanted to tell Rachel this, but his feelings on that subject were still inexplicable in speech. She knew, however, by instinct, that, much as he felt the business difficulties, he had received worse blows, which no wealth could ease, in Jennie's contempt and the treachery of Coolidge. She had many false, many insecure notions of life, but she had never committed the vulgar error of overestimating the power of money. In order, therefore, to share his secret trouble and identify herself more closely with his thoughts, she composed a story about a deep love she had once had, and lost.

"Once, years ago, there was some one," she began: "I met him in Paris. He was an author, and I longed to join him in a garret—as much as possible like the lodgings of Des Grieux, or Werther, at the Opéra Comique! That was indeed 'a dream in the dawn of life—a shadow before its noon.' On my side there was real love, on his there may have been love also; but whenever he left me, it always seemed as though our conversation together had consisted of enigmas and reticences. We were never natural. I thought that did not matter: hour after hour, day after day, night after night I comforted myself by thinking, 'Surely we

must understand each other if we love each other.' Each time we met we drifted farther apart."

Federan felt a pang of jealousy, but, as the history had so much in common with his own, he was fascinated, and watched her face with delight.

"We parted at last," she continued. "You cannot imagine—I cannot tell you—how much I suffered in coming to that resolution. Afterwards, I suffered still greater grief in regretting the estrangement I had made irreparable. It was a vision, a deception, but I wanted it back again. If I could have called it back at will, there were many, many times when I would have done so.

When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not

was not the case with me. I remembered the sweet notes too well. I could not forget them because they were unreturning."

She gazed past him; but although she conveyed, with art, the idea of a woman mourning over some hope for ever dead, Federan was made to feel that the sorrow had its recompense in the lulling sympathy she was able, through knowledge, to offer him at that moment.

"You see," she said presently, "we have both had our troubles."

The sentimentality of her invention and the pathos of her manner touched him, just as sentimental and pathetic scenes on the stage brought quick tears to his eyes. She had told her story consummately well because she had thought of him only while she told it.

"Where is the man now?" he asked, suddenly betraying the provincial intonation and inquisitiveness which she had called, in discussions with Jennie, *très paysan*.

"The man!" she stammered, taken by surprise: "oh, the actual man doesn't matter. It was the vision that mattered."

Federan decided at once that he had no dangerous rival to strive against, and his curiosity died out. "A girl's love-affair," he told himself, "the simple love which tests the heart without satisfying it—the love which the French call *l'amour d'essai*. It schools a nature for the fuller, deeper, true love."

"You must not tire yourself," he said aloud.

"I am not tired. I feel quite well,"

she answered, astonished at her own happiness and abandoning herself to a new dream.

Federan, too, was tranquil, and he now noticed the subjects of the engravings on the walls. Till then he had merely seen the frames. No man could presage his future from his present, he knew, but he felt a security of mind he had never before known. He thought: "I am exceedingly fond of this girl. I am devoted to her. I would rather be shot than deceive her. This is the best feeling I have ever had about any woman."

The pauses in their conversation became frequent and a little oppressive. Following the simplicity of his instincts, he stooped during one of the pauses, and kissed her cheek. No man had ever kissed her before; and, as her ideas grew coherent, she reflected, "I know now why common couples who kiss but never talk don't quarrel."

But she asked Federan, "Do you think it was quite nice of you to have done that?"

"Really," said he, with good-humour, "you are a child."

An outward primness in women appealed irresistibly to his taste. Jennie had always been a touch too spontaneous. When he rose to leave, kisses were not merely given, but with dovelike gentleness exchanged.

Before he left the Manor, he went into the library and wrote Rachel a letter in which he asked her to marry him. Drover, wise-eyed, carried the missive heavily sealed up the staircase while Federan sauntered down the avenue toward the town. There was a steeple-chase on the morrow, and he was glad that he had not, in a fit of despondency, withdrawn his name from the list of riders. His strength had returned, and at the

prospect of a wild race over obstacles and dangers his blood tingled.

"I shall win," he exclaimed; "and that will please her."

Rachel, who would have enjoyed a long meditation on her love, was despatching a dry but imperative communication to Federan's bankers: Tagg was ordered to take the note and deliver it personally. Tagg suspected that money was being parted with, and she became rueful, long in the face, and taciturn.

"Right is right," she kept murmuring, with irritating monotony.

"What's the matter, Tagg?" asked Rachel.

Tagg, subdued, replied that Mr. Federan's name had been entered for the steeple-chase at Wedderstown. She had seen the list in the local paper.

"He's a superb rider," said Rachel—"quite superb."

"Could you see him taking the water-jumps?" asked Tagg morbidly.

Rachel shuddered, grew pale, and covered her face. "I couldn't watch him. But I want him to ride," she said.

"His daring is awful," said Tagg.

"It terrifies me," said Rachel, glowing with pride. "If I opposed him, Tagg, he would be ten thousand times more reckless. I dare not say a word.—You may have that mauve silk jacket: I'm tired of it."

Tagg, taking the cue, and mentally designing many alternative uses for the jacket, said, while Rachel sealed the letter for the bankers: "Come what will, he's a magnificent specimen of manhood." Then she dropped into her dialect:—

"Them as have had happiness have nought to look forward to," as my poor mother used to say. 'Tis sure un can't have it past and future as well. All your happiness, miss, is to come."





BENJAMIN'S MESS.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

WHEN Farmer Westaway died, everybody in Belstone village was sorry—for themselves, but not for him, mind you. Because if ever a good man went straight to glory 'twas Michael Westaway. He'd had his ups an' downs like the best an' worst of us; but though the poor old gentleman weern't over-blessed in his wife—nor yet his only son for that matter—yet 'twas made up to him in a manner of speaking, for never a farm on Dartmoor edge did better. His things were always the first to be ready for market; his grass was always ripe to cut a week ahead of his neighbours, an' he always had fine weather to cut it in; while as for his corn an' roots—why, at the Agricultural Show to Okehampton, it comed to be a joke all over the country side, for first prize always went to Westaway as a regular thing. The Lord looks after His own, you see, in His own partickler way. An' such a patient, large-hearted man as he was! When Jane Westaway, his wife, was took off, after clacking nonsense for fifty year, us all thanked God in our hearts for her good man. For 'twearn't a happy marriage, an' he'd had more to put up with unbeknownst in his home circle than falls to the lot of many of us. But not an unkind word did he ever say either afore or after she died. Never would grumble about it, but kept his thoughts to hisself. I mind I met him in the churchyard nearly a year after he'd buried his wife, an' he was smoking his old clay pipe an' seeing about a granite gravestone for the tomb.

"So there her lies at peace," I said in my civil way.

An' farmer takes his pipe out of his mouth an' spits 'pon the grave, but not with any meaning.

"Yes, John," he says to me: "there her lies, poor old dear—at peace, I hope, I'm sure. Anyway, if she's so peaceful as I be since her's gone, she'll do very well."

Two year after that he was in the pit beside her, an' the space left 'pon the stone was filled up with his vartues.

Then Nicholas Westaway, his son—a lad five-an'-twenty year old an' a bit cross in the grain—found hisself master of the Old Rectory Farm, as the place was called. We shook our heads, for he was known to us as a chap pretty near spoilt by over-educating. Old Westaway had got his patience an' sense from the land, an' his wisdom an' sweetness of disposition out of no other book than the Bible; but Mrs. Westaway had great notions for her one and only child, an' she wanted more than the Bible could teach him; which, in my judgment, is to cry out for better bread than can be made of wheat. Farmering weern't a grand enough trade for him, she thought; so she kept nagging an' nagging by day an' night, till, in self-defence, the old man sent his lad to Tavistock Grammar School—a very great seat of larning, by all accounts, in them days. Yet what they didn't teach him was worth knowing too, for manners he never larned, nor his duty to his neighbour. He comed home at seventeen with some Latin, 'twas said, though 'twas only rumoured like, an' a very pretty way of reading the lessons to church on Sundays; but when he returned, the first thing as he told his faither was, "I be a Radical in politics evermore, an' I ban't going to touch my hat again to nobody living. One man's so good as another."

"So he be, Nick," said his father; "an' a darned sight better, too, for that matter. The world will larn 'e that, if

nothing else. I'm sorry ever I sent 'e to school, if they've taught 'e such tomfoolery there. But life will unlarn 'e, I hope. To touch your hat to your betters ban't no sign of weakness in you, but a sign of sense. Lord Luscombe hisself takes off his hat to the King, an' the King takes off his'n to God A'mighty. "Tis the laws of Nature," said farmer, "an' if you break the laws o' Nature," you'll damn soon get broke yourself, as everybody finds out after they'm turned fifty, if not sooner."

But Westaway died, as I tell 'e an' the young man comed to his own. With all his airs an' graces, he knowed when he was well off, an' of course followed his faither's footsteps an' stuck to the land, despite his mother's hopes, as planned an' prayed with her last breath for him to be a lawyer. Though why a lawyer should be a greater man than a farmer, you'd have to ax a lawyer to tell 'e. An' I won't say that Nicholas was a bad farmer. He'd got sense, though no broad-mindedness. The difference between him an' his faither was showed by a path-field as ran through Old Rectory lands and was very much used by folks coming up from Okehampton to Belstone, because it saved foot-passengers a good mile of walking, an' it had been there time out of mind. But there weren't no right of way with it all the same, an' farmer he always used to shut it up one day a year to make good his claim in the eye of the law. He wouldn't have turned back the leastest little one he'd found on the field-path, for 'twas his pride an' pleasure always to make life easier for man, woman an' child when the chance offered. An' the boys had the filbert nuts an' the girls had the mushrooms; an' he never minded, bless you. He liked 'em to be there.

Well, this here carmudgeon of a young Westaway—first thing he done, out of pure sourness of disposition, was to shut up the field-path an' stick up a lot o' scowling nonsense 'bout trespassers would be prosecuted. So much for his Radical ideas an' everybody being equal! But it's always that sort who talk loudest about the rights of men that be the sharpest about the rights of property. Belted earls will throw open their beautiful parks, but you won't catch common men doing it. An' the boys knocked young Westaway's boards down with stones, an' broke his hedges; an' the Okehampton people, as

didn't care a snap of the finger for the man, took their even way as usual. He spent half his time storming up an' down the great meadow in the farm-bottom, where Oke river goes clattering under Halstock; but he only turned back women an' children, for he was a little chap—thin an' not over-strong—so men just told him to get out of their road, else they'd knock him upsy-edgeways into the hedge.

But of course such a state of things couldn't last. There comed a terrible day when he turned back Mr. Matthew's wife—Matthew being the miller to Okehampton, an' a churchwarden, an' a man of high renown in general. Then us had a proper tantara, an' Matthew he took the opinion of Lawyer Pearce, an' Pearce he had a tell with young Westaway; an' Parson Courtenay of Belstone, he also done what he could, which was nought. But they might so well have talked to a fuzz-bush as Nicholas. He stuck out his chin—he was a underlung toad, like a bull-dog—and he said that rights was rights an' land was land; an' he turned on parson like an adder, an' said, "If you'll open a footpath through your vegetable garden an' let all Belstone walk up an' down it when your strawberries be ripe, then I'll do the same with my meadow, an' not sooner." But parson, whose heart was in strawberries, said the cases weren't similar; an' Nicholas held out they were.

Matters was let sink for a bit after that, but the upshot made a rare story, an' people laugh yet when you tell 'em about it.

You must know that young Westaway was courting just then, an' he'd got his hands so full with Mary Jane Arscott, the stone-breaker's darter, that for lack of leisure—nought else—he didn't watch his path-field so sharp as usual. The storm died down a bit, an' by the time that the matter of Mary Jane had come to a head, things were fallen back into the old way. All the rude notice-boards was knocked down—most of 'em had floated along the river; an' the people went to an' fro on Westaway's path just as if his faither was still alive. He'd only made a lot of enemies by his foolish conduct, an' that thought made him so grim as a ghost, an' poor company for every living soul.

Well, this Mary Jane was a very fine woman—rather on the big side for a girl



of twenty-two; but the small men always look for a large, helpful pattern of maiden, an' Nicholas was as much in love with her as he could be with any mortal she, despite her humble circumstances. Her liked him too, up to a certain point; but 'twas the sort of fondness a maiden naturally gets for any young man who be very well-to-do, an' have a fine house an' land an' a prosperous business. 'Tis hard to make up your mind about such a man, specially if he'm a trifle undersized an' underhung, an' not generally well liked by the neighbours. But, for all that, Mary Jane Arscott kept his beautiful farm in her eye an'

seed her way pretty clear, if it hadn't been for a young youth by the name of Benjamin Pearn. But for him no doubt she'd have said "yes" long ago—perhaps afore Nicholas had had time to get out his proposal of marriage, for she comed of very pauper stock, an' had never known comfort in her life. But this here Ben Pearn chanced to have just what t'other man lacked—a comely countenance an' a fine manly frame to him. A blue-eyed, sandy-headed man—hard as nails an' fairly prosperous for a chap only turned four- or five-an'-twenty. He was the port-reeve of Belstone, an' looked after the common lands; an' he was verger of the church; an' he kept bees; an' he'd

lend a hand at thatching, or painting of signboards, or harvesting, or any mortal thing. But his father had been a famous poacher, though of course I ban't bringing that up against the man. Yet, with all his cleverness, he was a fool when he failed in love, as a many afore him. 'Twas love for Mary Jane found out the weak spot in him, an' showed that he could do an underhand deed like anybody else in the same fix; for when we'm struck on a maid, if us can't see how to fight fair in it, us all fights foul without a blush. Which shows love ban't a Bible virtue, but just a savage strain in the blood, if you come to think of it. Besides, you can't forget his father was a poacher.

Between these two men, Ben an' Nicholas, it rested, an' Mary Jane took her time to make up her mind. She was in love with Benjamin's self an' Westaway's farm: that's how it stood. She didn't want to miss the farm, an' she didn't want to miss Benjamin; but her couldn't have both; an' her found it a bit difficult to make up her mind, though Lord He knows her faither an' mother done their best to make it up for her. They had an eye on the get chimney corners to the Rectory Farm, no doubt.

"So men just
told him to get
out of their
road."

Then things happened that helped Mary Jane to decide.

The rights of it got out long after, but what took place was this, for I heard it direct from Nicholas. Whatever else he was, he was a truth-teller. One fine evening in late summer, when Westaway was walking down his field-path in a devil of a gale, because he found that folks had been breaking his hedge again for the hazel-nuts an' running all about the meadow after mushrooms, there comed by Ben Pearn, an' he marked the trouble an' spoke.

"'Tis a shame to see what you get for your goodness in letting folks go up an' down your field-path, Mr. Westaway," he says.

But Nick looked at him sideways, for he knowed Ben was his rival, an' didn't feel like trusting him a yard.

"They wouldn't be here if I could help it. But seemingly I can't," he answered back.

Ben nodded. "The law won't help 'e? 'Tis a crying shame; but if I was you, I'd help myself an' hang the law."

"I've tried often enough, surely. I've done every mortal thing that I can think of. I wish to God us was allowed to use man-traps, like landowners did in the old time. But the law's got so weak as water nowadays. A man mayn't even shoot a burglar, they tell me. 'Twill be a penal offence next to ax a housebreaker to leave the family Bible behind him."

"Well, there's man-traps an' man-traps. The meadow be yours to do what you please with, ban't it?" says Ben, very artful like.

"It did ought to be."

"You can graze sheep in it?"

"Yes."

"Or cattle?"

"Of course. What's that to do with the matter?"

"You might even let your great red Devon bull, as takes so many prizes an' have got such a deuce an' all of a temper, run loose there, if you was minded to—eh?"

"By Gor!" said Nick Westaway. "It that ban't an idea!"

"I judge you wouldn't have no more trouble then, Nicholas. Better'n noticeboards. He'd work quicker, too. One sight of him would be enough for most people."

"Thank you," said the farmer. "Thank you very much. You'm a quick-witted

chap, for sartain, an' I'm greatly obliged to you. I'll turn him in this very evening, an' be damned to everybody."

An' so he did; an' next day that gert bull was wallowing in a pool o' mud in the middle of the meadow, an' wondering at his luck.

An' when young Ben left Westaway he went straight down to see Mary Jane Arscott. A crooked game he played, sure enough!

They had a bit of love-making by the river; an' then Ben arranged to meet her next day an' go out upon Belstone Tor an' pick whortleberries. But he never said no word touching his talk with Nicholas Westaway.

Well, the girl, who lived in a cottage down the valley, came up as a matter of course by the field-path to Belstone in the morning; an', for that matter, Westaway had long since given her special permission to do so. Her was half-way across the great meadow, with nothing in her thoughts but mushrooms an' whortleberries an' Benjamin Pearn, when there comed a sound, very high-pitched an' ugly. It got louder and deeper, till she heard a proper bellow, an' there, right ahead, she seed Nick Westaway's great red Devon bull, a-pawing an' a-prancing as if he was trying to dance the sailor's hornpipe. If he'd been a thought farther off, no harm would have come, for the field-path ran nigh the hedge; but as it was, Mary Jane had a narrow squeak, for she'd roamed off the pathway to pick mushrooms, an' when the old bull went for her, she'd got fifty yards to get to the hedge, an' he'd got a bit more than a hundred to catch her. He was in a good temper, I believe, an' never really tried to hurt her; but what's a joke to a bull may be a mighty serious bit of earnest for a twelve-stone female.

She dropped her basket an' ran for her life. She weren't built for running, but nature will do a great deal, even for the roundest of us, in a pinch like this, an' for once she got over the ground in very fine fashion. She'd reached within ten yards of the hedge, when she heard a shout, an' a man came tearing down the field-path; but he was too late. Mary Jane went head first into the hazel hedge, screaming to the Everlasting to spare her; an' the bull's horn just gave her the ghost of a touch—enough to swear by after—as she went through all ends



"Mary Jane went head first into the hazel hedge."

up. She weren't really hurt a bit, but, my stars! her temper didn't heal so easy; an' presently, when the man as had shouted an' runned to help her took the poor maiden home, she let him know what she thought about the world an' Nicholas Westaway.

Of course the man was Benjamin Pearn. An' he knowed really that the field-path ran nigh the hedge, an' he'd been dead sure as Mary Jane would not get into no real danger. Besides, he had planned to be there in plenty of time, an' it wasn't till he actually seed Mary Jane flying an' the bull a-bellowing after her, with his tail up an' his head down, that he knowed what he'd done. Then he rushed out from the hedge, where he was hid, an' chuckled in secret, for everything had happened just ezacally as he wanted it to—though I don't suppose he ever wished for the maiden to have such a narrow shave.

"To think!" gasped Mary Jane—"to think as I might be a lifeless jelly this moment but for my own legs! As 'tis, that gert beast's horn have horched me somewheres, an' I may die of it yet. An' if you'm a man, Benjamin Pearn, you'll go an' get your gun an' shoot him."

"God's goodness! you don't mean Mr. Westaway?" said Ben.

"No, I don't: you can leave him to me," the maiden answered. "I won't have no living soul come between me an' Nicholas Westaway now. He'll be sorry as he was ever born afore dinner-time, if I've got a tongue in my head; an' he shall have all Belstone hooting at him in the open street, come to-morrow. But 'tis your part to shoot thicky beastly bull wi' a gun; an' if you love me, you'll do it. He shan't take no more prizes, if I can stop him."

"As to shooting the bull, they'd put me in prison for it—not that I'd mind that if you'd have me when I comed out," said Ben, very eager like. "But," he added as an after-thought, "the dashed luck of it is, I haven't got a gun."

Her black eyes flashed, an' her gipsy-dark face growed darker still. She still panted an' puffed a bit. But Ben confessed arter that she never looked so lovely afore or since as she did when he pulled her out of the brambles in the hedge an' comforted her.

"You'd best to borrow a gun, then," she told him. "Anyway, I won't marry

you while that bull's alive; an' if you was a man, you'd never sleep again till you'd put a bullet through it."

Same morning she went up with her mother to Belstone an' gave Nicholas Westaway the whole law an' the prophets, by all accounts. I seem his ears must have tingled to hear her; but he was a pretty cool hand, an' when she'd talked herself out of breath an' falled back on torrents an' oceans of tears, Nick popped in a word or two edgeways.

"If you'll be so very kind as to hold your noise a minute, I'll tell you how the bull got in the field," he said. "'Twasn't my idea at all. Ben Pearn put me up to it. I didn't know as you was coming to Belstone to-day, God's my Judge, or I'd have been at the stile to meet you an' see you over the meadow safe; but he knowed you was coming. Any fool can see that he meant to kill you."

"He axed me to come," said Mary Jane.

"Did he? Then 'tis him you've got to thank, not me. 'Tis only by the mercy of Heaven he ban't a murderer."

"You'd better look after him, then," said Mary Jane, thoughtful-like, "for I've told 'un to shoot your bull."

"Let 'un," answered Nicholas, very cunning. "I'd shoot the old devil myself for daring to run after you."

Then Mrs. Arscott struck the iron while it was hot, an' afore she left that farm parlour Mary Jane had named the day.

'Twas rather a funny case of a chap overreaching himself in a love affair. You see, Ben Pearn was so blessed muddle-headed, that he couldn't look on to the end of the game, like any cleverer man might. He said to his silly self, "I'll make her hate the chap, so she'd like to scratch his eyes out"; but he never seed that the end must be differ'n't: he never remembered that Nicholas Westaway had a tongue in his head same as other people.

So Ben was sent off with a flea in his ear, an' the world laughed at him, an' he changed his opinion about marriage an' growed to be a hard-an'-fast bachelor. But as for Mary Jane, she did her husband a power of good, an' enlarged his mind every way. An' when they got a family, young Westaway's nature comed pretty well through the usual ups an' downs of life. He fancied hisself less, an' thought of his little people an' his good lady first, an' growed a bit more like his faither before him.



SUNRISE

AFTER so many long dark days
The sun shines down the rain-wet ways,
And every tear on every thorn
Is like a gem to deck the morn ;
Because at last Love comes my way,
And turns November into May.



So many foolish loves and vain
Have flashed across my window-pane—
Lanterns and lamps whose borrowed fire
Mocked the true sun's divine desire :
And, through the window I have known
The fraud, and kept my house my own.



But now the sun is risen, fling wide
Doors, windows, to the light, my pride!
No corner of my house but, swept
By sighs, and washed by tears long wept,
Is clean to meet the morning's rays—
Dear Love, dear sun of all my days!

E. NESBIT.

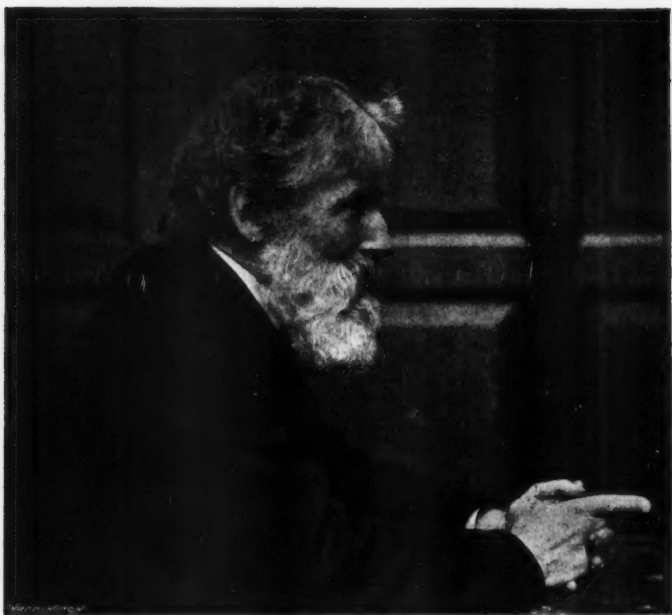


Photo by F. Hollyer.

Dr. George Bird.

THE ROUND TABLE. A FAMOUS DOCTOR AND HIS FRIENDS.

BY ERNEST RHYS.

I.
A LONDON physician who had known and doctored Leigh Hunt, fenced with Captain Burton (before he was Sir Richard), and outlived younger friends like William Black and Grant Allen, might for their sakes ask to be remembered. But Dr. George Bird deserved, if ever man did, to be known for his own sake. Lady Burton, who was married from his house, called him "an unbaptized angel," and another acquaintance, considering medicine perhaps a kind of divinity, "the angelic doctor." But if he was an angel, he was a very human one, and loved the earth and loved London none the less because he spent his life in fighting the ailments that flourish under London smoke.

II.

The author of the farthing epic, *Orion*, Hengist Horne, was in his later days a familiar guest in this doctor's circle. On his return from Australia, Horne, settling in poor quarters in Marylebone, appears to have found himself ill at ease in London

after his active life abroad. Ill-health seized on him, and one of his symptoms was a melancholy increase of weight. Indeed, he had been reduced to the necessity—like Balzac, if we can trust Paris gossip—of having V's (or V-shaped insertions) put in his *bracche*. And then he consulted Dr. Bird, with such results that in a term or more the V's had all to be taken out again. This suggests that Horne had not come back from Australia with a fortune; and it is clear he could not afford clothes for his double.

But now, thanks to the physician, the veteran renewed his youth. One day two ladies, on entering the house in Welbeck Street where Dr. Bird practised, were startled to see an old gentleman sliding, head first, down the banisters. This was Mr. Horne celebrating his return to health. It must have been about the same time that he was prompted, by some casual reference to his health, to ask a lady after dinner in the drawing-room the question: "I hope you do not think I wear a wig?" The lady was disclaiming, when, to the sensation of the beholders,

Hengist Horne snatched a wig indeed from his head, and waved it triumphantly in air.

From *Orion* came one of the doctor's favourite lines—a line engraved afterward on the Chain Pier at Brighton :

'Tis always morning somewhere in the world.

III.

It must have been before his acquaintance with Horne, that Leigh Hunt first found the way to his door. Loyal to Hunt's memory, he constituted himself his unswerving champion, and asseverated the popular view of the man as a "Skimpole," an airy sybarite, a professional prodigal, to be monstrously unjust. He would have rejoiced in his friend Mr. Swinburne's recent clinching testimony on Hunt's behalf; pointing out that "indolence was the essential quality of the character and conduct and philosophy of Skimpole," while Leigh Hunt was "one of the hardest and steadiest workers on record, throughout a long, chequered life, at the toilsome trade of letters." * When it was near the end of his own history, Dr. Bird drew up a signed testimony, drawn out of the knowledge he had gained as friend and friendly physician of the poet and his house; which throws a startling new light on Leigh Hunt's predicament, and painfully explains "the persistent calumnies that pursue his reputation." "I believe," said Dr. Bird, "I am the only contemporary of Leigh Hunt's who could testify to these facts, . . . and I put it on record before I pass away."

In deference to the Hunt family, it may be well still to withhold the complete document, but in the end it is bound to be published. At other times its writer declared how scrupulous a man, how honourable a gentleman, he had found Leigh Hunt: bearing the troubles which were the harder to bear as they came of his own house, without a murmur. Because Hunt was brave in this, and hid his secret, he passed for careless with careless observers, but a physician who was more than so might read the symptoms differently. In the Hunt correspondence will be found the letter which Leigh Hunt wrote to "My dear George Bird, Vincent's friend and mine," on the death of poor Vincent, and which shows on what affectionate terms they stood.

One of his last remiscences of Leigh Hunt was of a sombre winter's morning,

at the season of Christmas parties, when a group of young people—his grandchildren, I suppose—had begun dancing by candlelight, reviving the gaieties of the night before; and the poet came in to remonstrate mildly with them. He appeared then in the familiar black dressing-gown which imaginative visitors converted in their gossip afterwards into a theatrical robe of velvet with lace frills. No such fripperies belonged to the real Hunt of Doctor Bird, who could be just as grave as he was gay: a most authentic, unaffected man, as he was the best of hosts, the most delightful of talkers.

IV.

The Doctor might have claimed an inherited liking for poets, for his father wrote several plays and books of verse, which won some fame in their day. One of them, "Dunwich: a Tale of the Splendid City," recalls that the boy George, when he began to study medicine under a country practitioner at Yoxford, had queer experiences of the sea-doomed city—then become "a city of smugglers." The Yoxford doctor used to send him to Dunwich in a dogcart, to visit mysterious patients from under whose beds there invariably emerged smuggled kegs of brandy. The humour of this appears when we know that the Yoxford doctor was famous for his gout-cure, and was called to treat George IV. For colchicum digested in old cognac is said to have been the secret of this marvellous gout-cure; and so we have the delightful spectacle of George IV. being treated for gout with the brandy smuggled through his own customs. When young Doctor Bird had learnt all that "silly Suffolk" could teach of this order, he set his face for London.

It must have been a full half-century later when I first had the good fortune to come to know him. He had retired then from practice, and from Welbeck Street, but he could not retire from his own temperament. The physician was born in him, and must out; and he must prescribe foils and parallel bars, mountains and the Nile (for he had faith in the healing powers of the sun where it is hottest, in the Orient), seafaring and cycling, or whatever else might meet the case. He had always believed (unlike the late Sir James Paget, who had no faith in tonic athletics) in treating people through their

* *Quarterly Review*, July 1902.

muscles as well as their alimentary ducts. At Welbeck Street he had a gymnasium, into which he often took his patients, and made them try the foils or the parallel bars—much to their amazement. His doctoring was a kind of humouring, full of unexpected resources; and this may have been why his patients, or those who had the wit to appreciate him, so often stepped on, and became his friends.

V.

The Burtons' friendship dated from the earlier days when he was still comparatively obscure and living in Osnaburgh Street; and it was from his house there that they were married. And many a symposium, in the intervals of Italy and the East, and in still earlier days, found Dr. Bird among Captain Burton's guests. On such a night it was, when Burton had been telling of an Arab attack which ended fatally for his assailant, that the doctor provoked from him one of the most perfect retorts ever made at a doctor's expense.

"How do you feel, Captain, when you kill a man?"

"I don't know, Doctor. How do you?"

These Burton evenings were devoted sometimes to all the philosophy and poetry of the Orient; but they had their sequels. One night the doctor was called away to a patient, leaving his host at the mercy of some famous guests—well-seasoned travellers, and a wit or two. Next morning the doctor called to inquire for Burton, who was on the point of going abroad again. James the factotum said his master was still abed.

"Please, sir," he explained, "last gent went at six a.m."

"Who was he, James?"

"Please, sir, he said he was the Lord Almighty."

"What next, James?"

"Please, sir, he tumbled downstairs."

One result of his close acquaintance with Sir Richard Burton was that Dr. Bird became more and more infected with a perennial longing for the East. His frequent escapes from town to Egypt led to the myth that he went there

secretly to treat the Khedive. Instead, he treated the beggars on the Nile for their eternal ophthalmia. "The last thing I saw in Cairo," said a lady who knew him, "was a crowd of ragged Arabs tumbling over each other and scrambling, as the train moved off, for the ophthalmic discs the English doctor had spilt in the haste of departure."

VI.

In telling the humours that fell to his share, one runs some risk of losing the sense of the real spirit and temper of the man. He was an optimist, a knight-errant in his degree, a rebel against fashion and against the tyrannies of the London that he loved. He was the first doctor in London to drive a private hansom; he was one of the first to urge cremation. He was an inveterate athlete. The temptation to sprint on foot along a level road in the parks was so strong that he could not resist it. Once, when he was being driven home in a friend's carriage after a dinner-party, he quietly leapt out, ran home in the dark, and was in bed when the mystified coachman arrived to explain. He bicycled vigorously till a fortnight before his death, on May 4th, 1900. He had lived to be an octogenarian, without tasting the pains of age; and the end came as easily as if he had himself chosen the manner of his going.

I have not yet recounted half his friends: Sir William Crookes, Mr. Justin MacCarthy, Mr. Holyoake, Miss Ellen Terry, Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft, Mr. Clodd, Mr. Watts-Dunton and Mr. Swinburne among them; but here his

story must pause. Those who knew him, and who survive him, will not soon forget him, and his intrepid good-humour, and passion for health and liberty. These were the qualities that aided him to show that old age could be fairer than youth itself, in keeping with his faith that (to requote Hengist Horne's "Orion")—

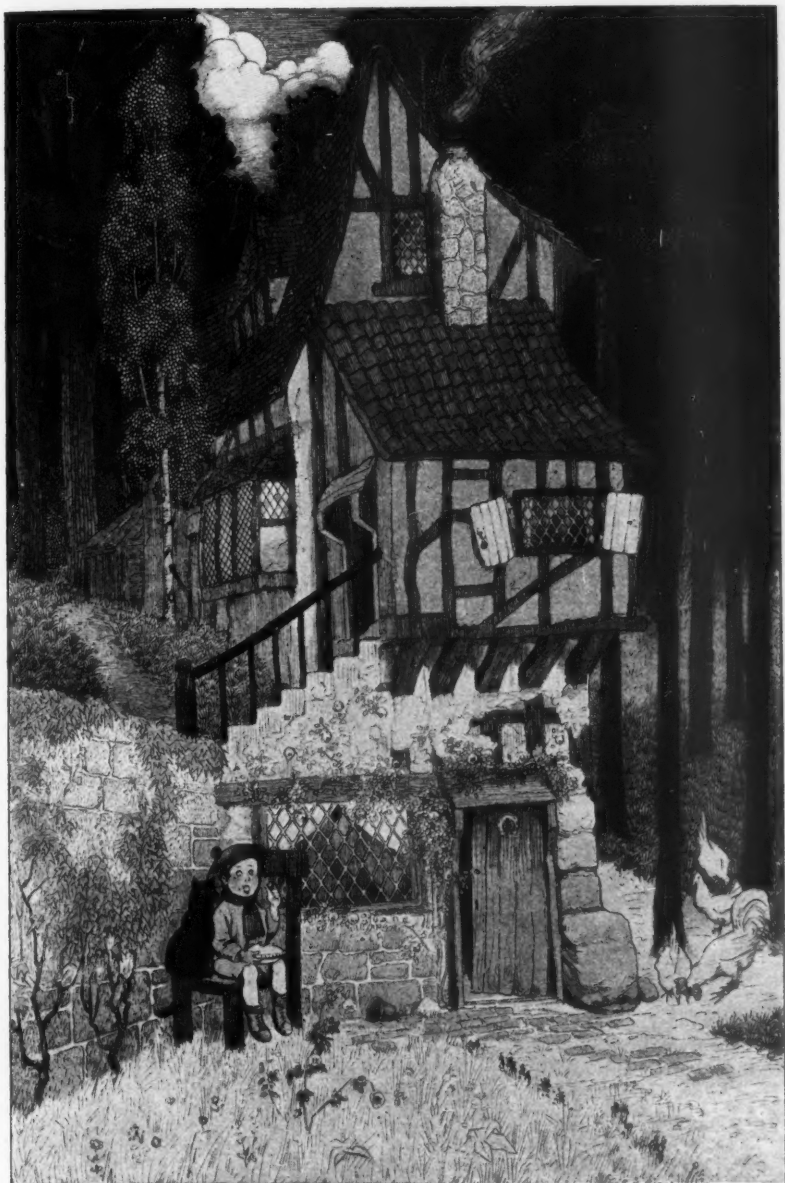
'Tis always morning somewhere in the world,
And Eos ever rises, circling
The various regions of mankind.



Sir Richard Burton.

NURSERY PICTURES.

BY S. H. SIME.



LITTLE Jack Horner
Sat in a corner,
Eating a Christmas Pie:
He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

A CRITIC CRITICISED.

MR. SIDNEY LEE AND THE BACONIANIS.

[Mr. Sidney Lee's denunciations of the Baconians have been unmeasured, and as this method of controversy is clearly open to retort, we have no hesitation in publishing the following letter, although not holding ourselves responsible either for its arguments or its deductions.—ED. P. M. M.]

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—
I breathe again—on the assurance of Mr. Archer in your November number* that Mr. Sidney Lee, who has taken all Shakespeariana for his province, as Bacon did “all learning” for his, has returned from the land of the Baconians “untomahawked and unscalped.” It was with fear and misgiving that I heard that Mr. Lee was crossing the Atlantic, as my old friend Mr. Edwin Reed (“a lawyer in Boston,” according to Mr. Lee, although Reed neither practises law nor lives in Boston), informed me that they were preparing beans and bombshells for the man who believed that Shakspeare of Stratford was the Shakespeare of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Mr. Lee's experience of America is remarkable. He has visited the country of the stars and stripes, and has never met a Baconian! Times have changed since 1898, when he declared that “The Baconian theory has found its wildest acceptance in America.” Perhaps Mrs. Gallup has something to do with the transformation. At any rate, it is evident that American Baconians refused to give a dress parade in honour of Mr. Sidney Lee, merely to show him that there were a few older folks than he in America who had read Bacon's works in a way he has never done.

According to Mr. Lee, all who believe in the Baconian theory are “cranks.” Some time ago they were described as “monomaniacs” whose “madhouse chatter threatens to develop into an epidemic disease.” In fact, “The whole farrago of printed verbiage which fosters the Baconian bacillus is unworthy of serious attention from any but professed students of intellectual aberration.” “The Baconian theory,” according to Mr. Lee, “has no rational right to a hearing.” And so on.

Then in your “Real Conversation” Mr. Lee maintains that “several of the people who have caught it on this side are men whom you certainly can't call

uneducated.” I like this expression—“men whom you certainly can't call uneducated.” Amongst these men are Brougham, Palmerston, John Bright (who had the courage to hold that “any one who believes that William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote *Hamlet* and *Lear* is a fool,” and that “they may say what they like, but whoever wrote these plays, Shakspeare did not”); Oliver Wendell Holmes (who wrote, “I would not be surprised to find myself ranged on the side of the philosopher against the play-actor”); J. G. Whittier (who said, “Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakspeare neither did nor could”); and Hepworth Dixon (who maintained, “What you say about your conviction that Bacon wrote the Shakespearean dramas is not surprising to me. That question is a strange one indeed, and the argument in favour of your theory is very strong”). And further, Mr. Lee, who declares that “the Baconian theory has no rational right to a hearing,” may be interested to know that Mr. Gladstone wrote on a postcard—“Considering what Bacon was, I have always regarded the discussion as one perfectly serious and to be respected.” Another of the “not quite uneducated” was Emerson, who “could not marry Shakspeare's *life* to his *verse*.” Nor could Henry Hallam.

In the same category Mr. Lee, I presume, includes Lord Penzance and Judge Webb, who have advocated the claims of Bacon to the Shakespearean dramas in their works, “The Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy” and “The Mystery of William Shakespeare”—both of them distinguished judges, whose Baconian sympathies were treated with scorn by the Shakspeareans, as, like Bacon, they were “simply lawyers.” But when Judge Willis produced a book on the other side, it was praised to the skies by Mr. Lee and his party. Willis was, indeed, “Daniel come to judgment,”

* “Real Conversations: Mr. Sidney Lee.” By William Archer.

and from *this* lawyer's judgment there could be no appeal.

In his "Lowell Lecture" in America Mr. Lee had the courage to say: "Those unfortunate persons who believe Bacon wrote the vast poems and dramas accredited to Shakespeare should be condemned to read the clumsy verses Bacon is actually known to have written." I would set against Mr. Lee as a critic of Bacon's poetry—Percy Bysshe Shelley, who wrote: "Bacon was a poet. His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect." Macaulay, no admirer of Bacon, declares: "The poetical faculty was great in Bacon's mind." Spedding, Bacon's greatest biographer, says: "If Bacon had devoted his life to poetry, he would have attained high rank among the poets of the world." Even Bulwer Lytton wrote: "Poetry pervaded the thoughts, it inspired the similes, it hymned in the majestic sentences of the wisest of mankind." According to the gospel of Mr. Lee, Bacon was no poet. But he has never compared Bacon's translations of the Psalms with those of John Milton, or with the man of Stratford's doggerel on his tomb, on Sir Thomas Lucy, and on John Combe, and, in his "Phoenix and Turtle," of which Mr. Lee says, "Happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character" (p. 184). There are none so deaf as those who don't want to hear, and none so blind as those who refuse to open their eyes. Mr. Lee is one of the deaf and blind—and also of the dumb, so far as any answer to Baconian argument is concerned. Argument, and not invective, is what the Baconians ask, and as no argument can be drawn from Mr. Lee the inquirer's only recourse is to consult his *magnum opus*, "A Life of William Shakespeare," so called with a humour that, coming from Mr. Lee, was certainly unexpected.

In his preface Mr. Lee states that "Shakespearean literature, as far as it is known to me, still lacks a book that shall [?] will] supply within a brief compass an exhaustive and well-arranged statement of the facts of Shakespeare's career, achievement and reputation; that shall reduce conjecture to the smallest dimensions consistent with coherence, and shall [?] will] give verifiable references to all the original sources of

information." Our "biographer" is quite correct—such a book is badly wanted; but Mr. Lee's does not supply that want. Halliwell-Phillipps was born and lived a good few years before Mr. Lee made his literary *début*, and his *Outlines* contain more reliable "personal history" than Mr. Lee's "great work." Even Halliwell-Phillipps said, "The compilation of a satisfactory life of Shakespeare is an impossibility." Does Mr. Lee believe him?

The best life of Shakespeare ever written was that of George Steevens, the great Shakespearean commentator, and it consists of the following sentence: "All that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare is, that he was born at Stratford-on-Avon, married and had children there—went to London, where he commenced actor, and wrote poems and plays—returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried."

This *is* biography—but of what sort is Mr. Lee's? He promised, remember, to "reduce conjecture to the smallest dimensions." I give an idea of the "dimensions" of the "conjecture":—

- (1) "There is every probability that his ancestors."
- (2) "Probably his birthplace."
- (3) "Some doubt is justifiable as to the ordinarily accepted scene of his birth."
- (4) "All the evidence points to the conclusion."
- (5) "One of them doubtless the alleged birthplace."
- (6) "There is no inherent improbability in the tale."
- (7) "William probably entered the school."
- (8) "There seems good ground for regarding."
- (9) "Probably in 1577 he was enlisted by his father."
- (10) "It is possible that John's ill-luck."
- (11) "Shakespeare's friends may have called the attention of the strolling players to the homeless lad."
- (12) "The wedding probably took place."
- (13) "The circumstances make it highly improbable."
- (14) "Renders it improbable."
- (15) "It is unlikely that."
- (16) "It seems possible."
- (17) "Probably his ignorance of affairs."
- (18) "From such incidents doubtless sprang."
- (19) "He was doubtless another."
- (20) "His intellectual capacity and the amiability . . . were probably soon recognised."
- (21) "It is unsafe to assume."
- (22) "But there seems no doubt."

(23) "All the evidence points to the conclusion."

(24) "It is fair to infer."

(25) "Justice Shallow is beyond doubt a reminiscence" [of Sir Thomas Lucy, which he certainly is not, according to Mrs. Stopes].

(26) "The Rose was doubtless the earliest scene."

(27) "It was doubtless performing."

(28) "He doubtless owed all [his realistic portrayal of Italian life and sentiment] to the verbal reports of travelled friends, or to books."

(29) "Shakespeare may be credited with . . ."

(30) "The whole of Shakespeare's dramatic work was probably begun."

(31) "It was, doubtless, to Shakespeare's personal relations. . . ."

(32) "Shakespeare doubtless gained. . ."

(33) "It is just possible."

(34) "The tirade was probably inspired."

(35) "The many references to travel in the *Sonnets* were, doubtless, reminiscences."

(36) "That Shakespeare visited any part of the Continent is even less probable." [That Bacon did is certain.]

(37) "That Shakespeare joined any of these expeditions is highly improbable."

(38) "Renders it almost impossible that he could have gathered his knowledge of Northern Italy from personal observation." [How did he get it, then? See *infra*.]

(39) "There is no ground for assuming."

(40) "There is every indication that."

(41) "There is a likelihood that."

(42) "There is little doubt that Shakespeare."

(43) "It was probably about 1571 that William."

(44) "It was probably in 1596 that Shakespeare."

(45) "But in all probability he drew."

(46) "In all probability it was."

(47) "It was doubtless under Shakespeare's guidance."

(48) "Shakespeare was doubtless withdrawn."

(49) "Doubtless, William . . ."

(50) "Shakespeare, doubtless, travelled."

I have given 50 "conjectures"—I could give 150, in this "Life of Shakespeare" with a reduction in "conjecture" that was never previously attempted.

Does Mr. Lee call this a "Life"? The whole story he relates is not that Shakspeare of Stratford was the author, but that the dramas were allowed without

challenge—and without any claim on the part of the reputed author—to pass as his. Piratical publishers stole the plays and poems, and Mr. Lee says the author had no redress, although we are informed that "Shakespeare brought to practical affairs a singularly sane and sober temperament," and that he "stood rigorously by his rights in all his business relations." Does it not seem odd that such a gentleman as this, who could sue to court a friend for "2/- lent," should allow every one of the sixteen plays published in his lifetime to be printed without his sanction (although he had recourse against the pirates at "common law"), and "that he made no audible protest when seven contemptible dramas in which he had no hand" were given to the world as his composition? How does Mr. Lee explain the fact that this man, so versed in "the practical affairs of life," showed such utter indifference to all questions touching the publication of his plays (p. 396) that, after their production, they were looked upon by him as no more than waste-paper? Had they no commercial value?

Mr. Lee alludes to his work as "a plain and practical narrative of the great dramatist's *personal history*," and says that he has "avoided merely æsthetic criticism." His volume is, however, mainly devoted to criticism of the plays, in the form of chapters on "Early Dramatic Work," "The Sonnets and their Literary History," "The Borrowed Conceits of the Sonnets," "The Supposed Story of Intrigue in the Sonnets," "The Development of Dramatic Power," "The Highest Themes of Tragedy," etc.—hundreds of pages directed to anything but the "personal history" of the reputed author of the plays. All that Mr. Lee has to give in the shape of "personal history" of the man of Stratford could be compressed into a few lines: viz. — (1) He was born 22nd or 23rd April, 1564 (p. 8). [*Probably*, although the birth was not registered.] (2) He was baptised 26th April (p. 8). [*Doubtlessly*, as the baptism is recorded.] (3) He seduced and was forced to marry Anne Hathaway, who had a child to him within six months after marriage* (p. 22). (4) He

* "With Shakespeare marriage is a divine institution; with Bacon it is a business matter. Shakespeare married young and for love."—*Rolle*. [Even the marriage is doubtful, as "no record of the solemnisation of Shakespeare's marriage survives" (p. 191).] "Bacon's fall taught the useful lesson that intellectual genius, however commanding, never justified breaches of any moral law."—*S. Lee*, Oct. 4th, 1903. [Shakspeare's "intellectual genius" *probably* does, at least Mr. Lee suggests its *possibility*.]

had to leave Stratford for poaching (p. 27). (5) He sued Philip Rogers for 2/- lent (p. 206).* (6) He cheated his fellow-townsmen over the enclosure of public land (p. 270). (7) He endeavoured to obtain by means of false statements a coat-of-arms (p. 188). (8) He "barred his wife's dower," and cut her off with his "second-best bed" (pp. 273-4). (9) He left unpaid a debt contracted by his wife to her father's shepherd, who in 1601 "directed his executor to recover the sum from the poet and distribute it among the poor of Stratford" (p. 187). (10) He neglected his daughter's education so that she had to sign her name by a mark or "sign manual," as Mr. Lee styles it (p. 226). (11) He is credited with "many sportive adventures," among them the dirty story in which he figured with Burbage, "the sole anecdote of Shakespeare that is positively known to have been recorded in his lifetime" † (p. 265). (12) He entertained his two friends Drayton and Jonson, and they "drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever then contracted" (p. 272). (13) The Davenant incident, of which Mr. Lee writes: "The antiquity and persistence of the scandal belie the assumption [whose?] that Shakespeare was known to his contemporaries as a man of scrupulous virtue" (p. 266). This led Emerson to say, "Other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought, but this man in wide contrast," characterising his life as "obscure and profane." Mr. Lee can see no inconsistency, however, in associating the author of *Hamlet* with immorality, money-lending, and meanness, without even the tradition of a noble or lovable action.

Bacon, of course, is never mentioned in the body of the work; but Mr. Lee dismisses the Baconian case in a contemptuous "Appendix." In regard to the "Parallelisms," Mr. Lee declares that "most of them that are commonly quoted are phrases in ordinary use by all writers of the day"—a statement far removed from the truth. I can give him dozens of (1) Identical Expressions, (2) Identical Metaphors, (3) Identical Opinions, (4) Identical Quotations, (5) Identical Studies,

(6) Identical Errors, (7) Identical use of unusual words, (8) Identities of Character, and (9) Identities of Style, that were not "in ordinary use by all writers of the day," or by any writer. "One parallelism has no significance; five attract attention; ten suggest inquiry; twenty raise a presumption; fifty establish a probability; a hundred dissolve every doubt"; but a thousand won't affect Mr. Lee's preconceived idea a single jot, although Oliver Wendell Holmes declared: "The wonderful parallelisms [in Shakespeare and Bacon] must and will be wrought out and followed out to such fair conclusions as they shall be found to force honest minds to adopt. . . . Our Shakespeare scholars hereabouts are very impatient whenever the question of the authorship of the Plays and Poems is even alluded to. It *must* be spoken of, whether they like it or not."

But, according to Mr. Lee, this is all pure nonsense. "Why," he asks, "should the Baconian theorists have any following outside lunatic asylums? . . . Those who adopt the Baconian theory in any of its phases should be classed with the believers in the Cocklane ghost, or in Arthur Orton's identity with Roger Tichborne. Ignorance, vanity, inability to best evidence, lack of scholarly habits of mind, are in each of these instances found to be the main causes predisposing half-educated members of the public [like Palmerston, Bright, Holmes, Bismarck] to the acceptance of the delusion; and when any of the genuinely deluded victims have been narrowly examined, they have invariably exhibited a tendency to monomania." I have no doubt the names, dates, medical authorities, and other particulars of these examinations, can be supplied by Mr. Lee. The Baconians are not quite so sure, however, of anything as Mr. Lee is of everything. All they ask is that the Shakspeareans will study the whole question, freeing themselves from preconceived ideas, and then meet the arguments *seriatim*. This is just what Mr. Sidney Lee will not or cannot do. "In the mortality of man is the salvation of truth," and it is truth only that the

* "A sharp man of business this poet of ours. . . . He is by no means the ideal artist of the vulgar."—*Fleay*.

† "To be told that he played a trick on his brother player in a licentious amour, or that he died of a drunken frolic . . . does not exactly inform us of the man who wrote *Lear*."—*Hallam*. "Bohemian ideals and modes of life had no genuine attraction for Shakespeare."—*S. Lee* (p. 278).

Baconians seek. Other men of habits as scholarly as Mr. Lee have been engaged in the Shakespeare "mystery" all their lives, and have found difficulties in reconciling the life of the actor with the works of the dramatist; but Mr. Lee extricates himself from all his difficulties with the aid of "possibly," "probably," "doubtless," and other qualifying adverbs. Guesses and fictions he substitutes for what he calls "facts." Another "fact" instanced by Mr. Lee is that Mr. Donnelly "pretended to have discovered among Bacon's papers a numerical cypher which enabled him to pick out letters appearing at certain intervals in the pages of Shakespeare's First Folio, and the selected letters formed words and sentences categorically stating that Bacon was author of the plays." Mr. Lee can never have seen "The Great Cryptogram," and I challenge him to prove his statements in the passage I have quoted.

I am afraid my letter is already too long; but there are other points in this authoritative "personal history" that I would like to inquire about from its author. Mr. Lee says, "Shakespeare had no title to rank as a classical scholar, and he did not disdain a liberal use of translations." Mr. Churton Collins has shown in his three brilliant articles in the *Fortnightly Review*—he has proved it to the hilt—that "so far from Shakespeare having no pretension to classical scholarship . . . that of the Greek classics in the Latin versions he had a remarkably extensive knowledge." That he knew Latin, French and Italian is proved by the fact that the plots and characters of several of his plays are drawn from works in these languages of which no English translations were then available.* But possibly Mr. Lee agrees with the Shakespearean critic Dennis, when he writes, "He who allows Shakespeare had learning, and a learning with the ancients, ought to be looked upon as a detractor from the glory of Great Britain." I am silly enough to believe that "the heights of classic knowledge climbed by Shakespeare were not scaled by any grammar-school prodigy of the sixteenth or any other century in England."

Then Mr. Lee explains the marvellous and accurate law knowledge in the plays by "the many legal processes in which his

father was involved, and in part to early intercourse with members of the Inns of Court" [Bacon, *probably*, among the number]. Let him study the law in Sonnets XLVI and LXXXVII, and he will, *possibly*, change his mind. Of the former Lord Campbell said, "Without a considerable knowledge of English forensic procedure, it cannot be fully understood." A certain Mr. Fiske once wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* that Shakespeare could easily have got all his knowledge of law "from an evening chat with some legal friend at an ale-house." This is quite as *probable* as Mr. Lee's suggestion.

On pages 33-4 of the "Life" in which "conjecture" is almost entirely abjured, the following passage occurs:—"Shakespeare's friends [at Stratford] *may have* called the attention of the strolling players [on a visit to Stratford] to the homeless lad, rumours of whose search for employment about the London theatres had *doubtless* reached Stratford. From such incidents *seems* to have sprung the opportunity which offered Shakespeare fame and fortune. . . . His intellectual capacity, and the amiability with which he turned to account his versatile powers [up to that time, be it noted, all that is known of Shakspeare was that he had been a poacher and a butcher's apprentice] were *probably* soon recognised, and *thenceforth his promotion was assured.*" There is certainty for you—in the last five words! It is quite affecting—this lively non-conjectural interest Shakespeare's friends in Stratford must have taken in the "homeless lad," who, according to Sir Theodore Martin and Mrs. Stopes, fled from Stratford after his deer-stealing exploits with the manuscript of *Venus and Adonis* "in his pocket." Can Shakespearean "faith" such as this find its parallel in any item of the Baconian creed? Then a few years afterwards "the homeless lad" produces his first play, *Love's Labour's Lost*, "so learned, so academic, so scholastic in expression and allusion, that it is unfit for popular representation."

Next we have the following *personal history*: "It was *probably* in 1596 that Shakespeare returned to his native town . . . thenceforth the poet's relations with Stratford were uninterrupted. . . . Until

* "Shakespeare must therefore have been a perfect master of the Italian and Latin languages."
—Karl Elze.

the close of his professional career he paid the town *at least an annual visit.*" There is no evidence to show that Shakspeare ever visited Stratford from the time he left it (date unknown) to the time he returned to it (date unknown). It is not even known that he was at the funeral of his mother or of his son Hamnet or at the marriage of his daughter Susanna!

Then how conveniently Mr. Lee twists out of his difficulties with regard to Shakespeare's universal *knowledge* of the life of a soldier, the life of a courtier, the life of a sailor,—the life of everybody! It was all accomplished by his "intuitive power of realising life under almost every aspect *by force of his imagination.*" There is no proof that Shakspeare climbed the tree of knowledge. According to Mr. Lee there was no necessity. He stood below the tree with his mouth open, and the fruit dropped into it *intuitively.* Lucky Shakspeare! Yet Dr. Johnson declared—"Shakespeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned." Mr. Lee knows differently, however.

Friends, not books, we have seen, supplied Shakspeare with his knowledge of law, so we are not surprised to learn from Mr. Lee that "he *doubtless* obtained all his knowledge of Northern Italy from the verbal reports of travelled friends or from books, the contents of which he had a rare power of assimilating and vitalising." The names of the books are not mentioned, but *probably* they were early editions of Baedeker or Murray, none of which are extant in any public or private library.

Then we are informed that "Shakespeare's accurate reference in *Macbeth* to the 'nimble' and 'sweet climate' of Inverness, and the vivid impression he conveys of the aspects of wild Highland heaths . . . can be *satisfactorily* accounted for by his *inevitable* intercourse with Scotsmen in London and the theatres." Obliging Scotsmen! I wonder how many London (or Scotch) Scotsmen of the period had ever been so far north as Inverness in the days of Queen Bess.

"It was *doubtless*," also, we learn, "to Shakespeare's relations with men and women of the Court that his Sonnets owed their existence," and *probably* where he obtained his marvellous knowledge of Court ceremonial. The actor and play-

wright hobnobbed with the nobility at the Court of Elizabeth and James, flirted with the Queen (*incog.*) on the stage of the "Globe," and the King wrote him a letter, with which *probably* he lit his pipe, as it has never since been forthcoming. *Probably*, it was also through these "personal relations" that we are to account for the author of the plays being a thorough aristocrat—"a Tory and a gentleman," as Hartley Coleridge calls him—although he was hounded from Stratford for stealing an aristocrat's deer. The masses he detested—"tag-rag people," "disordered rabble," "beastly plebeians," etc., he calls them—not a good word for or a scrap of sympathy with the "toiling masses" is to be found in Shakespeare, but then Shakspeare held aristocrats' horses at the stage door, and associated with Raleigh at the "Mermaid." I am under the impression that Bacon was an aristocrat, and a *grata persona* at Court, but then Mr. Lee tells us that Bacon could have had nothing to do with the plays.

Then, *probably*, Shakespeare obtained his medical knowledge—including the anticipation of Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood—from his son-in-law, "Dr." Hall, who believed in the curative properties of "frog-spawn water, juice of goose-excrements, powdered human skulls, and swallows' nests!"

In conclusion, may I ask Mr. Lee how he accounts for the fact that two such diverse men in Elizabethan literature used the same expressions, aired the same ideas, the one the counterpart in prose of the other in verse—"the one an aristocrat, the other a plebeian; the one the first subject of the realm, the other an actor; the one highly educated, the other uneducated; the one the son of scholarly parents, the other the son of illiterates who could not write their names"? The positions and circumstances of Shakespeare and Bacon were as wide apart as the poles, and yet their thoughts, their expressions, their mistakes are identical. "There is an understanding," says Carlyle, "manifested in the construction of Shakespeare's Plays equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum.*" "The wisdom displayed in Shakespeare," says Hazlitt, "was equal in profundness to the great Lord Bacon's *Novum Organum.*" Well might Lowell speak of "the apparition known to moderns as Shakespeare";

and Coleridge write—"What! are we to have miracles in sport? . . . Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truth to man?" According to Mr. Lee, He does.

The following criticism of Bacon was recently "made in Germany" by Dr. Engel: "Bacon was one of the most unliterary men—perhaps in his rank of life the most unliterary man—of his age. Shakespeare's reading, on the contrary, was of wide range, too wide even to outline here." Yet Edmund Burke, whose criticism was not "made in Germany," had once the audacity to declare—"Who is there that, hearing the name of Bacon, does not instantly recognise everything of genius the most profound, of literature the most extensive, of discovery the most penetrating, of observation of human life the most distinguishing and refined?" [*Possibly* obtained "by force of his imagination." See *ante*.] I must confess I prefer Burke to Engel.

Before I conclude, I would ask Mr. Sidney Lee's authority for the following statement: "Shakespeare, it should also be remembered, *must have been* a regular attendant at the parish church, and *may at times have enjoyed* a sermon." Is this free from conjecture? And what scrap of authority has he for maintaining—"The copy for the press, the manuscripts of the plays, the publishers obtained from the managers of the acting company with whom Shakespeare was long connected as both author and actor." If Mr. Lee's authorities for this detail are Heminge and Condell, he should turn to the best edition of Shakespeare's plays ever produced—the Cambridge edition—when he will find that the statements of the professed editors of the First Folio, which recently Mr. Lee has taken under his

wing, are by their own confession entirely contradictory and untrustworthy. "In short, the authority of the Folio is uniformly rejected . . . the assertions of its editors [are] discredited," by the editor, Mr. Aldis Wright.

I trust Mr. Lee will find himself able to reply to the statements I place before him. He has abused Baconians, but he has never argued with them. Edwin Reed challenged him to a public debate in America, but he would not take it up. I have not a tithe of the knowledge and ability of Reed, but I am willing to thrash out the subject with Mr. Lee when and where he pleases. I may not support the claim of Bacon, but I shall surely take Mr. Lee's "Life of Shakespeare" in my hand, and ask him where he obtained the "facts" for his "personal history." Till he does this, Baconians may be excused for maintaining that Mr. Lee has unconsciously invented "a fictitious biography" to sustain a fictitious character, a biography "full of fanciful might-have-beens," without which, according to Mr. F. G. Fleay, a "Life of Shakespeare" cannot apparently be compiled.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE STRONACH.

EDINBURGH, October 1903.

P.S.—May I add, for Mr. Sidney Lee's edification, a sentence from a recent article in *The Morning Post*: "However absurd the theory of Bacon's 'universal authorship' may be, and however idiotic [this word will please Mr. Lee, *probably*] many of the arguments adduced in favour of his claims to the plays of Shakespeare, *fair argument deserves a fair answer at all times and on all subjects, and some of the Baconian arguments are fair enough, whatever their force may be.*" G. S.

* *Stratford-on-Avon* (1885), p. 72. This revelation is worth contrasting with the statement (*Life*, p. 177): "The creator of Falstaff could have been no stranger to tavern life, and he doubtless took part with zest in the convivialities of men of letters." Shakspeare seems to have been equally at home in "church" or "tavern," not forgetting court and palace.

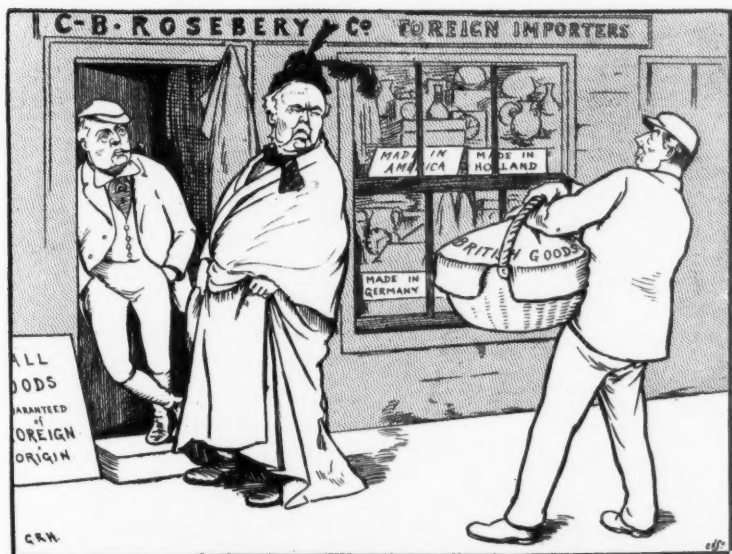


THE MONTH IN CARICATURE.



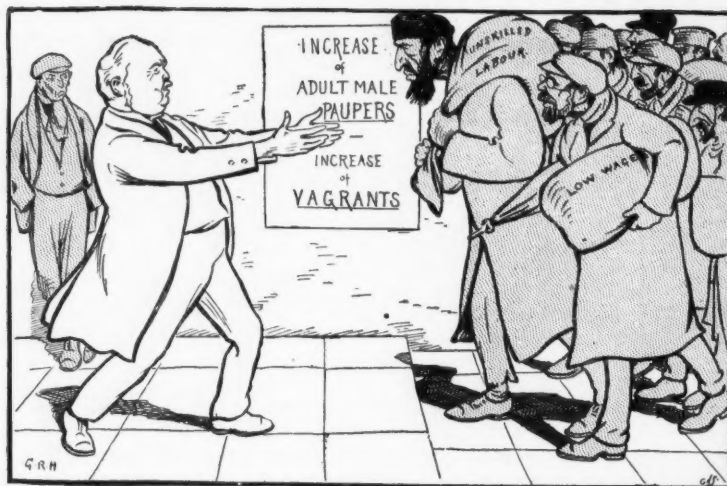
FREE TRADE FOSSILS.

J. C. (*the Labourer*): "Well, there's one good thing I've done—I've unearthed these fossils."



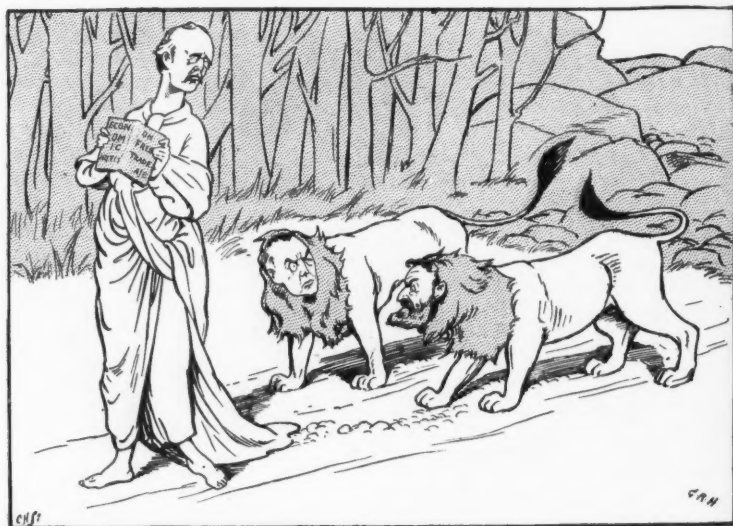
PENCE OR PATRIOTISM.

Mrs. C.-B. (*the Patriotic Housewife*): "Now then, young man, this gentleman and me's gone into partnership again, and I may tell you at once that we ain't goin' to pay a farthing a week extra for the pleasure of buying British goods—not likely! What impudence!"



UNRESTRICTED IMPORTS.

C.-B. (*the Friend of the Working Man*): "Welcome, my friends! in the name of Cobden I bid you welcome!"



UNA UP TO DATE.

UNA: "It is so sweet of these lions *both* to follow me, but I do wish they would give up growling at each other."

