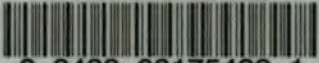


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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal. ✓

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

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THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME III.

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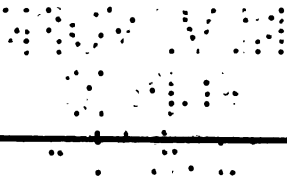
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THE EXTRA SPRING NUMBER FOR 1890,

ALSO

THE EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER FOR 1890,

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 53.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1890. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Paire Damzell," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XXI. WORTHLESS PAPERS.

ELVA walked upstairs as if she were treading upon golden clouds which were waiting her to heaven. The dressing-bell had just rung as Dr. Pink entered, and the happy girl fled. Her first thought was for Amice, whom she found sitting by the window of her room. There was no moon, only darkness in the sky, and a few stars shining between gathering clouds.

Elva went and threw herself on the ground beside her, and for once did not notice anything in her sister's face.

"Amice, darling, kiss me, wish me joy. It has all come upon me to-day; before I was always hesitating. I did not know if I cared enough, or if I could believe enough in him; but it is so different now. You should have seen him this afternoon; never one thought of himself. Amice, I saw then what a silly thing I had been to have had any doubt about him. Amice, Amice, this is life, this is happiness, if only I could hope you would some day have the same."

Amice took both her sister's hands and gazed into her face; the large, blue eyes had a strange, far-away expression that suddenly startled even Elva, who was used to Amice's curious ways.

"Amice, what is it? Why are you so grave, so sad to-night, when I am, oh! so happy, that I can't find words for it? I suppose papa will go and help him? I wish I might. I can't bear the idea that

they will hurt him. I never knew what love meant before. When it comes, dear Amice, there is no mistaking it. But even now I feel so miserable at the idea; he might have been killed, and then I should never have realised my loss. Isn't it foolish of me?"

"Do you love him very much?" said Amice, at last. "I knew that would come. If he were quite worthy of you, then I should be happier."

"Quite worthy of me. Now, you dear, gloomy child, don't utter such stupid fancies. But you did not see him as I did. If he had not been ordered off, he would have stayed to help the last poor unfortunate sufferer. Oh, I wonder how he ever got out! How horridly unfeeling one is when one is happy oneself. Fancy, Amice, Walter Akister was there; that was the only thing I did not like. I really think he must have the evil eye; he looked so angry when he saw me coming towards Hoel. I am glad Hoel is my first, my only love. I have never cared a bit about any one else, have I? I wonder if we shall quarrel? If we do, I know I shall give in; and yet that's quite unlike me. Amice, I never knew before that love does change one entirely; it makes one's whole character different. How strange!"

"Is papa glad?" asked Amice, laying her head on her sister's shoulder. "Dear Elva, I made him angry this afternoon—really angry. See!"

Amice drew up her sleeve a little, and showed a little red mark. Elva looked at it, and felt strangely afraid that her sister really was not quite like other people.

"Amice, what are you saying? What nonsense. Papa never in all his life was rough to any one, and least of all to one of us!"

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Amice hastily pulled down her sleeve again, and was silent; and Elva thought it wiser to take no more notice of the incident.

"I wish—I were already Hoel's wife," she said, "because then I could do all his writing for him. Now, I do hope he will stay here till he is well. I must dress. What colour does he care most about? I am sure I don't know. There's a carriage driven up. Oh dear! it's the Squire and his wife; it is merely curiosity that has brought them. Symee, quick! Let me put on my velvet gown. I must go and receive them. Mamma is upstairs; and you look like a ghost, Amice."

In a very few minutes Elva hastened to receive the Eagle Bennisons, who, having heard of the accident, and garbled accounts about Mr. Fenner, came at once to see if they could help. Mrs. Eagle Bennison alternately smiled and looked pathetically grave.

"My sweet child. Yes, we have heard; so sad. Poor Mr. Fenner! and I fancied——"

Elva was not going to live through a string of innuendoes. She boldly spoke out after the Squire had added:

"Does Dr. Pink think there is any hope?"

"Oh dear, whatever have you heard? Not the truth, certainly. Mr. Fenner was coming to stay here for the Sunday——"

"As he had done several times already," smiled Mrs. Eagle Bennison.

"Yes, and he was in the train that met with the accident, but he was not hurt at all. Only when he was doing wonders towards rescuing the poor people who were many of them jammed in, some débris fell on him, and his arm was broken; but it is nothing serious, only, of course, very inconvenient."

"Really, is that so; but, perhaps, he won't mind much being an invalid in this charming society," said Mrs. Eagle Bennison.

"I hope he won't, considering we are engaged to each other," said Elva, quickly, and very decidedly.

"My dear child! How very interesting! Well, really—— John, do you hear? Do wish your favourite joy. Now, darling, I must kiss you. Such a talented young man! I feel it is all my doing. You met him first the evening of the dinner-party at our house."

"And your father, what does he think?" asked the Squire, kindly.

"Papa is not likely to object to my choice; and, besides, everybody likes and admires Mr. Fenner. I think I am——"

No, Elva would say no more; Mrs. Eagle Bennison was such a gossip.

"Well, really, now, won't George be interested! He made me believe that a certain Walter Akister was to be the lucky man. Even the accident quite pales in interest when compared with such a romantic ending to it. I wish I had known sooner. We had a meeting of the T.A.P.S., and our committee would have been so much interested. Dear Miss Heaton was only to-day speaking to me against matrimony. She says clergy oughtn't to marry; but, of course, critics—that is quite another thing. Don't begin to write stories, though, Elva dear; for your husband will be bound to praise you against his will."

Elva blushed, and thought Mrs. Eagle Bennison more odious than ever before; but happily, at this moment, Mr. Kestell himself entered the room. He looked as pale and agitated as if he himself had witnessed the accident.

"So your guest is not killed," said the Squire. "Really, how stories get exaggerated! Guthrie declared there was not a word true, and would not trouble himself to accompany us, so he has missed quite a startling piece of news!"

"Yes, my dear Mr. Kestell, let me wish you every happiness for this dear child. Little sly puss, not to tell us before!"

"Papa, Mrs. Eagle Bennison means that she is very much surprised that such a famous man is engaged to such a very unknown person as your daughter! What does Dr. Pink say?"

Mr. Kestell received the congratulation with his usual courtly politeness. He even looked much gratified as he placed his hand on his daughter's shoulder.

"The young ones soon forsake the nest, nowadays, Mr. Bennison; but I only wish to consult their happiness. I have long ago decided it is best to give in to their fads and fancies."

"Well, you are a good father! and so there is no anxiety about your patient?"

Dr. Pink now entered and answered for Mr. Kestell.

"None at all; but I have sent him to bed. To-morrow, he can do as he likes. The splints must not be moved; but at his age it will be but a short affair."

The accident was of course rehearsed, and then Elva asked the doctor:

"Was that poor man hurt when he was at last extricated?"

"No, not over much; but he'll be laid up at Greystone for some time. There is a rib broken; but I hope that is all. A marvellous escape! By the way, Mr. Kestell, when asked about his whereabouts the man gave the name of Joe Button, and said he was on his way to see you."

"Joe Button!" said Mr. Kestell, slowly.

"Yes, that was his name. He's gone to 'The Three Feathers.' I told him I would ask you what you knew of him."

"Ah, yes; thank you. I'm afraid the poor fellow must be hard up for cash if he came to see me. He was once employed by me in—in the North. Thank you; I will go and see him."

"Well, don't let him sponge upon you," laughed Dr. Pink; "the Company is bound to pay the doctors' bills of these poor people. Now I must go back. I expect I shall be up all night; but I'm glad your patient will cause you no anxiety. A very simple case indeed."

Mr. Kestell followed the doctor to the door, and the Eagle Bennions soon took their leave, the Squire saying that he should drive on to Greystone, and see if he could be of any service to any of the sufferers. Left to his own devices, the Squire was as tender-hearted as a woman; but he had his spouse to reckon with.

"Good-bye, dear Elva," said this lady; "come and tell me all about it to-morrow. I do love young people, you know; and an engagement is quite an excitement in poor out-of-the-way Rushbrook."

Everything was disorganised to-day; for when dinner was announced, Amice sent down word that she would stay up with her mother, who wanted to hear about the accident. Elva was restless and excited, and Mr. Kestell rather silent till the servants left the room. Then father and daughter were once more alone.

"Dear old dad, I suppose I have given in now, and I thought once I never should. I hope he will be able to stay here some time. Papa, say you like him very, very much, or we shall disagree."

How different this daughter was from the other, thought Mr. Kestell, as he looked up with rather a sad smile.

"Would anything or anybody turn you against your old father, Elva?"

"No," she answered with flashing eyes, "of course not. Not even Hoel! But you do like him?"

"Of course. Don't imagine anything to

the contrary, my dear! By the way, I looked in just now, and Fenner was going off to sleep. Jones quite enjoys an invalid he tells me."

"I have always wanted you to have a son, papa; and now you will really have one."

"One who wants to rob me of a daughter!"

"Not really; we shall be here often, very often; we shall always be running down. I hate London, you know. Oh, I am a country bird, and shall never be a town sparrow; but I shall be a help to him, for, after all, you know, papa, women do see things rather all round, or else they see one side very clearly, and either of these things is useful to the lords of creation, who take such a time to turn round on their own axis!"

"You impudent girl! You must go to bed early, and rest after such a day. I think I shall order the carriage and go to Greystone. The Squire shames me into action."

"You, papa! At this time of night; why, it is past eight o'clock."

"Yes; but this Joe Button may be penniless. He used to work for me, and I pensioned him; but I fear he drinks all the money before he gets it. Poor wretch!"

"The fellow ought not to have been coming down to beg of you, papa, when you are so kind. You spoil everybody."

"So that you are happy, darling, nothing matters."

"Papa, you are always good to me. Sometimes I wonder how I can leave you. It seems as if I couldn't realise that part."

There was a sob in Elva's voice.

"No, no, not more good than you deserve. You, at least, have never given me anxiety."

The emphasis on "you" made Elva suddenly recall Amice's words. One glance at her father's face made her feel sure he could not be harsh. But she would make herself certain of the fact.

"Papa, what is the matter with dear old Amice just now? She has such queer fancies. Actually, she says you are angry with her, and believes you made a mark on her arm!"

Elva laughed to hide a feeling of shame she had at even mentioning such a thing.

"No, it must be fancy. Don't believe anything she tells you. I have myself noticed how curiously fanciful she is; it rather distresses me; in fact, if it could be

managed, Amice ought to go away for change of air."

Elva was relieved, and yet also perplexed and distressed for her sister's sake. She had seen the mark. Then who had made it?

"That would be no use; she would never leave home without me."

"Then could you not, both of you, go away a little, and take Symes with you?"

"Oh, papa! not now of course—oh no. Don't take any notice of Amice; she is so horribly shy sometimes, even of you."

"Very well; I only suggested it; I don't know why. Of course you could not leave home just now, and the winter is coming on. We must try in the spring, before your wedding, to go to Paris. But what will Fenner say? He may want you at Christmas, perhaps. A little Christmas gift. Well, well, we shall see. No, everything must go on as usual."

Elva had lost herself in a dream of happiness, and did not notice her father's changing mood. Nothing was really as usual to-day.

When she rose to go, her father kissed her and bade her good night.

"Go to bed, child. I shall go upstairs and see your mother, and then drive to Greystone. Don't tell her or any one; she is so easily made nervous. I shall be late, I dare say."

Elva put her arms round his neck. She was nearly as tall as he was, and she could lay her cheek near to his.

"Papa, thank you a hundred times for all your goodness about Hoel. You did exactly what was right; you gave me time to be sure; and now I am sure. I do believe it was all your doing. Say, God bless you."

Mr. Kestell kissed the soft cheek in silence, and so tender and long was the kiss that Elva forgot the omission of the words, for, at that moment Amice opened the door and said that Mrs. Kestell wanted to see Elva. She did not enter the room, and Elva, remembering her curious ideas, went hastily away with her. After this, Mr. Kestell rang the bell and ordered the carriage to come round.

"Mr. Fenner sent you a message, Elva. He begged you would go to bed early and rest, and said you were not to worry about him, as he felt quite comfortable," said Amice.

"I won't worry; why should I? I am so happy. Now I will go and tell mother a very little outline of the whole afternoon, and then go to bed."

"I will sit up then, in case anything is wanted. I shall tell Jones I shall be in the morning-room. He will sit up with Mr. Fenner."

"You must call him Hoel, now," said Elva, laughing; and then the happy girl went to see her mother, and afterwards to bed.

Greystone was still in a state of excitement over the railway accident; but as the night was dark, it was chiefly in the public-houses that the common people discussed it. At "The Three Feathers," especially, the topic was interesting, as, upstairs, lay one of the sufferers. When Mr. Kestell's carriage stopped at the door, the innkeeper felt decidedly elated, and came forward with alacrity to speak to the gentleman. Every one knew Kestell of Greystone's carriage; had it not been a daily sight these many years past? Mr. Kestell himself looked rather more smiling and kind than usual when he enquired after the sufferer.

"I hear a certain Joseph Button is laid up here. Poor man, I know something of him, and would like to see him if this is possible. Dr. Pink told me he could be found here."

"Yes, sir; will you walk up, sir? A most unfortunate accident. They say there are ten in Greystone to-night unable to move; but the rest have gone on to their friends. The man you speak of is rather easier now, thank you, sir."

"I am very glad to hear that. Yes, I will see him. Did he have any luggage?"

"Just a bag, sir, which has only been brought here half an hour ago. Come up the private stairs, sir. Betty, show Mr. Kestell up to the room where the injured man is."

The landlord touched his forelock and returned to the bar, leaving Mr. Kestell to Betty, his wife. Mr. Kestell walked slowly up the steep stairs, for "The Three Feathers" was an old house. Betty Stevens, with many curtsies and much whispered advice, opened the door, and ushered Mr. Kestell into the sick man's room.

"Mr. Button, here's a kind gentleman come to see you. The doctor said he wasn't to speak much, sir; but a few words cheers a body up wonderful, I think, sir."

Mr. Kestell took no heed of the doctor's orders, or, at all events, he did not apologise further than by saying:

"I merely wish to say a few words to

the invalid. I shall not detain—I mean, I do not wish to tire him.”

“It’s Mr. Kestell,” said Joe Button, not being able to do more than turn his head round. “Well, sir, that is kind of you; but, begging your pardon, sir, it’s d—”

“Mr. Button, don’t swear, please. I’m truly sorry to see you in this difficulty. Why did you leave London?”

“Well, sir, being hard up, I thought— You see, I lately talked to a young fellow, you know, called Vicary, and he said as how you were very kind. In fact, I’ve come to live in the country.”

“Is that all?”

“Well, yes, sir. I thought the nearer I could be to you the better. When a poor devil has been a gentleman, as you might say, why, it’s rather hard for him to find himself near cleared out.”

Mr. Kestell took a sovereign from his pocket.

“The Company will pay all your expenses, I fancy; but take this for the present.”

Joe reached out his right hand and took it. It was one of his left ribs that was broken.

“Don’t let yourself be robbed,” said Mr. Kestell. Then, correcting himself, he added: “I only mean—of course—in these places—”

“Don’t you fear, sir; I’m sharp enough. Besides, my property won’t tempt people. I was bringing down my old papers to show you, sir, and see if you could not do something for me. When a man’s been in better positions, it’s hard to come down to being as I am.”

“Through your own fault, Button, entirely your own fault. I found you living in a cottage, paying rent to—I forget now all the transactions; but your father sold the land, and then you felt hurt afterwards that you did not know it was valuable.”

“It was my father’s obstinacy, sir. I was too young to make him listen to me. I said often that I fancied it might be valuable, but he was never for doing anything but drink; and so, being rather short of funds, he sold it to a gentleman.”

“Land changes hands very quickly at times. You never saw the gentleman who was said to have bought it, did you, Button? I don’t think I have ever asked you before; if I have, I have forgotten your answer.”

The landlady’s footsteps were heard at this moment, and she coughed a little to make her near presence known. Joe Button glanced towards the door. He wanted to ask Mr. Kestell something more than about long-past transactions.

“Yes, sir, I remember his coming once, I think. He was a fine-looking gentleman; quite young and handsome. The other day I was reminded of him by seeing some one like him. Is he alive, sir?”

“No. I told you before he was dead; but when I came into the property I did all I could for you, Button, feeling sorry for your small means; for, had you been able to keep your land, you would have been well off. But then, again, you would never have had capital enough to work it. Ah! here is your good nurse; I must go.”

“Wait a minute, sir; you say the Company will pay up, don’t you?”

Mr. Kestell smiled at the landlady.

“Don’t distress yourself about that; and in the meantime, Mrs. Stevens, you can apply to me for anything that is necessary. Mind you, I don’t mean to pay for your special luxury, Button. It would be bad for you—very bad. It might lead to fever, and I know not what other complications. No whiskey, Button, eh? However, everything in reason I will advance, and trust to the Company to repay me.”

“Well, sir, I’m sure that is speaking handsome; and you may trust me, sir. We care for our good name more than for anything else. I often says to my husband, I’d rather starve than serve out drink to a man as is already fuddled, sir. No, there’s no one as can say our house isn’t respectable; cheerful company, and just enough liquor to help a poor man’s bread-and-cheese to go down easy, sir. That’s our principles.”

“Very good, very good principles,” said Mr. Kestell. “By the way, Button, you said you had some papers you were bringing for my inspection. Perhaps I had better take them now.”

Joe Button did not approve of this; but the gold sovereign was firmly glued to his palm. It is difficult to refuse anything to the donor of gold.

“Well, sir, if you’ll keep them safe for me, when I get up from this bed, why, I’ll come round and claim them again. A man likes to have his papers to show, even if they’re not worth much.”

“Of course, Button. Well, I think you can trust me. You can have them all back

as soon as you like. I will see what can be done for you. Good night. I hope you will soon be all right; and don't forget moderation."

Mr. Kestell lifted the black bag, and brought it to the bedside.

"Where shall I find them, Button?"

The bag was not locked; the papers lay at the bottom—a good-sized parcel of yellow parchment, and aged letters, tied with red tape.

"I know their number, sir," said Button, suspicious, though he knew his papers were perfectly worthless. "I'll call round for them when I'm well."

Then the poor fellow, tired with the conversation and all he had gone through, turned his head round, and took no more notice of his visitor.

Mr. Kestell spoke a few words to the landlady, a few more to the landlord, and then entered his carriage, still holding the old papers, and told the coachman to drive home.

"He once saw him," he said to himself. "Well, there is no harm in that. Button was a lad himself; and these papers are worthless, utterly worthless; but I can feel for him. If his father had not sold that property, they might have been in a very different position. That is the way fate treats people. If he had lived, it would have been the same; most likely he would never have known. But it is strange that Button should turn up just now—very strange."

TOBERMORY.

In no part of the playgrounds of Europe is the traveller more closely bound to follow the course of the designated highways than in the Highlands of Scotland. The orderly Caledonian mind has devised and knit together a system of railways, stage-coaches, and steamboats; so that one is taken up at a given hour in the early morning, shot through the roads, and lakes, and passes, which come within the day's work, and duly returned to the hotel in time for table d'hôte, served at separate tables by German waiters. But here and there an opportunity is given for the exercise of free will on the part of those who have had the forethought to abjure circular tickets; and, if these opportunities be seized, the memory of the month's outing will, in all probability, be richer and pleasanter, though, perhaps, one or two of the stock sights may be missed.

One of these chances of escape from guide-book thralldom will be at hand when the tourist, shipped on board the steamer to do the regular round to Staffa and Iona, or the voyage to Skye, finds himself, after threading the Sound between the almost treeless shores of Mull and Morven, in a little semi-circular bay, which looks as if it might be a bit of Devonshire transported northwards. Here and there the cliffs rise abruptly from the sea, and, by their reflection, give a dark-purple fringe to the sheet of water which, almost land-locked as it is, is generally as calm as a millpond; but for the most part moss-grown fragments, fallen from above, make a craggy slope, which gives good rooting ground for trees, so that the wood begins almost where the water ends.

In the north-west corner of the bay, at the foot of the high ground, runs a row of white houses, redeemed from monotony by the more striking lines of a church and a distillery; and, dotted about the heights, are a dozen or so of villas. There is the usual bumping and grinding of the steamer against the pier; the usual exchange of passengers and merchandise takes place. Some one says it is Tobermory; and then the mere tourist is sped away to Portree, or Gairloch, or Loch Maree, or some place which has had the good fortune to attract, in a greater degree, the attention of the guide-book compiler.

If it be, indeed, the truth that a land without a history is happy, then Mull ought to be a veritable isle of the blest, for none of the battles or sieges, or royal murders, or conspiracies, of which the Scottish annals are so prolific, took place within its borders. Mull men may have been out in the '15, or the '45; but if they were, they soon went in again, and left no trace of their excursion. One fact, and one only, the guide-book historian finds to quote apropos of Tobermory. During the disastrous retreat of the Spanish Armada round the north of Britain, one of the great ships was driven ashore near the town, and, doubtless there were rare doings when the worthy burghesses returned with their sacks full of unconsidered trifles from the ill-starred "Florida." Some horses got ashore from the wreck, and tradition says that this new strain greatly improved the existing breed, and made the Mull cattle famous through the West. There is still a large horsefair in August, where, perhaps, one might still acquire an animal sprung from Castilian sire. Two

brass guns from the wreck of the "Florida" were afterwards recovered from the sea, and these are now preserved at Dunolly Castle, near Oban.

The literary traveller, too, will seek in vain in Mull for any spot apropos of which he can bring out his carefully-stored lines of Burns or Scott. There is no "brig" where "the foremost horseman rode alone;" no "auld haunted kirk;" no ford where "thou must keep thee with thy sword;" no banks and braes, bonny or otherwise; but for those who only find modified pleasure in rattling char-à-bancs and crowded steamers; who want to be let alone to get through their holiday without sight-seeing, Tobermory is a place worth knowing of. To begin with, it is a sort of privilege to live in a place where the Atlantic Ocean is only just round the corner, as it is at Tobermory. The lovely little harbour, with Calve Island—its natural breakwater—to intercept even the modest waves of the Sound of Mull outside, may be smooth as a mirror; the Sound itself is a well-behaved strait; but round the point, if one takes the trouble to climb to the height above Ardmore, the rollers may be seen breaking into spray against the rocks of Ardnamurchan, which geographers tell us is the westernmost part of the mainland of Britain. And on a fine, clear day there is something better to be seen than breakers. The ocean will be calm and blue as turquoise; to the south the long, low island of Tiree loses itself behind the next promontory. On the other side, beyond Ardnamurchan, rise the fine mountains of Rum; and, if it be very clear indeed, the inland Skye Coolins may be seen; and Ben Nevis also, far away beyond the head of Loch Suinart, which runs eastward from the opposite side of the Sound.

This walk, over the heather and bracken, with the endless ridges of rock and moor on one side, and the Sound glittering in the sun some three hundred feet below on the other, is an experience to be treasured; and it is one which may be taken without dread of a meeting with the truculent gillie, who is in many other districts the terror of the pedestrian. The reason for this immunity is to be found in the fact that grouse-shooting on the coast is practically worthless. Occasionally, however, there are indications that the trespasser is disapproved of. Though the tourist is, and will probably remain, a comparatively rare object in Mull, the landed proprietor

has not neglected to show his humour by setting up those prohibitory notices and barbed-wire fences which have made him so popular in other parts of Scotland; but this remark applies chiefly to the immediate neighbourhood of Tobermory. Once let the man with the knapsack get a few miles inland, and he will find as much free rock and heather as he can wish for. The two chief hotels in the town have very fair trout-fishing for their guests in Loch Mishnish and Loch Frisa, and for those who care for sea-fishing, and dread not the free and lively motion of a small boat, there are, according to the testimony of men seemingly veracious, banks of whiting and silver haddies anxiously waiting to be hooked at the mouth of the Sound.

But the people who will find in Tobermory an ideal resting-place, are those who are in search of fresh air and freedom from all necessity of going somewhere to see something. Of course one must go for a walk; and there are two walks near at hand which are simply perfect. Neither of them is more precipitous than a switchback, and both are deliciously shaded and overhang the sea, which breaks upon the rocks some hundred feet below.

What more can a lazy holiday-maker want? Now and then he may stretch his legs and try his wind by climbing the moor to get a sight of the Atlantic; but the odds are that he will patronise one of the above-named walks on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and the other on the alternate days.

In taking life easily the holiday-maker will find himself powerfully aided and abetted by the resident population of Tobermory. It would be hard to find, out of Italy, a business community which goes about getting a living in more leisurely fashion. Nearly every other one of the crescent of houses, which is built along the quay, is occupied by a "general merchant," a person who in Scotch rural economy discharges the functions of the English village shopkeeper. The limits of his traffic are extensive as his style proclaims, and include almost every domestic requisite, from paraffin-lamps to unripe plums and gooseberries; but, for all this, he finds plenty of time for leisure and unbending. Every steamer that touches at the pier—and there are on an average five or six in the course of the day—is sped and welcomed by the entire trafficking population of the

town. They all do it, so there is no unfair stealing of marches the one on the other.

With an example such as the above, set by the people who are in the full stress and hurry of getting a living, there is no wonder that the jaded man of books or business, for the nonce an idler, should become very idle indeed. He will carefully time his daily walk so as never to miss being on the pier to welcome each arriving steambot. As the Staffa or the Skye boat comes up, he can wonder, if it be outward bound, whether there is a big sea on outside, and cheerfully speculate as to how many of the fortunate sight-seers will be writhing in agony before the next hour shall have struck. Then, in the course of the day, a dozen yachts may put in, and he can inspect the burgeses of these through an opera-glass to see if he can determine the club to which they belong, and wonder whether either of them may belong to a man who once took him sailing in a three-ton cutter at Erith.

In short, all the "wonders of the sea-shore" may be enjoyed at Tobermory, just as thoroughly as at Ramsgate or Bognor, with this additional advantage, that the wonderer's operations will never be interrupted by nigger minstrels, or Salvationists, or itinerant photographers, or suggestions as to the eminent fitness of the day for a sail. The boats available are few, and to secure the use of one of them, a certain amount of negotiation is necessary. If Dugald, at one end of the quay, be interrogated as to whether a particular one may be free or not, he will yell out something in Gaelic to Donald at the other, and at the end of a colloquy they will go off together and fetch a "general merchant" out of his emporium, and with the arrival of this gentleman, the real owner of the boat, direct business may begin, and the boat eventually be secured at the rate of something like sixpence per hour.

With regard to the music, the thrum of the harp and the wheeze of the concertina, discoursing, from the deck of an excursion steamer at the pier, the latest popular airs, will be the worst infliction of the vagrant musician that the wonderer is likely to feel, and it only lasts five minutes, at the most.

Then, again, Mull is a long way from London, even by the shortest route, and there is therefore less chance that he will be followed up by any of the people he cordially dislikes, simply because he sees them every day of his life—or for some more intelligible reason.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

WHEN people start at night from Charing Cross Station for Paris or the Continent in general, they are mostly too much occupied with their loose baggage, rugs, and newspapers to notice a scene, which, for brilliance, splendour, and a fairy-like glamour, is not to be matched, no, not in any of the fair and famous cities to which they may be travelling. If the night should be dark, say in early spring, when Parliament is sitting and London's gay season has just commenced, while a full tide brims in the river from bank to bank, then, as the train passes from the steam, and fume, and twinkling lights of the station, and begins to rumble over the big railway bridge, the brilliant show opens out with startling effect. It is a feast of lanterns, you would say, watching the myriad lights that sparkle in every direction, in a thousand reflections from the river; in brilliant lines on the Embankment and bridges; gleaming from the Towers of Westminster; moving lights, too, flitting to and fro continually in a mazy, bewildering dance. In another moment the brilliant scene is shut out, and we are rumbling over dark house-tops, and peering over into dismal, slummy courts; and when we cross the river lower down, towards Cannon Street, its aspect is altogether different. There are lights still, but of a quiet, sober kind; we hear the roar of traffic over London Bridge, and solemn gleams strike upwards from the dark waters beneath.

It is not necessary to be starting for Paris or Rome in order to see all this. From the foot-bridge, that runs alongside the Charing Cross Railway Bridge, there is a sufficiently good view of the river, although spoilt by the plaguy girders that intervene between Westminster and the spectator. And the foot-bridge suggests reminiscences to middle-aged people. It is a legacy from old Hungerford. That was a nice bridge, if you please, for a quiet promenade. There was a halfpenny toll that kept the place select, as far as numbers went; and though, like the present foot-bridge, it formed a convenient short cut to places on the other side of the water, yet it led to such a curious slummy labyrinth, that only the very knowing ones could find their way through it. And, to reach Hungerford Bridge, you passed through Hungerford Market.

Alas, poor Hungerford! altogether wiped out and demolished by railway terminus and Embankment. Not even the name of you is left as a memorial. It is all Charing Cross now; and a moral might be drawn from the circumstance, were not morals a little out of fashion. Charing Cross, which records the virtues of a good Queen, extends and blossoms everywhere, down here by the river, up there in a new avenue towards Oxford Street, while Hungerford, a name associated with violence, crime, and waste, has perished altogether.

For the Hungerfords, who gave their name to the market here, were certainly a very bad lot, and their fate is so curiously intertwined with that of Hungerford by Charing Cross, that it may be worth while to know a little about them. They were an ancient fighting family to begin with, originally of that pleasant, fishy town of Hungerford, which stands by a ford on the River Kennet. And they fought with credit and distinction in the French wars, winning great ransoms from noble prisoners taken at Crécy or at Poitiers, and building a fine castle at Farley Hungerford, in Wiltshire, with the spoil. They fought valiantly also for the House of Lancaster in the Wars of the Roses; and Lord Hungerford was one of the first to join the Earl of Richmond, and helped to win the Battle of Bosworth Field. So that, with the victory of their cause, and the favour of their Prince, it might have been expected that they would have risen to the highest distinction. And with their grand country château, and their mansion by the Thames, the Hungerfords ruffled it with the best, till fate set a tragic mark upon them.

Close by the castle of the Hungerfords lived, in the early years of the reign of Henry the Eighth, a worthy man, one John Cotell, something in the way of a scrivener, probably, and steward or man of business to Sir Edward Hungerford; the latter a man of middle age, and a widower, with a grown-up son. Cotell's wife, Mistress Agnes, was young and fair, unscrupulous enough with her charms to captivate and enslave the elderly Knight, and yet sufficiently cold and calculating to preserve her own reputation. But to be Lady Hungerford, and the mistress of castles and manors, and all the rich jewels, and plate, and furniture that adorned them, was temptation too great for resistance. Only the elderly scrivener was in the way, and Agnes presently suborned two sturdy yeomen to make away with him. It was

their lord's pleasure, they were told, and they set about the work with as little compunction as though it had been an affair of killing a sheep or a calf. They waylaid Cotell, strangled him with a kerchief, and cast his body into the great fireplace of the kitchen of Farley Castle. Some plausible account was doubtless given of the man's disappearance. "He had gone abroad on his lord's business, and so died."

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck.

Thus might Dame Agnes have addressed her noble lover, who married her, anyhow, forthwith. And although many must have known, and more suspected, that a foul deed had been done, yet none dared venture to speak out. Little more than a year elapsed, and the Knight was seized with a mortal illness. Lady Hungerford retained her empire over him to the last. In his will, made shortly before his death, he bequeathed her everything of which he died possessed, except the bare lands which his son inherited. Lady Hungerford, after her lord's death, hastened to London, proved the will, and entered into possession of all the rich furniture, jewels, and belongings, which she had lost herself to gain. Then the bolt fell upon her. The black barge from the Tower was in waiting at Hungerford Stairs, and dainty Dame Agnes stepped into it as the halbert-men made a lane for her to pass.

Justice, slow and cumbrous to move, was stern and inexorable when once set in motion; and the sequel is given in the chronicle of old Stow. "The twentieth February, 1523, the Lady Alice Hungerford"—a mistake, her real name was Agnes—"a Knight's wife, for murdering her husband was led from the Tower of London to Holborne, and there put in a cart with one of her servants, and so carried to Tiborne and both hanged." The second accomplice in the murder of Cotell was hanged a few months after. All that Dame Agnes had inherited under her husband's will was forfeited to the Crown; but it seems probable that her stepson Walter, who was "squire for the body" to the King, had influence enough to obtain the most of the goods and chattels. This Walter, afterwards Lord Hungerford, was such a desperate scoundrel that we might suspect some revengeful plot against his stepmother; but that the criminals themselves seem never to have disputed the justice of their doom.

The new Lord Hungerford made him-

self a byword and reproach for his horrible way of life. Two of his wives came to untimely ends from his barbarous treatment, the third lived to denounce him, and to bring her wrongs before the Privy Council. Three or four years she had been shut up in one of the towers of Farley Castle. Continual attempts were made to poison her. She would have died of starvation, but that the poor women of the country round, pitying her sad lot, brought her food at night "for the love of God." At last my noble lord, in some of his diabolical excesses, got within the meshes of the law, was clapped in the Tower, and was presently condemned and beheaded. He suffered on the same scaffold as Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Wolsey's successor in King Harry's favour, who, "passing out of the prison down the hill within the Tower, and meeting there by the way the Lord Hungerford, going likewise to his execution; and perceiving him to be all heavy and doleful, cheered him with comfortable words."

Henceforth the Hungerfords seem to have been distinguished rather for weakness than wickedness, till the days of the last of the line, Sir Edward Hungerford, who built a magnificent house on the site of the old family dwelling by the River Thames. Among the gay and greedy courtiers and dames of the Restoration, Sir Edward speedily made away with his paternal acres; a wild, foolish fellow, who is said to have once given five hundred guineas for a wig to cover his poor, silly pate. The destruction of his fine house by fire one night in 1669 was the last straw that completed his ruin; and, hoping to mend his fortunes, he obtained permission, and afterwards a Royal charter, to hold a market three days a week on the site of his house and gardens.

Yet ill-luck pursued the place, and the goodly market, although well situated for its purposes, did not take. It soon passed away from Sir Edward's control; and, divested of every scrap of his once vast possessions, the last of the Hungerfords lived to a good old age as a poor Knight of Windsor.

Sir Christopher Wren and cannie Sir Stephen Fox bought the market, and thought to make much of it, but were disappointed. So that in 1735 Seymour writes of it: "Likely to have taken well, lying so convenient for gardeners," who brought down most of their produce by boat, "but being balked at first, turned to

little account, and that of Covent Garden hath got the start." And kept it, too, it may be added; so that now Covent Garden is first, and Hungerford literally and absolutely nowhere. Yet there was a fine market-hall, which Wren had something to do with building; and the French Protestant Church, now in Bloomsbury, was settled in the upper floor for more than a century. And there were commodious stalls below, with cellars, and other conveniences. Yet the whole had been rebuilt and remodelled by Fowler, the architect of Covent Garden, early in the present century.

There was a pretty steady stream of traffic, too, in old Hungerford Market, and it assumed something of the air of a little Billingsgate, with fish shops, and a show of shrimps and winkles; though no fish-boats, as far as we know, unloaded their stores at Hungerford Stairs. It was a place for Devonshire butter and dairy produce; and the light and toothsome gauffre might there be had, hot from the honey-combed iron—and, indeed, may still be found, under the shadow of the mighty railway station. Here, too, the penny ice took its first development.

On Sundays, in summer, when steam-boats were crammed and fiddle and harp were twanging merrily on board, people would pass up and down Hungerford Market in crowds, and street preachers would hold forth in the open space, where a yellow omnibus or two was always to be found on the point of starting for the "Mother Redcap."

But here, about old Hungerford, the Embankment has taken in a goodly slice of the foreshore of the river, which, at low tides, was a shining, unsavoury mudbank. And here we have the Embankment Gardens, pleasant enough, with green lawns, upon which the London sparrows congregate in delighted flocks; with flower-beds, and a plentiful provision of seats for weary wayfarers. Yet would the gardens be better frequented if they were more accessible from the Strand. How much of the river bed has been reclaimed may be realised in a glance at the fine old water-gate that once formed the river approach to Buckingham House. It stands now high and dry, and forlornly cut off from approach on either side, a graceful, florid archway, weatherworn, yet comely still, and bearing the arms of the brilliant favourite who built it. It has always been known as York Gate; for the site was the

town house of the Archbishops of York, after Wolsey lost Whitehall, and had had many noted tenants. The great Lord Bacon was born here, and hoped to die here; but was reluctantly compelled to surrender his interest in it after his fall, when King James got hold of it for his favourite Steenie, who rebuilt the place in great splendour. During the Commonwealth, Lord Fairfax, the Black Tom of his soldiers, had a grant of the house, and his daughter, who, as a child, had shared her father's desperate ride to Hull, lashed to a trooper on horseback, restored the house, by marriage, to the second Duke of Buckingham.

The Duke, who was nothing if not whimsical, sold the house and its grounds for thirty thousand pounds, with the curious stipulation that his name and title should be kept in memory in the new buildings. Thus we have still, between the Strand and the Embankment, George, Villiers, Duke, Buckingham streets, and there is even a little "Of" Court, to complete the title. And York Place, out of Villiers Street, still retains a memory of the more ancient tenants of the place.

The new buildings on the site, streets of solid, respectable houses of red brick, still retain very much of their original aspect, although demolition and reconstruction are imminent. The river terrace in front may be still made out, although stranded and left dry by the Embankment. Much of the building enterprise was carried on by the York Buildings Company, in which Mr. Samuel Pepys, of the Diary, was a shareholder. Samuel himself, when he left the Navy Office in Seething Lane, came to live at York Buildings, and occupied chambers overlooking the river at the end of Buckingham Street on the west side, and for a time he had the Czar Peter as an opposite neighbour in the same street. The terrace in front of York Buildings was planted with trees, and formed a pleasant promenade for the residents. Presently upon the terrace rose a huge octagonal tower of wood belonging to the waterworks, set on foot by the Company. The river water was then tolerably pure, and was pumped from the Thames to the top of the tower, and then distributed in pipes over the district. A horse-gin was constantly at work pumping up water, and later on horses were superseded by a "fire engine;" but this was eventually abandoned as too expensive.

In its building and water-supply enterprises the Company was very successful; but it came under the management of persons of an enterprising and speculative character, who employed its funds in a very curious fashion. The disastrous rising of the Jacobites in 1715 had been harshly suppressed, and many of the Scotch adherents of the Stuarts had lost lives and lands for the cause. Yet there was considerable difficulty in disposing of the forfeited estates, and it was suggested that the York Buildings Company should buy them up and turn them to account. Thus the Company became large landowners in Scotland, and entered with light hearts upon the possession of castles, mansions, forests, lakes, and mountains, and became nominally the lords of districts whose inhabitants held strongly to their ancient feudal chiefs. All kinds of claims and interests, too, sprang up about the forfeited lands. Rents were unpaid, or sent over the water to the representatives of the proscribed chiefs, and the Scottish Courts of Law had few sympathies with the intruding cockneys, so that every attempt to enforce their purchased rights was hindered by endless difficulties. The Company also took to mining enterprises, and on the wild, desolate shores of Ardnamurchan, in Argyle, where Atlantic gales come howling against a rock-bound coast, they established a mining settlement, or New London, that sheltered a large population of miners and their families. Then there were forests to be cut down; and this part of the business seems] to have been effected rigorously. But it all ended in ruin and disaster. The mines were finally abandoned in 1740, and the leading spirit of the Company, Colonel Samuel Horsey, died in jail in the same year. Large sums had been raised by the sale of annuities, and the wreck of the Company's property was administered for the benefit of the annuitants and other creditors. The buildings were there; those solid, respectable streets, where one short, connecting street still bears the name of York Buildings, and is generally considered as in the Adelphi, although it more properly belongs to what we may call Buckinghambury. The wooden tower and waterworks existed, too, almost to the beginning of the present century.

These quiet streets between the Strand and the river are, indeed, wonderfully tranquil, and free from the turmoil of the city. Formerly they were occupied chiefly in residential chambers; and here and

there may still be left one or two of the oldest inhabitants, who have stuck to their quarters through the changes of the years. But now the houses are almost engrossed in offices—engineers, architects, solicitors, philanthropic societies and others, with here and there, perhaps, a quiet club. At night the glare of light from the Strand shows over the house-tops, as if some great fire were in progress; and the noise of the people coming from the theatres, the shouts of link-boys, and the clatter of the cabs echo along the silent streets, which stand apart, and take no share in all this midnight revelry.

Of the same quiet character, too, is the Adelphi, although there is more movement within its precincts. For here we have hotels and clubs, and even boarding-houses, and some of the old inhabitants of the Adelphi still retain their chambers there. Few leave the Adelphi voluntarily; but, as the residents cannot live for ever, there comes a time when the chambers become vacant, and then they are eagerly secured for business purposes. But any time within the present century, the Adelphi would have formed an equally good hunting ground with the Inns of Court, or other quiet residential nooks, for a student of character. Wealthy virtuosos, retired "Captains, or Colonels, or Knights-in-Arms," grizzled old sea captains, who had shared in the sea fights of Nelson, a judge or two who loved the racket of the Strand, dramatists and littérateurs of the age of Dickens and Thackeray, such were some of the familiar figures to be met with up and down Adam Street, and John Street, and by the Royal Terrace.

Now, the Adelphi, as everybody knows, in its name commemorates the brothers who built it. Cannie Scottish brothers, four of them, lads fra' Kirkcaldy, who had graduated at Edinbro', and who came up to London under the wing of Lord Bute. They were in great demand among the nobility as architects, and obtained snug Government commissions through the influence of their patron. They built Sion House, Kenwood and Luton Park mansions, the latter for Lord Bute himself. Of course, the Princess employed them, whose partiality for Lord Bute irritated the popular feeling so much, and caused old boots to be flung after her carriage, not for luck, when she appeared in public. And so we find the brothers busy about Carlton House and St. James's Palace. They are great in ruins also, they built a

sham Roman aqueduct at Bowwood, and a broken bridge among the groves of Sion. And for a while the Scoto-classic style brooded like a nightmare over the town. And if you came across a peculiarly gloomy and depressing building, like that Paymaster-General's Office next the Horse Guards, you may give a guess that it was the work of the Brothers Adams.

Yet the Adelphi itself is not so bad. Building with their own money, and their own bricks and mortar, these "brither Scots" managed better than in adapting the Parthenon for a nobleman's residence, or in placing my lord and his lackeys to sleep behind a screen of tall Ionic columns. For the Adelphi was a private speculation of the brothers, begun in the year 1768 and built upon the site of old Durham Yard, then but an unsightly heap of ruins. Here had formerly stood the thatched stables and outhouses of Durham House, the residence of the princely prelates of that richest of all the wealthy sees of England. In the plan were wharves, arcades, and entrances to the subterraneous streets and warehouses of the Adelphi, forming those dark arches, which had but an indifferent reputation during the early part of the present century. The arches are now all enclosed, and within are spacious vaults for the warehousing of merchandise—and above rises the Royal Terrace, with a pleasant railed promenade in front, overlooking the graceful bend of the river, with the towers, palaces, temples, and theatres that rise from its banks. And here, leaning over the railings, we may see in the mind's eye worthy Dr. Johnson and his scratch wig, and the faithful Boswell, who have just visited widow Garrick, and are talking, or, at least, the doctor is talking regretfully of the days that are no more, and of that brilliant coterie of friends in which David Garrick was ever a prominent figure. For it was in the Terrace, in the centre house, not wanting in a certain full-bottomed dignity, that Garrick lived the last years of his life—dying, indeed, in the back room on the first floor—and there his widow lived, too, till she died, long after her husband. So that the veteran author and dramatist, E. L. Blanchard, who has only recently joined the majority, who was also long an inhabitant of the Terrace, used to tell of his having, as a boy, actually met and spoken with the venerable dame.

David Garrick took much interest, it

may be said, in the building of the Adelphi, and, according to Mr. Wheatley ("The Adelphi: and its Site"), he obtained from its builders the promise of the shop at the corner of Adam Street, facing the Strand, for his friend Andrew Beckett the bookseller, undertaking to make the shop "a rendezvous of wit and fashion." The shop is still in existence, but no longer a bookseller's, and "wit and fashion" no longer assemble about a bookseller's counter, reading and tasting new books, and buying them too, at times, as was the old and laudable custom.

We may guess from John Street, the Christian-name of one of the brothers, and assume that he was the eldest; for, after the Terrace, John Street is the most important part of the Adelphi, as it contains the house of the Society of Arts, which was designed and erected for its present tenants. And here we see the brothers at their best. Those flat pilasters of theirs and the ornamental plaques do really break the lines of brick and mortar with a quite pleasant effect. And the buildings represent for us, too, a distinct age—the age of Reynolds and Johnson, of Garrick and Goldsmith, and one would be sorry to see them replaced by gigantic mountains of masonry of the modern type. Then we have a Robert Street, after another brother. Robert was a great traveller, and brought home ideas from Greece and Rome, and even from the ruins of Palmyra. Then there was, probably, a younger brother James, for there is a younger brother in the way of a street that bears his name. The youngest of the firm was, perhaps, a failure, for we find not a street dedicated to his memory.

Yet it is curious, if you come to think of it, that all these streets, from Charing Cross to the Savoy, bear a kind of history in their names. One might make anagrams with them, or acrostics, or perhaps find a cryptogram—remembering that Lord Bacon was once busy in the neighbourhood—a secret cypher that should prove us all in the wrong, and show us that Buckinghambury and the Adelphi were really built by "the Lord knows who."

MIDNIGHT COURAGE.

THE high estimation in which the great Napoleon held what he called "two o'clock in the morning courage," is only another

instance of his shrewd and accurate knowledge of human nature. He placed in the front rank of the truly valorous the man who can face, with equanimity, the insidious inroads which the enemies of mental peace always make in the dead of night.

The First Consul himself, it is well known, was a shining illustration of such power, and, although it might be expected that, as courage is the stock-in-trade—the commodity in which he deals, and on which he relies for success—every General would be a good judge of the various degrees in its quality, we are not aware that so accurate and tersely expressed a valuation of the attribute has ever been made before by soldier, sage, or scientist.

Few can doubt that the Corsican hero was perfectly right in putting midnight courage at the top of the tree; and none will ever question its claim to the position for a moment, who have ever suffered from wakefulness. Albeit there are not many, if any, witnesses of our bravery, it is none the less a matter of congratulation to us if we possess the power of defying the assaults of the terrors of silence and darkness. Innumerable are the shapes they take. The wakeful man, however, knows them all too well, for the very nervous exhaustion which mainly creates insomnia, lays him open to the attacks of gloomy and depressing thought. Great, indeed, is the self-control, the courage necessary for their defeat.

It is bad enough to lie with open eyes, staring into the blackness of our room, or at the dim prospect revealed by the feeble night-light, when they ought to be closed in sweet oblivion. It is bad enough, we say, to do this even with a calm and unperturbed mind; but when, in addition to the loss of rest it involves, we are beset by every conceivable and inconceivable kind of foreboding, by every imaginable care, worry, and distress; when each and all become extravagantly exaggerated, the sleepless night is surely one of the most exhausting and fearful experiences which our artificial life brings about.

Modern civilization has much to answer for, and this is not one of the least counts against it, for, to the stress and strain, the helter-skelter pace at which the business of existence is carried on nowadays, is chiefly due the vast increase, as doctors tell us, of sleeplessness. Six or eight people out of every dozen beyond the age of forty with whom one compares notes on the

point, are suffering, or have suffered from it more or less; and, perhaps, three or four out of the dozen have to resort, as they tell you, to remedies which, in the end, they find produce worse consequences than the disease. Not two out of the dozen, most likely, will lay claim to Napoleon's courage, and tell you that they find insomnia very wearying, and nothing more. The majority, if pressed, admit their cowardice, and, if you describe in detail what you yourself know about it, you can see, by the expression of the listener's face, that his experiences are identical.

Possibly "you go to bed," you say—quoting an able writer on the subject—"about eleven p.m., feeling tired, and in a few minutes are steeped in forgetfulness. Suddenly, however, you awake—broadly, widely awake—with a sense that you have had a good, long night's rest, and that it must be quite time to get up. But the room is still dark; all is perfectly quiet; not a sound outside or in. What is this? What does it mean? You strike a light and look at your watch, to discover that you have been asleep an hour; it is only a little past midnight. Then the horrible truth bursts upon you; you know your time has come—your coward's hour. Possibly you have awakened even with a vague dread already upon you, and which henceforth claims you for its own, until your depressed vitality recovers somewhat its normal condition. Meanwhile, your heart is beating like a sledge-hammer, and to sit upright in bed, or get up and walk about, becomes your only resource."

Then you describe another phase of insomnia. The night is more advanced ere you reach the climax of misery in its acutest form. "You must sleep till about half-past two or three a.m., and then rouse up rather slowly with a dim consciousness of the terrors awaiting you. You try to cosset yourself, and to do nothing to prevent your falling off again. You keep your eyes shut, and lie perfectly still, knowing, by sad experience, what is before you if you have not the luck to drop off again soon; but it is of no use. You do not drop off again; and the longer you lie, the more wide-awake and uncomfortable you become. Finally, you give it up, and are obliged to turn over on your back, to encounter with all their force the demonic fancies incidental to that abject period."

The French philosopher, Rabelais,

declares "the greatest loss of time that I know, is to count the hours;" and demands, with acerbity: "What good comes of it?" Well, assuredly not much. But who, under the circumstances just alluded to, can help counting, not only the hours, but the actual minutes?

At first, however, you are generally too depressed, your courage is at too low an ebb to allow of your doing anything but groan audibly, as the phantoms, increasing in number and size, make such rapid assaults upon your intelligence and common sense, that in a short while you approach the condition of an idiot. The climax of your misery, as is suggested in this case, dawns gradually, and culminates only after one has been awake some five or ten minutes.

There is, however, yet another stage of consciousness by which it is attained. It comes about quite suddenly, indeed, in a flash, as it were, and as you awake, the full force and terror of the coward's hour is at once upon you. A vague dream, more or less horrible, in which you are struggling for your life, or are slipping down a yawning chasm, or over a frightful precipice into the sea, or into a bottomless pit, brings you with a cry bolt upright in bed before you are awake. But being so, you sink back exhausted instantly with shattered nerves, and a fear in your very soul which makes you shiver. The fact that it is only a dream is fully grasped, of course, but it in no wise gives your common sense the requisite strength to assert itself, or prevent its effect telling. You have had a fright, and cannot get over it. The fiends have the upper hand of you again, and are in full cry, for there is such a silence in this "dead waste and middle of the night," that their phantom yells mingle and combine to make up that deafening buzzing in your ears.

By the same token, the darkness enveloping the room offers a favourable background, whereon the children of your idle brain disport themselves in all their fantastic hideousness before your wide-open, staring eyes. The fancy that the chamber is peopled with shapeless, but terrible things, is not easily beaten back. The bead on your brow suggests the idea that some ghastly fever-fiend has seized you, and that before morning you will be dead. As this notion gains credence, you question the advisability at once of ringing the bell and sending for a doctor. To arouse the house and say you are

dangerously ill would be easy, and there is a strong impulse to do so. But reason begins to resist it, and an effort is made to recover calm. Successful at length more or less in this direction, your ideas nevertheless act in the most irrational fashion. True, the wild train of phantom forms has vanished, and has given place to matters of every-day occurrence. That business in the city, that picture on the easel, that half-finished article on the desk, the vital importance of that appointment to be kept—these and kindred items, to say nothing of absolute trumpery trifles which make up man's existence, and occupy his waking hours, now take distorted shapes and exaggerated dimensions. You foresee nothing will go right. The business must inevitably fail, the picture will be rejected, the manuscript cannot be finished in time, the negotiation to be carried out at the appointment will fall through—there is no spark of hope, no rift in the gloom.

Thus, and in a thousand similar ways, the coward's hour is triumphantly realised. Lucky will it be for the sufferer if the hour does not extend to two or three, for all things are favourable to its continuance. The nights are probably at their longest, the morning is yet far distant, that same darkness and that same silence still act and react upon the brain. Deeply impressive as it is profoundly solemn, thoughts may now beset us—thoughts too deep for words. Our past, besides our present, rises vividly into the picture, and all the regretful sadness inseparable from retrospect adds its weight to our feeling of despair, and haply of remorse. From this our weary mind takes but one bound to that appalling future—that dread eternity, the great mystery, the great secret. To what is this life tending? What is the object of it all? Very strong must be the resolution necessary to quell those questioning doubts to which each human soul is at some time subjected. And thus the poor victim runs through the whole gamut of awe-inspiring gloom and despondency.

Delineate your troubles on these and similar lines, and you are pretty sure to obtain the sympathy of your listener—a sympathy begotten of his own experiences. You both then conscientiously feel that whatever may be your natural bearing by day, however much side and swagger you may assume in your intercourse with mankind, whatever character for bravery you may have acquired, you are an impostor,

to a great extent a sham, for you are devoid of two o'clock in the morning courage. Be but candid, and here is the conclusion.

A valiant few, a very few, there are, no doubt, who, in the forefront of this battle, go through it without blenching, without so much as an additional pulsation, and coming through it victoriously, have a right to claim the honourable distinction of the Victoria Cross; men whose health and nerves are sternest steel, and yet with women's hearts. Some others, too, go through the ordeal unscathed; but they, if more numerous, are of very different mould, people who have but little beyond their philosophy and stoicism wherewith to arm themselves or to recommend them for promotion. Enviably beings in one sense, perhaps they are; but only in one, for their immunity from hurt is purchased at a heavy cost—the cost of total indifference to the feelings and sufferings of their fellow-soldiers. Selfish creatures, who can lift themselves to the attitude of Carlyle's Teufelsdröck, and calmly survey the grim spectacle of the battle-field without emotion, thus:

Teufelsdröck, sitting at ease in the attic room which commanded the great city, is represented by his biographer as watching its life-circulation, its "wax-laying, and honey-making, and poison-brewing, and choking by sulphur." "Ach, mein Lieber," so once, at midnight, he confides to a friend when engaged in rather earnest talk, "it is a true sublimity to dwell here." . . . "The stifled hum of midnight when traffic has lain down to rest, and the chariot-wheels of vanity, still rolling here and there through distant streets, are bearing her to halls roofed in and lighted to the due pitch for her; and only vice and misery, to prowl or to moan like night-birds, are abroad; that hum, I say, like the stertorous, unquiet slumber of sick life, is heard in heaven. Oh, under that hideous coverlet of vapours and putrefactions and unimaginable gases, what a fermenting vat lies simmering and hid. The joyful and the sorrowful are there! Men are dying there; men are being born; men are praying. On the other side of a brick partition, men are cursing, and around them all is the vast, void night. . . . Upwards of five hundred thousand two-legged animals, without feathers, lie around us in horizontal positions; their heads all in nightcaps, and full of the foolishest dreams. Riot cries aloud, and staggerers

and swaggers in his rank dens of shame; and the mother, with streaming hair, kneels over her pallid, dying infant, whose cracked lips only her tears now moisten; all these heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them—crammed in like salted fish in their barrel; or weltering, shall I say, like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed vipers, each struggling to get its head above the others. Such work goes on under that smoke counterpane. But I, mein Werther, I sit above it all; I am alone with the stars!

Doubtless a "true sublimity" to dwell at such a height, and to be able thus to philosophise about it all. Still, can the courage it betokens be justly esteemed other than the courage of indifference? And is the courage of indifference real courage? Is the man who knows no fear truly courageous? We doubt it. But this is a question too wide for discussion here. Meanwhile, to sit alone with the stars in the cynical spirit of Teufelsdröck is a privilege, we think, happily not given to the majority. These must suffer, must feel and bleed with the rest; and, feeling and suffering with the rest, it is from their ranks alone, we hold, that will step out to the front the very few who can claim the right, on the Napoleonic principle, to wear upon their breast that noble badge, whose proud, yet simple, motto is, "For Valour."

"NOBLESSE OBLIGE."

"NOBLESSE OBLIGE;" of course it does. How can it help doing so, if you are a De Vere, for instance, and can trace your pedigree all the way to Noah, including such minor celebrities as Meleager, who slew the Calydonian boar; Diomedes, who fought at Troy; Verus, "so named from his true dealing," who was baptized by Saint Marcellus, A.D. 41; and the Duke of Angers, Charlemagne's brother-in-law? Think of one who belongs to such a stock doing anything mean or commonplace.

But people do not always do what, in Cornish phrase, they "belong to do;" very far from it. Look through a book like the Duchess of Cleveland's "Battle Abbey Roll." There is every name occurring in any of the extant lists, and many that do not occur at all; and, of tragic histories; of black, ugly treasons; of things which make us ashamed of human nature; why,

these brief records contain almost as many as of things to be proud of.

Few need to be reminded that there is no "Battle Abbey Roll." Some say there never was one. Those who believe in it insist that, at the dissolution, it was carried to Cowdray, then owned by the Catholic and most ill-fated family of Browne, and there burnt, with heaps of other priceless records, in 1793, just when the heir of the house was drowned, along with young Mr. Burdett, in madly trying to swim the Rhine Falls of Laufenberg. The existing lists are Leland's, Holinshed's, and Duchesne's. Leland was the father of all pedestrian tourists; footed it over nearly all England, visiting the just suppressed—in some cases, not yet dis-furnished—monasteries. He came to Battle, and gives a catalogue of the monks' library, for he was curious in books, and was always bemoaning the loss to learning through the dispersion and destruction of these libraries. But he does not mention a roll, nor say whence he got the list that he gives. If Holinshed, historian of Henry the Eighth, and Duchesne, give approximately true copies—and they are very like one another except in spelling—Leland's, in which the names are strung together in rhymes, must be from another source. Of course spelling doesn't count. Holinshed and Duchesne would employ scribes; and these would not be likely to conscientiously distinguish between S and C, and O and G, and M and W, or to reflect that G and W are used indiscriminately, as Walter or Gaultier.

Black letter probably had, for a copyist of Queen Elizabeth's day, more traps and pitfalls than it would have for most of those who take it in hand nowadays. Then, though we need not go as far as Sir Egerton Brydges, who calls the "Battle Abbey Roll" a "disgusting forgery," even those who believe in it most firmly, own that names did get put in every now and then. The monks could easily manage this; and, in days when money could buy a man out of purgatory, no wonder it was powerful enough to buy him into "the Roll." On any assumption, however, the list contains the foremost of our old families; and one who should go to work with it as Mr. Froude did with Irish history—pick out all the crimes and serve them up with suitable garnishing—might prove the Anglo-Norman "families" to be as bad a set as the world has ever seen.

The fair way is to take the good and

bad, and then, if we strike a balance, we shall see that gentle and simple are pretty much of a muchness. Each class has its own temptations, and is less open to those which beset the other class.

"There's a deal of human nature in us all," says Artemus Ward; and if you or I had been Lord Stanley, in 1521, we should have thought it quite natural to hate the Butlers of Warrington, because they would not give in in the matter of the ford over the Mersey; though, I trust, we should not have let our hatred carry us to such wicked lengths. Stanley, like Ahab, could not rest till he had got rid of his enemy, Sir John Butler. His neighbours—Walter Savage and Sir Piers Leigh, a priest—took sides with him, and, between them, they bribed Butler's servants. Butler was in bed, in his moated house, at Bewsey; his porter set a lamp in the window to guide the murderers, who crossed in leather boats. The serving-man let them in, but the chamberlain—the Bodleian MS., which tells the story, says he was a negro—made fight and was slain, but not till he had helped a faithful nurse to wrap up Butler's baby boy in her apron and run off with him. "To the serving-man they paid a great reward, and he, coming away with them, they hanged him on a tree in Bewsey Park." "Sir John's wife, being in London, did dream the same night that her husband was slain, and that Bewsey Hall did swim with blood; whereupon she presently came homewards, and heard by the way the report of his death." She afterwards married the Lord Grey, on condition that he should cause her to be avenged on the murderers; "but he, making her suit void, she parted from him, and came into Lancashire, saying: 'If my lord will not let me have my will of my enemies, yet shall my body be buried with him I lost.' And she caused a tomb of alabaster to be made, where she lieth on the right side of her husband, Sir John Boteler." The murderers were never brought to justice; no one cared to prove that the head of the powerful house of Stanley had done such a deed. The churchman Sir Piers was sentenced in the Bishop's Court to build a church at Diale; but the laymen got off scot-free. So much for cruelty; of fidelity there are some noble examples, and some just the reverse.

Several astronomers say that the moon has no influence on the weather, and that after hundreds of observations they have

found as many continuations of the same weather after a change of moon as they have changes.

So you might argue of noble blood. The Bonvilles, for instance—written Bondeville in the Roll (their name-place is Bondeville Castle, Normandy)—a great family in Somerset and Devon, stuck to their colours during the Wars of the Roses, and "withered with the white rose." In two months three generations were cut down. Lord Bonville of Chuton saw his son and grandson killed at Wakefield; and a month later he was beheaded. Margaret hated him because he was one of the Barons in whose custody Henry the Sixth was placed after Northampton. He had him in charge at the second battle of Saint Albans; and when the King's other keepers fled to their party, he surrendered, "on the King's assuring him he should receive no bodily hurt." Her husband's promises had little weight with Margaret; and "she rested not till she had taken off his head." The only survivor of the family was a great-grandchild, in her own right Baroness of Bonville and Harrington, and by her mother a Neville. She was a King's ward; and Edward the Fourth married her to Elizabeth Woodville's eldest son, Grey, Marquis of Dorset, so that she was Lady Jane Grey's great-grandmother.

The Bouchiers, from Boursseres, in Burgundy, veered round at the right moment. One of them married Anne Plantagenet, daughter of Thomas, Edward the Third's youngest son. Henry the Fifth made him Earl of Eu in Normandy; and his sons were zealous Lancastrians, one of them holding the Archbishopric of Canterbury for thirty-two years, having been nineteen years Bishop of Ely, "the like not to be paralleled in any other dignity of the Church before nor since." The eldest was bribed by the Duke of York, who gave him to wife his sister Elizabeth, Edward the Fourth's aunt, "in the firm hope that he and his generation should be a perpetual aid to the Duke and his sequels, and associate together in all chance of fortune." Besides a wife, the Duke gave him promises which Edward by-and-by fulfilled. He was made Lord Ramsey, and Earl of Essex; he got Lord Ross's forfeited castles in Northumberland, and Lord Devon's Buckinghamshire manors, and Lord Wiltshire's in Essex, Cambridge, and Lancashire. Moreover, as he had brought over with him all his brothers, even young

Lord Bernery, who had been by Henry the Fourth made a Knight of the Garter for his bravery at Saint Albans, Edward, "in recompense of the charge he had been at in his services, granted him license to transport sixteen hundred woollen clothes of his proper goods, or any others, without any accopt or customs for the same"—gave him, in fact, a monopoly of the woollen trade. Of fidelity to King and faith, Blundell of Crosby in Lancashire is a notable instance. His "note-book" is as interesting as Mrs. Hutchinson's memoirs. At fifteen, being an orphan, he was by his grandfather married to a daughter of Sir Thomas Haggerston of that ilk in Northumberland. "You will remember," he writes years after to his mother-in-law, "what a pretty, straight young thing, all dashing in scarlet, I came to Haggerston." In Charles's army he became a captain of Dragoons, and had his thigh shattered at an attack in Lancaster. Thus, at twenty-two, he became a cripple for life, his lands were sequestered, and, as he expresses it, "I was confined to my plundered bare walls and a pair of crutches; but it was for the noblest cause in the world." Four times was he imprisoned during the Commonwealth, once for ten weeks "in a loathsome dungeon," in Liverpool. Twice he paid ransom. At last he never ventured near his house for fear of being again apprehended. His wife and sister had charge of Crosby, and so persecuted were they by domiciliary visits of soldiers, who took all they could lay hands on, that the poor ladies had to buy their bread from meal to meal. In 1653 Blundell was allowed to compound for his estate, that is, to buy back his life interest in it with money lent by friends; but he was forced to pay up arrears of Crown-rent due for recusancy (he was a Catholic). The bill for these, some of them dating back to Elizabeth, a roll twenty feet long, is still shown at Crosby. The worst is that Charles the Second treated him with characteristic ingratitude, accentuated by the fact that he was "a Papist," and therefore unpopular in those days of sham Popish plots. The recusancy fines were still exacted, and in 1679 he was disgusted to find "my trusty sword taken from me (which has been my companion when I lost my limbs, my lands, my liberty, for acting against the rebels in the King's behalf) by an officer appointed for the purpose who, in that former old war, had been a captain against the King." Ten

years later he was thrown into prison; a poor reward for all his sacrifices, and certainly not the way to open his mind to conviction.

Of faithlessness a type is Banister of Lacon, who betrayed Buckingham to Edward the Third. "A servant," he is called in the histories; "not that he was a menial, being of ancient family and plentiful estate, but that he was in the retinue of the great Duke. Buckingham was disguised, and digging a ditch, when Banister set the sheriff upon him, whereat, kneeling down, he solemnly imprecated vengeance on the traitor and his posterity, which curses were signally fulfilled; for shortly after he had betrayed his master his son waxed mad, and so died in a boar's sty; his eldest daughter, of excellent beauty, was suddenly stricken with a foul leprosy; his second son very marvellously deformed of his limbs and made decrepit; his younger son, in a small puddle, was strangled and drowned." So says Hall, the chronicler, adding that "he himself, in extreme old age, was found guilty of another murder, and by his clergy saved. Anyhow, his family grew ashamed of him, and his name appears in none of the pedigrees. The family is either named from a village near Etampes, or else is Balweater, master of the baths: the arms are two water buckets.

Another man of old descent, of whom his family was ashamed, was Francis Colonel Charteris, of the house of Chartres, which is entered on the Divis Roll, and the head of which held lands in Leicestershire, in 1086, and in Wilts and Huntingdon, in 1297; and of which the Scotch branch were first noted as long back as the reign of Malcolm Canmore. He became, in the beginning of the last century, so infamous that his cousin preferred to merge her name in her husband's, though he was called Hogg, and though she lost family property by so doing. The epitaph, written for Colonel Francis Charteris, is a contrast to epitaphs in general. "With an inflexible constancy he persisted, in spite of age and infirmity, in the practice of every human vice except prodigality and hypocrisy; his indefatigable avarice exempting him from the first and his matchless impudence from the latter." By cheating on the race-course and the gambling-table—"though often detected and severely chastised—he created a ministerial estate, without trust of public money, bribe, service, trade, or profession.

Think not his life useless to mankind. Providence connived at his execrable designs to prove of how small estimation exorbitant wealth is held in the sight of the Almighty."

The Colonel—immortalised by Hogarth—found his second grandson, Francis Wemys, more accommodating than his cousin. He let himself be called Charteris on condition of getting his grandfather's ill-gotten gains.

Less repulsive than Charteris—only because force is less repulsive than fraud—must have been that Fulk de Breanté, whose chief stronghold was Bedford Castle; while from his lesser fortress of Luton he terrified the neighbouring Dunstable. But when, quarrelling with the monks of Saint Albans about a wood, he pounced down on them, and carrying off thirty, shut them up in Bedford Castle, he dreamed that from Saint Albans tower a huge stone fell on him, crushing all his bones, and, crying out in sleep, awoke his wife. She, pious lady, said it was a plain proof that Saint Alban was wroth, and bade him release the monks, and get reconciled to the Saint. "Whereupon he rode to Saint Albans, and besought leave to ask pardon of the Convent in Chapter. The Abbot consented, admiring to see such lamb-like humility in a wolf. Wherefore, putting off his apparel, Fulk entered the Chapter-house, bearing a rod, which he handed to the Abbot, confessing his fault. But when from every one of the monks he had received a lash on his naked body, he put on his clothes again, and went and sat by the Abbot, and said: 'This my wife hath caused me to do for a dream; but if you require restitution of what I then took, I will not hearken to you.' And so departed; the monks rejoicing to be so rid of him without doing them any more mischief." But though he could bully the Church, he found the State too much for him.

In 1224, he carried off Henry of Braybroke, "one of the King's justices, then itinerant at Dunstable," and put him in dungeon at Bedford. Even Henry the Third could not stand this; and King, and Archbishop, and chief nobles attacked the castle "with petrorias, mangonillas, and tall wooden towers." After four months, the keep, which still held out, was set on fire. Fulk's brother was executed, and his castle dismantled. He had escaped to Wales, whence very soon he came to Court, under protection of the Bishop of Coventry, and was pardoned, but banished, that he might go on pilgrimage to Rome. Here he got

full absolution, and was on his way home, when he suddenly died. Had he returned he would have been far from welcome, for his pious wife, Margaret de Redvous, had been seeking a divorce—she was a widowed heiress, married to him, sorely against her will, by King John; to whom, of course, Fulk paid a substantial "commission" for this profitable match. Some say Vauxhall is named from this Fulk's town-house.

D'Oily of Oxford, though a far greater noble, and William the Conqueror's Constable, was far less able to cope with the Church than De Breanté. A meadow, belonging to the Abingdon monks, lay temptingly under his castle. He annexed it, and forthwith dreamed that, being in presence of the Queen of Heaven, she had frowned on him, and had bidden two Abingdon monks to take him to the meadow which he had usurped. Therein he saw a bevy of ugly children making hay, who cried, "Here is our friend, let us play with him." But the hay that they threw on him burned his beard and hair, and scorched and suffocated him, so that he cried to his wife, "I have been among devils." He had to make solemn restitution, and to give the Manor of Tadmerton and one hundred pounds in money. His wife was a Saxon heiress, Ealghtha.

The Burdets, ancestors of Sir Francis, "the pride of Westminster and England's glory," who spent ninety thousand pounds in his Middlesex elections alone, and of the wisely benevolent Baroness, have their share of grim stories. The brothers Bourdet came over; William, descendant of one of whom (1150), "being valiant and devout went to the Holy Land; and his steward, soliciting the chastity of his lady, and being resisted with much scorn, grew so full of envie towards her, that he went to meet his master; and, to shadow his own crime, complained to him of her looseness with others. Which false charge so enraged her husband that, when he came home, and that she approached to receive him with joyful embraces, he forthwith mortally stabbed her. To expiate which unhappy act, after he understood it, he built Ameth Priory."

Every child has read of Thomas Burdett, son of Sir Nicholas, Great Butler of Normandy, and ravager of French towns; and how, when King Edward the Fourth had killed a white bull in his park at Arrew, "he passionately wished the horns in his belly, that had moved the King so to do." For this saying he was convicted

of high treason, beheaded at Tyburn, crying, "Ecce morior, cum nihil horum fecerim," and affirming he had a bird in his bosom (a good conscience) that did sing comfort to him. Is there any memorial to him in the Grey Friars' Church (Christ's Hospital), where he was buried, and where his epitaph was "Armiger Dmi. Georgii Ducis Clarenciæ"? His dying words refer to the charge of "Poisoning, sorcery, and enchantment," brought against him, and other followers of Clarence, by his implacable brother.

Such is a sample of the histories called to mind by the "Battle Abbey Roll." Almost every name has its stories. Some grave, some gay, and not a bit more or less creditable to human nature, considering the times they refer to, than stories which might be gathered about a company of plebeians.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

It was a bright August morning, and the sun was shining on the little strip of "God's Acre" which surrounded the ivy-covered village church, and a soft south wind was rustling among the leaves of the trees, and blowing the pink and white petals of the roses in the Vicarage garden over the low, grassy mounds. A couple of terriers were chasing each other across the grass; a hen, which had just laid an egg in a quiet corner, was clucking in noisy pride; while an old sheep, which had strayed in from the lane, lazily munched the short, sweet grass; and a blackbird's song mingled pleasantly with the rustle of the leaves and the ripple of the brook outside the low wall.

The church door stood open, and the school children, who sat close by it, shuffled their feet, and fidgeted in their seats, and cast many a longing look outside, and envied the old clerk sitting in the porch, cool and comfortable, and more than half asleep in his shady corner. It was very hot inside the church; so hot that half the congregation were nodding drowsily in their high-backed pews, while the other half listened with greater or less degrees of impatience to the Vicar's droning voice, and longed ardently for the moment of release.

It seemed long in coming to all, especially long to Paul Beaumont, who was not a church-goer as a rule, and had only consented—not without many inward misgivings—to accompany his host and hostess that morning, out of a sense of duty, and had spent the time occupied by the service in regretting his weakness, and envying Sir John Butler, who was sleeping somewhat noisily in the corner of his pew. Lady Cecil sat by his side, beautifully dressed, and languidly graceful as usual, and serenely disdainful of everything and everybody.

There had been a time—not so very many years ago—when the mere fact of being in her presence, the touch of her dress, the slow, sweet smile which now and then the violet eyes would turn upon him, would have set Paul Beaumont's heart throbbing with wild delight. But that was some years ago, when she was beautiful, portionless, Lady Cecil Stewart, and he was the younger son of a country squire, with nothing but a handsome face and a long pedigree to recommend him to notice; and Lady Cecil, not without some tears and regrets, had done her duty, and taken her wares to a better market, and carried off one of the best matches of the season—honest Sir John Butler, who was immensely rich and good-natured, if somewhat stupid and dull, and whom she ruled with a rod of iron.

Times had changed, too, for Paul. By the unexpected death of a cousin he had succeeded to Oaklands, a large estate in Devonshire, soon after Lady Cecil's marriage. This unexpected change in his circumstances gave him the means of indulging his taste for travel and adventure. He had spent the last five years in wandering in foreign countries, and had come back bronzed and bearded; and—or at least so Lady Cecil secretly thought—handsomer and more attractive than ever.

She had met him in London in May, and had given him an invitation to come to Chesham Hall in August. Paul had accepted it with some slight reluctance. He had loved Lady Cecil passionately once; her marriage had been a great blow to him, and now, that time and change of scene had deadened the pain and healed the wound, he was reluctant to run the risk of a return of his old malady. But after the first few days of his visit were over, he told himself, cynically, that he need not have been afraid. There was no danger! Lady Cecil was as handsome—some said hand-

somer—than ever; but her beauty was powerless now to awaken the old passion in his heart, or to blind his eyes to her selfishness and vanity.

Was this affected fine lady really the woman whom he had once set so high; who had seemed to him so far above all others? he wondered; of whom he had thought with such tender regret and bitter longing during many a long, silent night, spent under the stars in some lonely place, while his dusky servants slept around him and he kept watch alone! He could scarcely believe it, or be too hard upon himself, and his blindness, or feel too compassionate towards Sir John.

He had promised to remain a fortnight at Chesham Hall; but although only three days of his visit were over, he was already beginning to feel a little tired of it, and was casting about in his mind for some excuse to shorten it. Lady Cecil, sitting by his side, with her slim hands folded over her Prayer-book, little guessed at the thoughts which were passing through his mind, as he fidgeted in his corner, and yawned, and pulled his beard, and looked round at the sleepy, uninterested faces of the rustics. How very stolid and uninteresting they were, he thought, contemptuously. Stay, there was one exception, and that belonged to a tall, slight boy of one or two-and-twenty, who sat in the Vicarage pew, immediately below the pulpit.

The pew apportioned for the use of the family at the Hall was in the chancel, and, being large and square, occupied the greater portion of it; and any one sitting there had, if they chose, a full view of the faces of the congregation; and Paul, in his idle, meditative way, occupied the last portion of the sermon by studying the boy's face. Something in it seemed strangely familiar to him; but, beside this, it was worth looking at, with its delicate, refined features, bright, dark eyes, and sensitive mouth, as well as for the contrast it presented to the stolid faces around it; and also to that of the lady, sitting in the same pew, whom Paul knew to be the Vicar's wife.

Paul looked at her quiet, colourless face, and straight, thin lips, and wondered what relation she was to the bright-eyed, mobile-faced lad by her side.

"Is she his mother? And if so, what strange freak of nature has given such a son to the commonplace Vicar and his wife?" he wondered.

He noticed by-and-by that the boy's dark eyes were constantly wandering to the further end of the church; upwards to the loft, over the west door, where the organ was, and the choir sat. Paul's eyes, following these glances, soon found out their object—a pale, fair girl, who acted as organist, and who had consequently sat with her back turned to the congregation, during the earlier part of the service.

She was quite a young girl, not more than sixteen or seventeen, and she sat with her hands clasped on her knee, and her eyes demurely downcast, studying her hymn-book, apparently quite unconscious of the two pair of eyes which were resting on her face. By-and-by she raised her head and looked up, and Paul saw that the long lashes which he had been admiring veiled a pair of magnificent dark-grey eyes, full of fire and brilliancy. He saw, too, that the brows above were dark, and finely drawn; that the chestnut hair was swept back in a thick, bright roll from the white brow, and gathered in a great knot low on her neck, under her shabby, little bonnet.

"Why, what sweet eyes!" Paul thought, as he gazed at her; "and what lovely hair!" and quite forgot to notice, in his admiration of eyes and hair, that the rest of the face was far from being as perfect in form and colour as the beautiful face by his side.

As he looked, the girl suddenly became conscious either of his glance, or of that directed towards her from the Vicarage pew. Paul could not tell which. Probably the latter, he told himself, grimly; and a lovely flush swept over her face, and her eyes grew bright and starry, and then hid themselves demurely under the thick veil of her eyelashes. Paul smiled in his lazy, sarcastic way. Had he stumbled on a village idyl, on a boy-and-girl love-story? he wondered.

The service was over at last; Lady Cecil gathered up her scent-bottle, handkerchief, and gloves, and followed Sir John slowly down the aisle to the porch. It was not etiquette in Chesham for any of the congregation to leave their seats before the "quality" had set the example; and so, much to Paul's disappointment, he was obliged to follow Lady Cecil out of the church, and into the bright sunshine, without another glimpse of the fair face, which had now retired with its owner behind the red-baize curtain which veiled the organ from profane eyes.

"Well, Mr. Beaumont, were you very much bored?" Lady Cecil asked, in her slow voice, as she walked by his side up the churchyard. "I think the Vicar was, if possible, a degree more prosy than usual this morning."

"Prosy? Not at all, not at all, my lady," Sir John interrupted, cheerfully. "Capital sermon, I thought. Full of common sense and—and all that sort of thing, eh, Beaumont? I didn't think it prosy, by any means; but women can never appreciate common sense!"

My lady gave the slightest possible shrug of her dainty shoulders.

"Perhaps, if I possessed your happy faculty for sleep, Sir John, I might set as high a value upon Mr. Ainslie's orations as you do," she said, listlessly.

"Sleep! Why you don't mean to say I was asleep," and Sir John opened his eyes wide, and looked the picture of injured and astonished innocence. "Wouldn't sleep in church on any account, my lady; sets a bad example to the parish! Why, why," and Sir John paused and struck his stick vigorously on the path to emphasize his words, "we should have all the boys and girls in the congregation sleeping if they caught me at it! No, no; we can't have that sort of thing in my parish!"

My lady gave a little disdainful smile, and a glance at the tall, broad figure that was sauntering by her side, with his head bent a little forward, and his hands clasped behind his back. He smiled also.

"Rank has its drawbacks as well as its privileges, Sir John," he said, gravely. "I never knew how great those drawbacks were until I came here, and learnt from your bright and shining example how great and manifold are the responsibilities which rest on the shoulders of a country squire! Doesn't some poet or other speak of 'the fierce light that shines on Kings,' Lady Cecil? I quite dread the idea of going to Oaklands and having my actions criticised and viewed by the blaze of that 'fierce light.'"

Sir John stared at him.

"Eh? What are you talking about, Beaumont? No, no, my dear," this to a little blue-eyed child who opened the churchyard gate for him, and then came forward and shyly held out her hand in expectation of the penny which usually rewarded a similar action, "it is Sunday, you know. We don't give pennies on Sundays; I'll remember you to-morrow—

or stay," for the disappointed look on the child's face touched Sir John's heart, and banished his Sabbatarian scruples, "perhaps you had better have it now; I might forget. Here it is; but," and he shook his head gravely, "you must remember your commandment for the future. It says do no manner of work, you know; neither opening gates, nor anything else. Mind you ask Miss Doris to teach it to you. By the way, my lady"—Sir John always called his wife "my lady"—Lady Cecil was too formal, Cecil too familiar, so he made a compromise between the two—"did you notice how pretty Doris looked this morning? She grows more like her mother every day."

"You forget I did not know her mother."

"No, no; of course not. I ought to have remembered that you were a child in the nursery when poor Doris died," he said, apologetically; "but I remember her when she was the prettiest girl in the country side, and the most admired and sought after. She could count her lovers by the dozen, and to think that out of them all she should choose Francis Cairnes, the biggest scamp that ever wore shoe leather, or won a woman's heart only to break it by his neglect and cruelty," Sir John cried explosively, and with another dig of his stick on the gravel. "But there! there is no accounting for the perversity of a woman's taste! Eh, Beaumont? I must confess I never could understand the sex."

"Wiser men than you or I have come to the same conclusion, Sir John," Beaumont answered with a lazy twinkle in his eyes and a lazy glance at my lady's scornful face; "but as in that incomprehensiveness lies their chief charm, I for one am content to remain in ignorance. I noticed the young lady—she sat in the organ loft, did she not?—of whom you are speaking. She is pretty—very pretty," he added, tranquilly; and smiled to see how, at his words of praise, the angry light flashed up into Lady Cecil's eyes. "Don't you think so, Lady Cecil?" he added blandly.

"I really have not considered the subject. She never struck me as being pretty," Lady Cecil answered, carelessly; "but then, I never see any beauty in saucer eyes, and a wide mouth, and—red hair," she went on with a low laugh. "Do you, Mr. Beaumont? If so, your tastes must have altered strangely of late years."

"My taste is catholic, and, at the risk of incurring your contempt, I must admit that I admired the young lady," Beaumont answered, in his slow, lazy voice. "Is she a neighbour of yours?"

"Yes; she lives over there, at the Red House," and Sir John pointed across the fields to a clump of trees at a little distance, amongst which peeped the red brick chimneys of the house of which he spoke, "with her great aunt, Miss Mordaunt. It is a dull home for the girl, for Miss Mordaunt—who is a far-away cousin of mine, by the way—is a most peculiar person, and quite miserly in her habits. She rarely goes out, and never by any chance has any visitors. She has the reputation of being very rich, and she must be fairly well off, for she never spends anything," Sir John added musingly. "Only keeps one servant, and sells all her fruit and vegetables. I fancy poor Doris has a hard life enough. She certainly has a dull one. I often wish, my lady," and he glanced deprecatingly at his wife, "you would ask her here occasionally. It would be a little change for the child, and Floss is so fond of her."

"If you are content that she should be considered Floss's visitor, and remain in the nursery, I am quite willing to invite her," Lady Cecil answered in her coldest, sweetest voice, "but I must really decline to allow her to appear in the drawing-room among my visitors. She has not a dress fit to be seen, and her manners are quite too—impossible."

"Nay, there I differ from you," Sir John answered, stoutly. "Her frocks may be—I dare say they are—shabby enough; but I defy any one to find fault with her manners. She is a perfect lady, whatever else she is, like her mother before her. Ah," and his voice changed suddenly, and his eyes brightened, "here is Floss coming to meet us."

Floss was Sir John's only child, the very apple of his eye, and the pride and delight of his life. She was a pretty child, with her mother's golden hair and bright blue eyes, but with her father's amiable disposition and generous heart. She admired, but was secretly a little afraid of her mother, who had never quite forgiven her for not being a boy, and regarded her more as a beautiful superior being to be worshipped and adored from a distance, than a mother to be loved and caressed. She adored her father, over whom she exercised a beneficent despo-

tism, and had taken a great fancy to Paul Beaumont, who was naturally fond of children, and was always willing to play with her, and to bring her chocolates and toys.

Floss's arrival changed the conversation; and, although Sir John's narrative had sharpened rather than allayed the curiosity which the girl's lovely face had raised in Beaumont's mind, he was much too wary and polite to continue a subject which was, evidently, distasteful to his hostess, or to persist in praising the beauty of one pretty woman to another. So he allowed the subject to drop; but after lunch was over, and he and Floss were alone in the garden—Sir John had walked off to the stables, and Lady Cecil had retired to her dressing-room—he returned to it.

"Floss," he said, lazily—he was lying on the grass smoking, with half-closed eyes, while Floss sat by his side and stuck flowers into his buttonhole, and Soot, the terrier, and Jeannie, the colley dog, also sat at a little distance and watched her proceedings with eager eyes—"I saw a friend of yours this morning."

"Did you? Who was it?"

"Give a guess."

"Oh, I can't guess, Paul. Tell me. Was it old Mrs. Mason?"

"Don't know the lady; but this one was not old. She was young and beautiful, like—you and me."

"You are not beautiful, Paul, and you are not very young, either," Floss interrupted, with unflattering candour. "You have white hairs, and wrinkles round your eyes; but never mind, dear," and Floss tickled his nose lovingly with a long grass, "I loves you just the same! I allus loves people with white hairs and wrinkles, cause my dad has 'em, and I loves my dad better than any one else in the whole world," cried Floss, eagerly, and then sentiment suddenly vanished, and curiosity returned, and she enquired:

"Who did you see, this morning?"

"Doris Cairnes."

"I know," Floss nodded emphatically. "I s'pose you saw her in church. I wish I could go to church and see her too. I used to, once, but mother says I fidget her, so I don't go when she is at home, and I never see Doris now."

"Does she never come here?"

"No, never; I don't think," Floss added in a confidential whisper, "mother likes her."

"Why don't you think so?"

"Oh, because, when she used to come—dad and me used to bring her sometimes—mother used to look at her like this," and the young mimic drew up her head and gave such a ludicrous imitation of one of Lady Cecil's cold, disdainful side glances, that, involuntarily, Paul laughed outright, "and Doris thought she didn't like her, so she never comes now, and I am so sorry, 'cause I never see her."

"Can't you go to the Red House?"

"Not by myself, and nurse won't take me."

"Shall I take you? Shall we go this afternoon?"

Paul could not have told why he made the suggestion, or have explained the sudden interest which he felt in the pretty country girl. He had seen scores of prettier faces, and had never felt the slightest desire to improve their owners' acquaintance; but he felt an odd longing to see more of Doris Cairnes.

Floss welcomed the proposal with avidity. She jumped up quickly from the ground.

"Yes, come on," she said, decisively, "we'll go."

"I suppose your mother wouldn't be angry, eh?" Paul said, as he lazily followed her example, and brushed away the flowers and leaves from his coat.

"Not if I am with you. Mother is never angry with you," Floss returned, solemnly. "Everything you do is wight in her eyes."

This last sentence sounded so much more like a quotation, than an original remark, that Paul stopped suddenly, and looked down at her enquiringly.

"How do you know that?" he said.

"'Cause nurse said so to Celestine; and nurse allus knows everything," Floss answered, confidently. "Come on! and don't wrinkle up your forehead and look so cross and ugly," she added, reprovingly, as she slipped her small hand into his.

Paul laughed as he gave it a kindly pressure. For a moment he had felt slightly annoyed and surprised to hear that Lady Cecil's manner towards him had

been the subject of comment among the lynx-eyed domestics, who, no doubt, were fully aware of his past history, and of the relations which had once existed between him and their mistress; then he laughed and shrugged his broad shoulders.

"What does it matter?" he thought, and he gave Floss's hand a squeeze.

"Come on," he said, gaily.

Lady Cecil, sitting at her dressing-room window, watched the odd pair of friends cross the lawn, attended by the two dogs, and smiled contemptuously over the fancy which Beaumont had taken for Floss's society.

"He used not to be so fond of children, in the old days," she thought. "Was it because Floss was her child; the child of the only woman whom—or, so he had often told her—he had ever loved or desired to make his wife?"

Her face softened at the thought. For a moment she felt more tenderly towards Floss than she had ever felt before, watched with almost a motherly pride in her beautiful eyes, as the little white figure, with the floating golden hair and blue ribbons, went dancing across the lawn by Beaumont's side, and disappeared behind the thick belt of shrubs that divided the lawn from the park.

It was a beautiful scene on which she gazed from her window; as far as eye could reach stretched green pastures and waving fields of ripening corn, and it was all hers now by right of marriage. She had sold herself for it, and for her beautiful home, and Sir John's great wealth. She had made her bargain with her eyes open, and she had never, until now, repented it, or acknowledged that it had failed to bring her the happiness she had expected. But now, as she watched Paul Beaumont's tall figure striding across the park, with the child dancing round him, a great distaste for and a sudden conviction of the emptiness of life came over her, and hot, scalding tears welled up into her beautiful eyes. Oh, why had fate dealt so hardly with her? Why had riches come to Paul only when it was too late? she wondered, bitterly.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Jan Vellacot*,"
"*A Faire Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXII. AMICE'S RESOLUTION.

AMICE had a strange liking for being alone in the big house at night. She had no fears of ghosts or apparitions, for the sisters had lived too free and healthy a life from childhood to have foolish fancies. She did not know her father had gone out, as, in all the excitement, Elva had not mentioned it; and she merely wished to remain up in case there was anything wanted for Hoel Fenner, so that Elva might have a good night's rest, and feel easy. The morning-room was not so big and lonely as the drawing-room, and, having got a large white shawl to wrap round her, Amice began her vigil by slowly walking up and down, to prevent herself getting sleepy.

Jones knew she was here, and Symee, too; but Symee was not strong enough for watching; and Amice always considered other people before herself, especially she considered Symee.

As she paced to and fro, her mind reverted with painful distinctness to her father's conduct towards her. She even once pulled up her sleeve and looked at the mark to make quite sure that it had not all been a dream. Yet, surely, it must be fancy. He, so gentle, so loving towards Elva, and, usually, towards herself, what could she have done to anger him? She had merely asked about Jesse Vicary. Was that wrong? She remembered so clearly Jesse's face of agony in that lonely wood; she saw, as if still before her, the mute despair of the strong, noble-hearted man

whose life she knew so much of from Symee. Some strong sorrow it must have been to have changed his whole expression and his ambition. It could not all have been caused by Symee's refusal to go and live with him. What, then, was it? Could it be anything wrong? Symee knew nothing of it certainly; but then she ought to know it. She ought to go and live with her only relation, and help him.

Tired at last of walking, Amice sat down, and, after a time she folded her hands, and her eyes seemed to see nothing before them. The ardent spirit was, as it were, released from its prison, and soared far away into a region where thought is untranslatable; and thus, for a short period, Amice was happy.

She was roused from her dream by the sound of carriage wheels, and stood up suddenly, wondering what this could mean. Perhaps Mr. Fenner's uncle had heard of his accident, and had come to see him; perhaps some one was soliciting help from them. She listened attentively; she knew Jones had not gone to bed; he would come down and open the door; but she must soon go out and see what help was wanted. Her dream had been so grand, so beautiful, it seemed almost pain to come back to every-day life. But Amice never paused, or was turned back from her duty by common difficulties.

Now she listened again. The bell sounded, and, strange, the carriage drove away. Not even yet imagining it could be the home carriage, Amice walked toward the door and opened it. She heard the hall-door open, and Jones saying something she could not hear.

"Who could it be?" She felt a little shy. It might be a stranger. Very slowly she walked up the small passage

leading to the central hall. She heard Jones actually walking away again down the passage towards the servants' hall. What had he done with the stranger? Amice paused again, and listened. She heard the study-door shut, then open again, and then at last she recognised her father's footstep. He crossed over to the drawing-room; and Amice trembled for fear he should come to the morning-room, and find her there.

"I must tell him," she thought, "why I stayed up. It is late. Where has he been? How strange."

She walked softly across the hall, and entered the study, for the door was wide open, and there were two candles burning on the writing-table. Amice tried to feel brave. She was doing no harm; it was her duty to tell her father that she was sitting up. Standing there, she involuntarily cast her eyes on the table and noticed a large bundle of yellow-looking papers lying on the blotting-book; the writing was plain and lawyer-like, and it was easy enough to read:

"Copy of the title deeds of the property known as Westacre Lands, now in the possession of John Pellew, Esq.
"January 18th, 18—" "J. Button."

"Westacre Lands," thought Amice. "That's papa's property in the north. I thought he bought it of some poor people called Button. He often told us they felt themselves injured about it, and that he had to pension off the son. This must have been a former owner."

Amice argued this out, not because she cared about the subject at all, but because she tried to employ her mind till her father should return; she was afraid he might be vexed at finding her still up; and yet her motives had been of the best; it was silly to fear.

Then at last she heard her father's footsteps again coming across from the drawing-room. He must have gone merely to fetch something. Suddenly he entered, and stood one moment transfixed at the sight—at Amice standing there in a white shawl, as if she were an apparition, her immobility and her speechlessness giving Mr. Kestell some cause to believe this was indeed but an appearance, an optical delusion; and it was Amice herself who broke the spell, wondering why her father stood there staring at her in such amazement.

"Papa, I did not know you were out; or that you were coming in so late. I

stayed up to make Elva feel quite easy, in case Mr. Fenner should require anything. Now you are sitting up, perhaps I had better go to bed."

Mr. Kestell had had time to recover his composure during her speech. There was nothing in it to find fault with; indeed, the kind thought and kind action were only what were to be expected from Amice. But, nevertheless, he felt, as most people do, extremely annoyed at having been startled.

Amice, always Amice gliding about and looking at him. It was becoming unbearable.

"Next time, my dear, you make these arrangements, I prefer being told. I had to go to Greystone to see one of the poor sufferers of the accident whose presence was unexpected."

"Joseph Button was it, papa? Mr. Fenner told Elva about him. He is the son of the man you bought Westacre Lands from, isn't he?"

Her eyes unconsciously reverted to the deeds.

"Ah, did he mention it to Fenner?" said Mr. Kestell, coming near his writing-table, and nervously placing his hand on the title-deeds, looking up as he did so at Amice. She glanced again towards her father, and then at the papers, then again at his face. What was the matter? She saw how strangely agitated he looked. Never before had she seen him look like this. His face said plainly: "Have you looked at these?" But his lips did not utter any words.

At this moment Amice felt the strange, terrible feeling come over her—the feeling she hoped not to experience again. The sight of the papers near to her made her visibly shudder. Her father's very presence caused her to shrink away from him, so that, without another word, she walked slowly away, resolved not to be tempted into saying what was on her lips; for quite clearly and quite distinctly she saw the word "guilt" written on his face.

And she was afraid to see more.

Before now she had had the unknown dread and the unexplained shrinking, yet the cause had never appeared; but during these first moments of agony it was not so much his guilt, whatever it might be, that she thought of, but, besides, she now recognised for a certainty that the children were punished for the fathers. What she called the curse, was, in truth, the punishment of the generations. If it had to

descend to the third and fourth, what would be the visitation on the first ?

Sobbing, as if she had committed a crime, Amice Kestell knelt near her bed and prayed for forgiveness, forgiveness for she knew not what, merely certain, for the first time in her life, that fair and prosperous as were the outward prospects of the Kestell family, they were walking over a flowery path beneath which a precipice was hidden.

"I must know, I must find out," said Amice, aloud, "there may yet be time for restitution. Why did I not have the courage to ask him then ? It was a chance given me, and I was too cowardly to take it. Why must I know it—I, his child, or is it all some frightful temptation of the devil ? Am I accusing my father of something which is merely a fancy of my own brain, and yet——" Gradually the fever of her mind abated, and the peace of resignation came over her ; but this was not before the morning light broke over the moorland.

Another, and a very different, scene was taking place in the study. When Amice had gone—not stopping even to shut the door—Mr. Kestell stood quite motionless where he was. One hand was on the title-deeds, and his eyes were also fixed on the dirty parchments and papers. The grey hue on his features—which had so much startled Amice, and where she had read the word "guilt"—gave place to a cold perspiration, the effect of intense mental activity or suffering. His lips slightly opened, remained fixed, as did his eyes ; only the candles flickered a little as the draught from the open door caught them. It might have been five minutes or more that Mr. Kestell of Greystone stood there. He knew not, and no one heeded ; but Nature's great law of movement asserted itself after a time. Mechanically, Mr. Kestell lifted his hand from the papers, and, walking slowly across the room, he shut the door. The sound of this did him good ; he breathed more freely ; but as he came back, he involuntarily remembered the scene with Jesse Vicary. It flashed vividly before his eyes, just as if it were being rehearsed again—Vicary was standing by the fireplace, insisting on knowing the truth.

"He would have it," murmured Mr. Kestell, feeling himself really alone, now that the door was shut. "He would not let well alone, and those hot-headed fellows mistake one so easily. I never said

anything to wound him ; he inferred everything so quickly. Perhaps I had better have let things take another turn ; but I could not help it, he forced my hand."

Thus murmuring, as if the sound of his own voice were a relief to him, Mr. Kestell went to a great bureau placed in the corner of his study. The top part consisted of bookshelves, covered by glass doors ; below, there were three deep drawers. There was a key in the glass doors ; but the drawers were not locked. If these contained secrets, then Mr. Kestell did not keep his secrets under lock and key.

Mr. Kestell stooped down and took from the topmost drawer a large blue envelope, which lay, if not quite at the top, at all events, well within easy reach.

Then, going back to his writing-table, he took out the contents of the envelope, and compared them with the papers procured from Button. There was a bundle of private letters, which he put on one side ; then some title-deeds, and these he compared with Button's dirty papers. Yes, word for word they were the same ; and, in the flowery language of the law, they made over the property, known as West-acre Lands, to John Pellow, Esq., of Dunglepore, Madras. To this document was added the original title-deeds of the Buttons, which enumerated the number of fields and their acreage.

It took Mr. Kestell some time to go through these papers and compare them together. He found no flaw in the copies ; indeed, he had not expected to find any ; but all the same, his keen glance took as much care to detect one as if he had expected it.

Was the wish father of the thought ?

"I conclude the Buttons really owned these fields for many years ; their title was quite good ; otherwise, the whole transaction might have fallen to the ground. Pshaw ! title-deeds are, after all, every day found imperfect. If the law were to meddle with half the deeds in England, how many could stand ? John Pellow paid a very small sum for the land—four hundred pounds. Merely that ; and now it is worth thousands ; just because I had capital, and could work it. I paid more than the four hundred, if my bill were required of me. A man cannot accuse his conscience of unfairness if he has had the chance to come upon valuable property in the way of ordinary business. I have never taken even a stick from a hedge without paying for it, never."

This confession of probity seemed gradually to restore Mr. Kestell to a calmer frame of mind. He put up his own documents again into their cover, and replaced them in the drawer; then, tying up Button's bundle, he enclosed all these papers in a large lawyer's envelope, and addressed them to "J. Button." As he sealed it, however, Mr. Kestell thought:

"Perhaps, after all, that poor fellow will never call for them again."

CHAPTER XXIII. A MAN'S HONOUR.

To be only a partial invalid, and yet to be made a great deal of, and to be considered very much of a hero is, even to the most modest and humble of individuals, by no means an unhappy state of affairs. Perhaps the feeling of the greatest unmixed felicity which can be experienced is to be a hero, and to be conscious at the same time of repudiating all attempts at flattery. The highest, or rather the essence of flattery is imbibed when we are openly rejecting the proffered cup; indeed, it may not be altogether paradoxical to say that a very humble man does not reject admiration, because true humility is seldom conscious that praise is being offered.

Hoel Fenner's arm being imprisoned in splints, and supported by a sling, made its owner a decidedly interesting mortal. There were the laurels of the hero round his head, and the myrtle-wreath of the lover on his handsome brows; and, as sometimes happens, the most Cassandra-like prophet could find nothing but blooming flowers for the present, and prospective buds for the future.

Miss Heaton, who had quite a knack of discovering the canker in the rose, peered in vain into Hoel and Elva's flowers to discover it, so she contented herself by saying to her brother:

"Of course, Herbert, though you are so much pleased about this engagement, I very much doubt if it will answer. Elva is such a wilful young woman; she will never learn to obey, though, of course, now she is quite dazzled by the prospects of becoming a London lady."

Mr. Heaton was having his tea, and there was a quiet gravity on his face which his sister could not construe into words. Surely it could not possibly mean envy, or a doubt of his own supreme happiness under her kind care.

"Elva Kestell looks very happy; I met

her and Mr. Fenner to-day on the Beacon. It is very pretty to see her tenderness coming to the surface."

"It won't last! Girls are so ridiculous when they are engaged; they fancy every one is envying them, and thinking of them."

"I don't think self-consciousness is Elva's failing," smiled the Vicar, who, in his quiet way, was a keen observer.

"Well, perhaps not; she does not care enough for public opinion, and neither does her sister. By the way, Herbert, I met that strange girl Amice to-day, and she begged me to ask you if you could give her a few minutes' conversation soon. I do hope you will say you are too busy."

"But I'm not too busy," said the Vicar, looking surprised. "Why should I say so?"

Miss Heaton coughed a little to give herself time to find the answer.

"Well, if you once begin a few minutes' conversation with a girl like Amice Kestell, the minutes might grow into hours."

"What, on the same day? That would be indeed serious," the Vicar laughed.

"Really, Herbert, that is ridiculous of you! I mean there would be minutes' conversation every day."

"Miss Amice is not given to much speech; sometimes I cannot get her to talk at all."

"That is her way, so that she may appear shy," said Miss Heaton, mysteriously.

"Why should she want to appear shy?"

"Really, men are so simple and short-sighted! Don't you understand, Herbert, that Amice thinks you will be taken with those shy manners of hers, and all that cottage-visiting, and sitting up with old women. It all means the same thing."

"I should say it meant a very kind heart."

"Of course you would say so. A man is so easily taken in. Why, a blind bat would see farther than you do."

Poor Herbert, he felt that he was paying dearly for having been asked for a few minutes' conversation.

"When did she want to see me?"

"After the Sunday-school; but I have asked Mr. Fenner and Elva to come in then. You really must not be rude to them."

"No one is ever rude to lovers, my dear, except those who keep them from each other. Well, I must be off to night-

school. I mean to try this year again, and, after that, if my roughs won't appreciate their advantages they shall have no more of my pearls. By the way, you know Miss Grey can't come this year, because of the walk back. She says it was too much for her last year, and yet she looks well enough."

Miss Heaton was, this time, very glad her brother was so simple. Miss Grey had lately become too attentive in the way of working slippers "for the dear Vicar," and she had had a delicate hint that he required no more worsted work.

"I expect her aunt wants her company at home. I only wish Amice had as careful a parent; but really Mrs. Kestell is quite a useless member of society, and never looks after her daughters."

"I rather imagine that there are no such creatures as useless members of society," replied the Vicar, thoughtfully. If one thinks of it seriously, every one is useful in some way or other."

Miss Heaton gave up arguing, and took to herring-boning flannel, for, when her feelings were ruffled, she generally went to seek consolation in a flannel petticoat—an intimate friend—and even Herbert himself always tried to avoid saying much when she was engaged on flannel.

Elva cared for none of these things at present, she was enjoying her young dream of happiness with the ardour which characterised her; and, happily for her, love had at once to be represented by action. All Hoel's letters had to be written by her; and what discussions and plans did not this lead to? She had so little to tell him about the outside world, and he had so much to tell her; though, of course, perfect candour is impossible between two beings who have to begin a new life of thought together. In the first place, there was all the truth about his Uncle Mellish: the man whom the world looked upon as his father. Elva was prepared to like him. Curiosity about a set of new relations was quite natural; and Hoel expressed himself very properly concerning his uncle. But then, how could he explain to Elva that as she was an heiress, he was overjoyed at being able to tell his uncle, in a perfectly correct fashion, that he might keep or throw away his money as he liked. No; Elva could not be told this; but, nevertheless, Hoel's secret satisfaction over this fact considerably heightened his happiness. It might be a very unworthy feeling; but it was there.

Elva's sudden softness was also most gratifying to his manly feelings. If he had admired the independent, original-minded Elva Kestell, he loved her in a far more satisfactory manner now that the feminine element of tenderness was so much more apparent. That desire for mastery in man has its great, as well as its little side; it springs from the wealth of his strength as well as the pride resultant from that strength. It is caused by an earnest desire to protect something weaker than itself, in order that strength may be more fully realised. On the other hand, it is difficult to protect a person who fancies she does not need our protection: so that, in truth, the manlier a man is the more will he appreciate the opposite sex in its weakness, and not in its exhibition of independence.

If now and then in their conversations, Hoel suddenly discovered in Elva a trace of a finer nature than his own, he would not dwell on the discovery. When once she belonged to him her being would be merged into his, and he was quite ready to share everything with his wife, because, as his wife, Elva would be a reflection of himself. How his heart beat when he saw more plainly every hour that he had been right in following his instinct. Love could drown free thought. In a wife it is better to have an echo than a second voice; and every one acknowledges that there is a strange fascination in echoes, for they enhance the interest of the original sound.

The late autumn weather was very beautiful this year. Winter seemed unwilling to appear; even the leaves fell reluctantly from their parent stem. All along the road by the five Pools the gorgeous colouring seemed to make spurious sunshine. The beeches were dazzling to look at; the oaks, too, with every shade of gold, russet, and brown, did their best to cheat autumn of its sorrow. To walk side by side with Hoel, sheltered from wind and all, even to pause and sit down on some bank of dry leaves, seemed to Elva a perfect foretaste of happiness. If now and then she found herself disagreeing with him, she was silent, or only half expressed her disagreement, for fear of marring all the harmony of the moment. Of one thing, however, they never spoke; and that was of Elva's former attempts at writing a book. She even felt ashamed of the attempt; it was as if she had dishonoured the profession of letters. Hoel,

who was so clever, so keen a critic, was very good not to recur to the subject. So she thought when, side by side, they discussed books or talked of the future; but during some moments when he was not with her, a sudden wave of thought came over her that, bad as her book might have been in form, there were a few ideas worth something in it. Hoel had acknowledged as much. At such times Elva experienced the first feeling of the bondage of love; for there is nothing more difficult to human beings than to be perfectly true to themselves; the overpowering force of opinion, both public and private, undermines the true self. So crushing can the weight be, that, for the happiness of the individual, it is better to be ignorant of the fact; but the greater originality possessed by the unit the greater will be the power to recognise the overwhelming antagonism of the multitude to the individual. In this fact lies the danger to perfect happiness, even of wedded life; for few men, and fewer women, can realise that freedom is true happiness. Civilised as we are now in this marvellous age of ours, there are yet few who see that slavery is still rampant, the slavery of the mind; and by this we do not mean to touch old-world institutions or their honoured customs, or the best authority of parent or teacher, but a far more subtle slavery which, as in the case of Hoel, demands not submission in its vulgar sense, but submission of that heart of a human being which, if once subjected, lives ever in a restless state, knowing that it is not achieving its highest capabilities.

And yet, as far as each of them knew it, and as far as the world could see, this romance was very perfect and very bewitching.

Close by the road, beyond the first Pool, the lovers sat this bright day on a great heap of fir-poles. The wind sent long drawn out and somewhat melancholy sighs through the pines, and the bracken waved its tiny answers to it. The fallen firs were reflected in the water. Every now and then Hoel himself came into the water-picture; and Elva watched his reflection with a smile on her face. A passer-by would have involuntarily admired the pair.

They would have been struck by the intellectual refinement of the man's face; but some wave of sympathy would have gone out towards Elva, who, in a dark-brown dress, and a hat surrounded with

soft ostrich feathers, united strength and womanliness in a very marked degree.

"It is just a week, Hoel, since that horrid accident," said Elva, clasping her hands in front of her, and looking, not at Hoel, but at his reflection; "to me it seems years, and yet we haven't said half what we want to say; at least, I haven't. You promised you would read your uncle's letter to me. Shall I get it out of your pocket?"

Elva smiled a little shyly. Shyness had come with love, and it made her doubly beautiful in Hoel's eyes.

"My right hand still," he said with an answering smile. "First, I want to tell you about Uncle Mellish. I believe you know that he is very fond of me. He has been a father to me in many ways. On the other hand, I don't think I am as fond of him as I ought to be."

"I hope he will like me. Do you think he will? I am accustomed to old people. At least, papa may be old to some; but to me he always seems young."

"Your father is devoted to you, Elva. When I see him looking at you, I know I have never had a father's love."

"No one can pretend to be a father, can they? Mine is the best, dearest, noblest on earth."

"You are a very faithful friend, dear," he said, taking her right hand in his left one, and kissing it. "No one could call you a fickle woman."

"No, I think not. I am glad you are not like most men, and talk nonsense about all women being fickle and all women being vain."

"You don't believe in tradition then? I suppose all sayings are founded on truth; but all exceptions have a tendency to disbelieve in the rules."

"I suppose men meet curious specimens of our sex which we poor country folk know nothing of. I wonder what is really the difference between a man and a woman apart from intellectual and physical strength?"

Hoel thought a moment, and then said:

"I think it is a great dread of anything touching their honour—I mean, given a man of honour. I have known men do strangely ill-considered things when they fancied their personal honour was in jeopardy."

"Would you?"

"I can't imagine what would happen to me in that line; but still, I can so well

understand the feelings that I conclude I should not be an exception."

"If I jilted you, for instance?" said Elva; and her whole face was illuminated by a smile which made Hoel consider her still more beautiful than he had previously imagined.

"Yes; if you did—I should never forgive you."

"Really and truly?"

"Yes; but then, when I first loved you, I knew that was impossible to your nature."

"I should always love you, whatever you did," said Elva, in a low, passionate voice, which frightened Hoel for a moment, because it was the speech of the Elva he knew so little of and wished to know less.

"Did you ever fall in love before?" she went on, smiling, so that her last words were like an unnatural ruffling of calm waters.

Hoel smiled.

"Never till I saw you. Once I admired a girl very much; but, you see, I can make the confession very calmly."

"You admired her very much, but did not fall in love. That is strange, isn't it? Why was it?"

"In the first place, she was not a lady. Her father was a working farmer somewhere, and her mother a very homely body indeed. Still, I did not know that when I first saw her. She was a very clever girl, very pretty—a governess in a family I used to visit. The eldest son was a college friend of mine."

"And you went there and admired the clever and pretty governess? I wonder if she admired you, and whether you paid her attentions? I sometimes think men who do that are answerable for a great many heartaches."

Hoel smiled at Elva's earnestness.

"There was, I dare say, some imprudence on my part, but I hope not much. In the first place, I knew beforehand Uncle Mellish would never give his consent. I did not mind much about that; but my means were then less than they are now, and my prospects not so good. I was never far gone enough to be unable to reason with myself."

"Oh, then there was no fear of your being very much in love. If I loved, I should not reason at all——"

"A woman's argument. But, you see, men ought to reason. Anyhow, Elsie Warren could never have been my wife."

"Elsie Warren; what a pretty name! But why, Hoel? Men have done all sorts of things for love."

"Because I found out that her father had been, when quite a young man, imprisoned for a forgery. He yielded to a sudden temptation, and the poor fellow expiated his crime in prison. When he came out, he married, and was a very respectable member of society ever afterwards. The story was but little known, and it was quite by chance that I found it out."

"But poor Elsie Warren could not help that. Surely she was guiltless enough."

"Oh, quite; a perfectly ideal woman—all golden hair and good feeling. But it was what I was telling you just now; I could no more have married that girl, even if I had loved her a thousand times more than I love you—which, remember, I did not—than I could have gone to Uncle Mellish, and asked him how much money he was going to leave me!"

"How strange!" said Elva, letting go Hoel's hand, and gazing at the slow flight of a rook, "how strange! Now, if I had been a man, I would have married Elsie Warren, because her father had been once disgraced; and I should have shown her that love can make up for everything."

"Would you? And, afterwards, you would have repented. Surely it were wiser to pause first. Think of that black secret between a man and his wife always there; and if he were of a suspicious nature he would have said she may deceive me as her father deceived his own father, for he forged his father's name. There might be even a life-long dread that his children might inherit crime. No, a thousand times no!"

"Oh, but love is so merciful," said Elva, starting up in her excitement. "Hoel, you talk like this just because you did not love that girl, and so it is all right. But I know you better. If you had loved her, all those future and past reasonings would have disappeared; you would have acted as you did last Saturday. You would have said, 'Let me suffer, only let me keep suffering away from others.' I know you would. If I had been a man, I would have gone to her, and said——"

"Said what, Elva?" answered Hoel, now rising and putting Elva's right hand in his left arm. This was just a case in which he preferred Elva's agreeing with him.

"That we are not sent into the world to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children."

"But I am not sure that I should then have been speaking the truth. Man is made a judge over his fellows, otherwise, how would society get on at all? From the times of the Patriarchs to the days of Constitutional Government, we can follow the progress of human law, or, as some would say, the Divine will, carried out by the human instrument."

The two walked on in silence a little while. Elva was turning her thoughts over, unable to express what she felt, till at last Hoel, feeling she was wandering a little from the centre round which he liked her best to circle, remarked:

"A woman's love, darling, is the grandest and the best thing on earth; but she must not always expect her judgement to be the same. Anyhow, on the score of honour, you and I shall always be at one. If you are lenient in thought, you would be stern in principle."

"I am afraid you would always bring me round to your view against my will," said Elva; and Hoel, with a sudden wave of love, admiration, and entire agreement with her last speech, sealed it with a kiss. And then, when they had reached another secluded spot, he took a small volume from his pocket and read out a poem he had brought to discuss with his betrothed. It was "The Palace of Art," which, it so happened, Elva did not know well. Hoel read beautifully; it was a pleasure to listen to him, and Elva's whole soul seemed to lie in the placid depth of her grey eyes as he finished:

"Yet pull not down my palace towers that are
So lightly, beautifully built;
Perchance I may return with others there,
When I have purged my guilt."

"I suppose," said Elva, "I have built my palace of art now; but I do not wish to leave it."

And Hoel was not insensible to this exquisite flattery; exquisite because it came from true lips. Was it possible for a man not to feel elated by it? Not certainly for a man like Hoel, who was clever enough to know truth that was veiled in humility. Love and life were beautiful to both to-day, and worthy to be sung by poets.

THE VIKINGS.

THIRTY years ago Mr. du Chaillu introduced the Gorilla into European society and scientific notice; eight years ago, he

transported us to a delightful sojourn in "The Land of the Midnight Sun;" and now he has presented us with a new theory of our origin. It does not concern the missing link, which, after all, has not been found in his famous African monkey. It has to do with the origin of the English, or, as in deference to the other "nationalities" forming the United Kingdom, one should say, the British race. We have been quite wrong, it seems, about our progenitors. The people found on our islands when William of Normandy kindly came over to annex them, were not, as we have been taught to believe, a fusion of Saxons, Jutes, and Angles, but pure "hardy Norsemen"—real and original Vikings.

And here it may be necessary to explain to many persons what they will not find explained by Mr. du Chaillu. And that is, that the word Viking has nothing to do with Sea King, as seems to be often supposed. The word, indeed, is not Vi-king, but Vik-ing. The termination "ing," is equivalent to the English termination "er," as in hospitall-er, housebreak-er, etc. The word "Vik" means not exactly the sea, but an arm of the sea, like a bay or fjord. If we could suppose that it meant what the Scotch call a loch, then Vikings would be Loch-ers—dwellers on or by the loch. The old plural form was not Vikings, but Vik-ingr. It is a pity to dispel the old Danish "Sea-king's daughter from over the sea" idea; but truth is great, and truth compels us to see that the old Vikings had nothing to do with kingship.

What, then, Mr. du Chaillu means is, not that we are the lineal descendants of a race of sea-potentates, but of a race who lived by the sea away over in Scandinavia. The people who established themselves in England after the Romans withdrew, were, in fact, Norsemen, and these Norsemen, or Vikings, have had the largest share in the ancestry of the race now called English. The theory is more acceptable than that of our Low-German origin, which has been often propounded; and it is not more wild than many other theories which have been advanced. It is a good and pleasing theory in itself; but then, unfortunately, Mr. du Chaillu does not succeed in establishing it, and the ethnologists will smite him hip and thigh. We do not propose to discuss it; but in a few sentences will state the case as he presents it.

The English and Frankish chroniclers, who are our chief authorities for the events of what is called the Anglo-Saxon period,

were, according to Mr. du Chaillu, bigoted enemies of the Norsemen. They had no real knowledge of the early settlement of the country, and they coloured their narratives by the animosity which they bore to people whom they regarded as foes of the Church, and piratical monsters. The Roman writers, who described the northern tribes they found in these islands, were uninformed both as to the names of the tribes and their localities. They confounded the Norsemen with the Angles and Saxons, and classed them all as Germans. But the real Saxons and Angles were not seafaring people, and the Norsemen were. Therefore, the probability is, that the Norsemen descended on the English coasts in the fifth century, just as we know they did in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, and made settlements here which were afterwards attacked by men of the same race.

This is a slender basis for a theory; but Mr. du Chaillu finds support for it in resemblances which he has discovered between the Norse civilisation and customs, and those of England prior to the Norman Conquest. He also finds confirmation of it in the colonising and maritime propensities of the English race, even as it exists unto this day. But he dismisses as baseless legends all the cherished stories of Hengist and Horsa; and of the successive invasions of Angles, Jutes, and Saxons in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Now, we do not propose to discuss this theory. It is one for ethnologists, and is doubtless too dry for the majority of our readers to go into further, although they may be interested in this plain statement of it. But whether Mr. du Chaillu is right or wrong, he has thrown a flood of light upon the manners and customs of an age and a people whose influence upon all the western nations has been enormous. He has literally devoured the Sagas, and the result is a series of extremely interesting pictures, some of which we propose to reproduce, of the Viking Age.

The earliest ages of the cosmogony and mythology of the Norsemen are pictured in three great poems. The central figure is Odin; but the real and the mythical are so intermixed, that it is often impossible to distinguish one from the other. Odin goes in search of information, and learns that there are nine worlds: 1, Muspel; 2, Asgard; 3, Vanahheim (home of the Vanir); 4, Midgard; 5, Alfheim (world of the Alf); 6, Maunheim (home of men);

7, Jötunheim (home of the Jötunar); 8, Hel; 9, Nifheim. And then, in these poems, we read of Yggdrasil, the ash-tree, one of the strangest conceptions found in any mythology:

An ash I know standing
Called Yggdrasil,
A high tree be-sprinkled
With white loam;
Thence came the dew
That drop in the dales;
It stands ever green
Spreading over the wall of Urd.
Three roots stand
In three directions
Under the ash Yggdrasil;
Hel dwells under one,
The Hrim-thursar under the second,
Under the third, mortal men.

It is to the world of Hel, under Yggdrasil, that Odin goes for news about his son Baldur, who had died.

Baldur, called The Good, had many great and dangerous dreams about his life, which he told to the Asar, of whom Odin was chief. They consulted, and resolved to ask for safety for him from every kind of danger. Odin's wife, Frigga, took oaths from fire, water, iron, and every kind of metal, stones, earth, trees, sicknesses, beasts, birds, poison, and serpents, that they would spare Baldur's life. After this, Baldur used to entertain the gods by standing up and allowing them to throw things at him. Whatever they did, he was not hurt, and they all thought this a great wonder. When Loki saw this he was angry that Baldur was not hurt, so he changed himself into the shape of a woman, and went to Frigga, and told her that they were all shooting at Baldur without hurting him. Frigga said:

"Weapons or trees will not hurt Baldur. I have taken oaths from them all."

The woman, Loki, asked:

"Have all things taken oaths to spare Baldur's life?"

Frigga answered:

"A bush grows east of Valhöll called Mistiltein (mistletoe). I thought it was too young to take an oath."

The woman went away; but Loki took the mistletoe and tore it up, and went with it to the Thing where the gods met. Baldur's brother, Höd, was standing in the outermost ring of spectators, and to him Loki said:

"Why dost thou not shoot at Baldur?"

"Because I am blind," said Höd, "and also I have no weapon."

Then said Loki:

"Do like other men, and show honour

to Baldur. I will show thee where he stands. Shoot this stick at him."

Höd shot the mistletoe stick at Baldur as Loki directed, and Baldur fell dead to the ground. This, goes on the Saga, was the most unfortunate deed that has ever been done among the gods and men.

"When Baldur was fallen, none of the Asar could say a word or touch him with their hands, and they looked at each other with the same mind towards the one who had done this deed, but no one could take revenge; it was such a place of peace. When they tried to speak the tears came first, so that no one could tell to the other his sorrow in words. Odin suffered most from this loss, because he knew best what a loss and damage to the Asar the death of Baldur was."

In the Norse literature Odin is constantly referred to not only as a god, but also as a hero and leader of men. It is not necessary to infer that any real person of the name of Odin ever existed; but, says Mr. du Chaillu—and this is another of his startling theories—"from the frequency with which a migration northwards is mentioned, and from the details with which it is described, it is legitimate to infer that the predecessors of the Norsemen came from the south or south-east of Europe, probably, to judge from literature and archæology combined, from the shores of the Black Sea."

The knowledge of rune-writing was supposed by the people to have come with Odin, and the numerous Runic inscriptions are said to contain many characters resembling the Etruscan letters.

"To corroborate these records, a considerable number of antiquities—the forms of which are unknown in Italy, and are similar to those of the North—have been found in Southern Russia, and may be seen in the museums of the country."

It is partly from the Runic writings, and partly from the archæological remains called "bog-finds," that Mr. du Chaillu has been able to describe how the old Norsemen were dressed, and what were their riding equipments, agricultural utensils, cooking utensils, household vessels, wagons, tools, weapons, and ships. By means of these long-buried objects, we can now "dress a warrior from head to foot, and wonder at his costly and magnificent equipment, and his superb and well-finished weapons, and can realise how magnificent must have been some of his riding and driving vehicles."

Upon their swords the poets of the Sagas lavished a wealth of figurative epithets and poetical attributes. Thus, they are called :

Odin's flame;
The Gleam of the Battle;
The Ice of Battle;
The Serpent of the wound;
The Wolf of the wound;
The Dog of the helmet;
The Battle-snake;
The Glow of the War;
The Injurer of the Shields;
The Fire of the Shields;
The Fire of the Battle;
The Viper of the host;
The Torch of the Blood;
The Snake of the Brynja;
The Fire of the Sea-kings;
The Thorn of the Shields;
The Fear of the Brynja;
The Tongue of the Scabbard.

One of the most celebrated swords was "Tyrting," belonging to Sigurlami, the Son of Odin. It shone, we read, like a ray of sunshine, and slew a man every time it was drawn. It was always to be sheathed with the blood of man upon it; it never failed, and always carried victory with it. Some weapons, as we see, had special names attached to them; but Mr. du Chaillu suggests that the great fame they acquired was due to the personal bravery and great skill of the warriors who handled them, although, also, to some extent, to the superior workmanship of the blades. Supernatural qualities were attributed to them, and they were believed to be rendered infallible by charms and incantations while they were being forged.

Then, as to the ships, which play so important a part in the life and history of the Vikings. They also were called by figurative and poetical names, as thus one of the Saga-men :

Deer of the Surf;
Reindeer of Breezes;
Sea-king's deer;
Reindeer of the Shield-wall;
Elk of the Fjords;
Sea-king's Sledge;
Horse of the Home of Ice;
Soot-coloured Horse of the Sea;
Horse of the Gull's track;
Mare of the Surf;
Horse of the Breeze;
Raven of the Wind;
Gull of the Fjord;
Carriage of the Sea;
The Sea-wader;
Ægir's Steed;
Sea-steed;
Lion of the Waves;
Hawk of the Sea-gull's track;
Raven of the Sea;
Snake of the Sea.

All their vessels were generically called skip; but there were different varieties.

The warships were Dreki (Dragon), Skeid, Sækkja, Skuta, Buza, Karfi. The Her-ship, or Langship, was the most powerful ship-of-war; but the Dreki was the finest and largest of all their vessels, and was ornamented on prow and stern with the head and tail of a dragon.

The most beautifully proportioned of the ships was the "Ormrinn Langi" (long serpent), which seemed as a model down to the twelfth century. The "Skeid" was a swift vessel, holding benches for twenty or thirty rowers. The largest mentioned was one used by Erling Skjalgason on Viking expeditions; it had thirty-two benches, and carried two hundred and forty men. The "Skuta" was a small vessel, much used, and often mentioned. It contained fifteen benches, and the upper part of the gunwale was so built that the crew could find footing upon it from which to board the enemy. The "Buza" seems to have been somewhat similar to the "Dreki," for thus writes one of the Scalds:

"King Harald Hardradi had a buza-ship built at Eyrar, during the winter. It was made as large as the Long Serpent, and as good as could be in every way. It had a dragon's head on its prow, and a tail in its stern, and the beaks were ornamented with gold all over. It had thirty-five rooms (benches), was large in proportion thereto, and very fine. The King was very careful about its outfit, sails, rigging, anchors, and ropes."

Ironclad ships, used as battering-rams, are mentioned. At the battle between Hakin Jarl and the Joms Vikings, Eirik had a ship, the upper part of which was provided with a projection of iron spikes, for ramming. Then, in the Fridthjof Saga, we read:

"Thorstein had a ship called 'Ellidi;' fifteen men rowed on each side of it. It had a carved prow and stern; and it was strong, like a sea-going ship; and its sides were sheathed with iron."

The "Knerri" were the merchant-ships, larger than the war-ships, and stoutly built, to stand heavy seas. The war-ships had often a crow's-nest at the masthead large enough to hold several warriors, who, from that height, could throw missiles at the enemy.

The different parts of the ship were, the "lypting," an elevated place on which the commander stood and steered; the "stafn" (prow); the "rausen" (forecastle); the "fyrir-rum" (fore-room); the "krapparum"

(stern-room); and the "hasæis-kista" (high-seat chest) or armoury. The ships were highest at the stem and stern, and were pointed at the ends; only the largest appear to have been decked. The oars were very long and very strong, about twenty-six feet in length, and manned by from two to four men each, according to the weather and the weight of the ship.

Great attention was paid to the painting and ornamentation of the ships and sails. The woodwork was richly carved; the dragons were gilded or covered with thin sheets of gold, and sparkled splendidly in the sunshine. The sails were striped with different colours, sometimes embroidered, and sometimes even lined with fur.

The dimensions of ships are rarely given in the Sagas; but a twenty-seater must have been about one hundred and ten feet long. The "Long Serpent" of Olaf Tryggvason must have been one hundred and eighty feet long, thirty-two feet beam, and ten feet draught. The largest vessel on record is the "Dragon," of King Knut, which had sixty oars, and must have been about three hundred feet long. The fleets gathered together for great expeditions were enormous. That assembled for the battle of Bravöll covered the whole Sound. In one sea fight we read of three thousand ships on one side alone! On naval expeditions, provision-ships followed the fighting ships.

The trading expeditions of the Vikings Mr. du Chailly traces as far south as Russia, to the Black Sea, the Tigris, the Euphrates, and as far east as Samarcand, as well as over all the seas of Western Europe and the Mediterranean. Here is an interesting item from Egils' Saga:

"Thorolf had a large sea-going ship; in every way it was most carefully built, and painted all over above the water-line; it had a sail with blue and red stripes, and all the rigging was very elaborate. This he made ready, and ordered his men-servants to go with it. He had put on board dried fish, skins, tallow, grey fur, and other furs, which he had from the mountains. All this was of much value. He sent it westward to England, to buy woollen cloth and other goods he needed. They went southward along the coast, and then out to sea. When they arrived in England they found a good market, loaded the ship with wheat and honey, wine and cloth, and returned in the autumn with fair winds."

This is how a ship appeared to the poets :

The sea howls, and the wave
Dashes the bright foam against the red wood,
While the ship gapes
With the gold-ornamented mouth.
Fair woman, I saw a skeid
Launched in the river out to sea ;
Look where the long hull
Of the proud dragon rides near the shore.
The bright manes of the serpent glitter,
For it has been launched off the rollers ;
The ornamental necks
Carried burnt gold.

The warrior's Baldur takes down
His long tent on Saturday,
When beautiful women look out
From the town on the Serpent's hull ;
The young King is just steering
His new skeid out of Nid westward,
White the oars of warriors
Flashed into the sea.

The host of the King can rightly
Tear the oars out of the waters ;
Woman stands wondering at
The marvellous oar's stroke.
The Northmen row on the nailed serpent,
Along the hail-stricken stream ;
It seems to the woman she sees
An eagle-wing of iron.

Insurance companies for cattle and against fire were known amongst the early Norsemen ; but we do not gather that they extended to shipping.

Hospitality was a leading trait in their characters ; and that man was honoured of whom it could be said that his house afforded accommodation to every one. The stranger was always well received, and generously entertained. Their feasts were notable for prolonged and heavy drinking.

They dressed well, even with great luxury. The materials used by both sexes were linen, wool, silk, skins and furs. There is mention also of "pell," supposed to be a kind of velvet. On many of the garments was a border of lace, ribbon, or band, called "hlad." The colours most in favour were blue, red, green, scarlet, and purple. Grey was the every-day colour ; and white "vadmál"—a coarse woollen stuff—was the distinctive clothing of slaves.

The men wore trousers fastened at the waist with a belt. The socks were knitted on to the trousers, and shoes were worn over the socks. They wore linen and woollen shirts under their coats of mail, and over the shoulders a cloak with a fringe or border. These cloaks were the most costly part of the dress. One was the "Kapa," a hood-cloak of grey colour for every-day use, and for feasts scarlet, made up of skins or "pell," and lined with

fur. Another was the "Feld," the sides of which were of different colours. There were also rain or dust-cloaks, and cloaks made of reindeer-skin. Shoes of leather or skins were used, fastened with strings of silk wrapped round the leg to the knee. Gloves of hart-skin stitched with gold were worn, and sometimes these were lined with down. In the hand either a staff, a sword, or an axe, was carried. The hats were black, grey, or white, and there seems also to have been a silken cap ornamented with lace. The warriors wore moustaches. The hair was worn long, hanging over the neck, parted in the middle, and ornamented on the forehead with a gold band.

The women wore a principal gown, called the kyrtil. It was made very wide, with a train and long sleeves, and was fastened round the waist with a gold or silver belt, from which suspended a bag for rings, keys, ornaments, and housewife's appliances. Over the "kyrtil" was worn a kind of apron with fringes. The festive dress was the "slædur," which did not cover the neck, and was there surmounted by a collar and handkerchief. The neck and bust, however, were frequently left bare and ornamented with necklaces, etc. There was also a shoulder ornament, called "dvergar." This is how a Saga describes a lady of the period :

And the house-wife
Looked at her sleeves,
She smoothed the linen
And plaited them ;
She put up the head-dress,
A brooch was at her breast,
The dress-train was trailing,
The skirt had a blue tint ;
Her brow was brighter,
Her breast was shining,
Her neck was whiter
Than pure, new-fallen snow.

The high-born women wore costly cloaks out of doors ; and, when travelling, they wore overcoats, like the men, with a hood of felt. Their undergarments were of linen or silk, their hose were richly embroidered, their head-coverings were of linen, with bands or diadems of gold, and even their night-dresses have been described. Girls wore the hair long, wrapped round their belt ; widows wore it hanging down. Long yellow hair and a delicate complexion were considered essentials of beauty.

Thus one Scald : "Helga was so beautiful, that wise men say she was the most beautiful woman in Iceland. Her hair was so long that it could cover her whole body, and was as fine as gold."

And thus another: "Hallgerd was sent for, and came, with two women. She wore a blue woven mantle and under it a scarlet kirtle, with a silver belt; her hair reached down to her waist on both sides, and she tucked it under her belt."

Both men and women were very fond of jewels and golden objects. The ornaments were very numerous and of very remarkable and skilful workmanship. Mr. du Chaillu has taken tracings and drawings of an immense number of these, which show a developement of taste and artistic faculty such as we have never been accustomed to associate with our Norse ancestors.

But, indeed, in their occupations, their pastimes, their social regulations, their laws, and their industries, they were a people vastly more advanced and refined than we have been accustomed to regard them. Take, for instance, the position of woman.

It is shown by Mr. du Chaillu, from the Sagas of the very earliest times, that ancient laws accorded a high position to women. "A maiden was highly respected, and, on becoming a wife, she was greatly honoured, and her counsels had great weight; by marrying, she became the companion and not the inferior of her husband. She held property in her own right, whatever she received by inheritance or by marriage being her own; though there were restrictions put upon her, as well as upon her husband, in regard to the use of her property." A chivalrous regard was paid by men to women, and youths went on warlike expeditions to attain great fame, so that their acts could be extolled, and themselves considered worthy of the maidens they wished to woo. Marriage was not a religious ceremony, but a civil compact, regulated by law and negotiated by binding contracts.

We have not space, however, to go into the social relations of the Vikings. Enough has been said to show that, whatever may be the value of Mr. du Chaillu's ethnological theory, we have no cause to feel ashamed of the ancestry with which he seeks to endow Englishmen.

HISTORICAL ERRORS.

THAT is admirable advice which Seneca gives us: Not to believe too readily anything we hear; for some persons disguise the truth in order to deceive, and others,

because they have themselves been deceived. It is well to bear it in mind when we come to the study of the historians—who differ from other writers of fiction chiefly in the assurance with which they parade their fictions before us as incontestable facts.

Vopiscus asserted that no historian could be named who had not imposed some invention upon his readers; and, as he was an historian himself, he ought to have known. He made this assertion, it is true, before the art of historical whitewashing had been perfected; that he would not now be inclined to modify his opinion we may, therefore, take for granted.

The science of history is involved in a dubious atmosphere, which obscures not only events and scenes, but persons; so that it is as difficult to get at the real character of an historical worthy as at the exact details of a decisive battle or critical negotiation. Prejudice, partiality, religious and political influences, help to increase the confusion. In fact, one may almost define the study of history as a kind of Diogenes-like search after authenticity; so much is known to be false, and so much more is suspected, that the difficulty is to determine how little can be accepted as genuine. In justification of what may seem to be a too-sweeping censure, we shall proceed to gather together a few of the popular errors which generations of historians have repeated in reference to certain famous personages who, in their time, played a more or less conspicuous part in the world's drama, and, by good deeds, or bad, have contrived to make themselves remembered.

Let us begin with ancient history. The worshipful guild of schoolmasters, or pedagogues, have long been pleased to count among their numbers so distinguished a person as Dionysius the Younger, ex-Tyrant of Syracuse; but they must learn to be content with such lustre as their profession can derive from the fact that Louis Philippe, afterward King of the French, once taught history and geography in a college at Reichenau. For there is no proof that Dionysius, when driven into exile at Corinth, kept school there; and one may hint one's disbelief that, to a man so notorious for his idle and dissolute habits, the Corinthian parents would ever have entrusted their children. Diodorus Siculus says nothing about the school.

We don't want to frighten the reader with our stores of classical knowledge; so,

passing over Theopompus and other contemporary historians, we shall quote only from Plutarch, who states that the banished Prince spent the remainder of his life in great misery, and lived to an advanced age; that through excessive intemperance he lost his eyesight; and that he frequented the barbers' shops, jeering at everybody—obviously an ill-conditioned old man.

It is not to be denied that Cicero speaks of the ex-tyrant as having kept school—*aperuisse ludum*—at Corinth; but he gives it as an "on dit," and a learned German, named Hermann, traces the origin of the report to the coincidence that, about the time spoken of, Greece rejoiced in a grammarian named Dionysius, who did teach young people, as Diogenes Laertius informs us; while Suidas speaks of another grammar-teaching Dionysius as living in Corinth itself. Out of this identity of names sprang the fiction which has so often been used to point a moral and adorn a tale.

A good deal has been written about an interview between Hannibal and Scipio, alleged to have taken place when the latter went on an embassy to Antiochus, King of Syria. It was then that the great Carthaginian remarked that he had placed himself first among military commanders until Scipio defeated him at Zama. But there is no better authority for it than gossiping Livy; and Polybius, who has written an elaborate account of the embassy in question, does not mention Scipio as having had any part in it. In short, this is one of those interviews that never occurred.

Even the courage of Socrates has been disputed as a doubtful quantity; but we will pass on to more modern times, and the first fine old crusted tradition which we shall attack in the Christian era is that of the disgrace, poverty, and blindness of the illustrious Belisarius, the last of the great Romans. Who in his youth has not been moved by the pathetic story of the blind old hero—who had rendered such important services to the empire—wandering about the streets of Rome, and crying to the passers-by, "*Date obolum Belisario*"? But it is not to be found in any contemporary record, and makes its first appearance under the auspices of an obscure Greek grammarian of the twelfth century, named Joannes Tzetzes, author of a poem on the Trojan war, of an epic entitled "*The Chiliades*," and of other dull works, long since consigned to a merciful

oblivion. With this friend of our boyhood—do you remember Marmontel's "*Belisaire*"?—we are compelled, therefore, to part.

Do you know that pretty romance about the Byzantine Emperor, Theophilus, and his marriage? The Russians observed, down to the sixteenth century, a singular institution in the marriage of the Czar. They collected the daughters of their principal nobles, who awaited in the Palace the choice of their Sovereign. Euphresyne, the mother of Theophilus, adopted a similar method, it is said, in the nuptials of her son. "With a golden apple in his hand, he slowly walked between two lines of contending beauties. His eye was detained by the charms of Icasia, and, in the awkwardness of a first declaration, the Prince could only observe that, in this world, woman had been the cause of much evil. 'And surely, sir,' she pertly replied, 'they have likewise been the occasion of much good.' This affectation of unseasonable wit displeased the imperial lover; he turned aside in disgust; Icasia concealed her mortification in a convent; and the modest silence of Theodora was rewarded with the golden apple."

This tale, which, on the face of it, appears sufficiently improbable, has been repeated by Gibbon with less than his usual incredulity. But Lebeau, in his "*Histoire du Bas Empire*," successfully challenges its authenticity.

How often has been attributed to Francis the First, after his defeat at Pavia, the striking phrase: "*All is lost, save honour.*" ("*Tout est perdu, fors l'honneur.*") Only the other day we saw it trotted out again. Unfortunately, the letter to Louise of Angoulême, describing his misfortune, in which the King—it was pretended—had used this laconism, is extant, and the phrase is not there. It begins: "*Pour vous advertir comment se porte le ressort de mon infortune, de toutes choses ne m'est demeuré que l'honneur et la vie, qui est sauve*"—"Nothing remains to me but honour and life, which is safe." Not an unkingly expression, but lacking the force and terseness of the traditional phraseology.

We confess to a feeling of sorrow that historical research should deprive us of all these admirable "things that might have been said." As, for instance, the saying ascribed to Philip of Valois, when, after his night's ride from the lost field of Cressy, he drew bridle before the Castle of

La Broye, and to the demand of the governor who it was that sought admission, answered: "It is the fortune of France!" Whereas, you may read in the authentic editions of Froissart that he replied, more simply, and less picturesquely: "It is the unfortunate King of France." Again, when Louis the Sixteenth laid his head beneath the guillotine, his confessor, the Abbé Edgeworth, dismissed him from this world, so it was said, with the beautiful vaticum: "Fils de Saint Louis, montez au ciel!" ("Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven!") Alas, the phrase was a later invention! The chivalrous defiance attributed to Cambronne, when at Waterloo the Imperial Guard were invited to throw down their arms, "La garde meurt et ne se rend pas!" (The Guard dies, but does not surrender), is now acknowledged to be an impudent fiction. When Louis the Eighteenth was restored to the throne of France, he acquired considerable popularity by his happy answer to an address congratulating him on his return: "There is but one Frenchman the more." The King was incapable of anything so epigrammatic, and the words were put in his mouth by Talleyrand. It was at one time supposed that the French man-of-war, "Le Vengeur," at Lord Howe's famous victory of the "First of June," 1794, refused to strike her flag when overpowered, but went down with her colours nailed to the mast-head, and her crew shouting "Vive la République!" French patriotism naturally made much of so creditable an incident. Unfortunately, as Carlyle has shown, it never occurred. The "Vengeur" had been taken possession of by her captors before she sank.

The saying that "Providence favours les gros bataillons"—not always true—has been fastened upon Napoleon; but Harte, in his life of Gustavus Adolphus, describes it as "a profane and foolish maxim" used by Wallenstein, who, in his theory of war, certainly acted upon it. It may be traced, however, to the writers of antiquity; and Cicero alludes to it as "an old proverb."

It is not true that the president Mathieu Molé (1584-1656), one of the most honest and courageous of French statesmen, ever said, "Il y a loin du poignard d'un assassin à la poitrine d'un honnête homme." (It is far from an assassin's dagger to the breast of an honest man.) He was too wise to have uttered an epigram which all history contradicts. But what he did say was: "Quand vous m'aurez tué, il ne me faudra

que six pieds de terre." (When you have killed me, I shall want only six feet of earth.) These, however, are "familiar words," as for example:

When the Norse sea-king, Harold Hardrada, invaded England, and encountered the English fighting-men on the banks of the Derwent, a brief conference took place before the battle between Tostig, his ally, and King Harold of England, who offered Tostig the hand of peace and all his old honours and estates.

"But if I accept this offer," said Tostig, "what will you give to my true friend and ally, Hardrada of Norway?"

"Seven feet of English ground for a grave," replied our English Harold, "or even a little more, seeing that he is taller than other men."

The remarkable incident in the early life of Henry the Fifth, which connects the young Prince with Chief Justice Gascoigne, is sufficiently well known to every school-boy. In a fray, in London streets, one of the Prince's retainers was captured by the Lord Mayor's guard and carried before the Chief Justice. When the Prince heard of his arrest, he hastened to the judicial chamber, and, with his own hands, endeavoured to undo the fetters. Gascoigne interfered, and the Prince struck him in the face; whereupon the Chief Justice ordered him into custody, reprimanded him for his misdeeds, and committed him to the King's Bench prison. The Prince, awakening to a consciousness of his error, submitted without resistance to the gaolers, and suffered his punishment with a humility which provoked from his father's lips the celebrated exclamation: "Happy the King who possesses a magistrate resolute enough to discharge his duty upon such an offender; and happy the father who has a son so willing to submit himself to the law!"

Some recent writers have discredited this anecdote; but Lord Campbell, in his "Lives of the Chief Justices," brings forward what seems to be unimpeachable evidence in support of it; except that the blow in the face is not mentioned by the earliest authorities. Here is the account given by Sir Thomas Elyot, in his book, "The Governor." "It hapned, that one of his servantes, whom he fauoured well, was, for felony by him committed, arraigned at the kynge's benche; whereof the prince, being advertised and incensed by lyghte persons aboute him, in furious

rage came hastily to the barre where his seruante stood as a prisoner, and commanded him to be vngurd and set at libertie; whereat all men were abashed, reserved [except] the chiefe justice, who humbly exhorted the prince to be contented, that his seruante mought be ordred, accordynge to the aunciente lawes of this realme; or if he wolde haue hym saned from the rigour of the lawes, that he shulde obtayne, if he moughte, of the kyng his father, his gracious pardon, whereby no lawe or justyce shulde be derogata. With which answer the prince not beyng appeased, but rather more inflamed, endeauoured hymselfe to take away his seruante. The judge considering the perilous example and inconuenience that mought therby ensue, with a valyante spirite and courage, commanded the prince upon his alegeance, to leave the prisoner and depart his way. With which commandement the prince, being set all in a fury, all chafed and in a terrible manner, came vp to the place of iugement, men thynkyng that he wolde have slayn the iuge, or have done to hym some damage; but the iuge sittynge styll, without mouing, declaring the maiestie of the kyng's place of iugement, and with an assured and bolde countenance, said to the prince these wordes followyng: 'Syr, remember yourselfe; I kepe here the place of the kyng your soueraine lorde and father, to whom ye owe double obedience: wherefore, good syr and prince, in hys name, I charge you desyste of your wyfulness and vnlawfull enterpryse, and from hensforth give good example to those, whyche hereafter shall be your proper [own] subjects. And nowe, for your contempts and disobedience, go you to the pryson of the kyng's benche, whereunto I commytte you, and remayne ye there prysoner vntyll the pleasure of the kyng your father be further known.' With which wordes, being abashed, and also wonderynge at the maruylous gravitie of that worshypfulle justyce, the noble prince, layynge hys weapon aparte, doying reuerence, departed, and went to the kyng's benche, as he was commanded. Wherat his seruantes, disdaynge, came and shewed to the kyng all the hole affair." The King's exclamation is thus given by Sir Thomas Elyot: "O merciful God, how moche am I, above all other men, bounde to your infinite goodnes, specially for that ye have gyuen me a iuge, who feareth not to minister justyce, and also a sonne, who can suffer umblely and obeye iustice!"

Byron, in his "Childe Harold," says

homage to the memory of "the starry Galileo and his woes." The great astronomer's "three years of captivity" have been celebrated, not only by poets, but also by artists, who have more than once represented him as tracing on the walls of his prison the figure of the terrestrial globe. After having endured much petty persecution, Galileo, soon after the publication of his "Dialogue on the Two Great Systems of the World," was ordered by the Pope to appear before the Roman Inquisition, February the thirteenth, 1633. He resided with Niccolini, the Tuscan Ambassador, until April, when he was committed for a fortnight to the prison of the Inquisition; but was afterwards allowed to return to the Ambassador's. On June the twentieth, however, he was again brought before the tribunal, which ordered him to abjure his teaching, sentenced him to imprisonment for an indefinite period, and required him to recite once a week, for three years, the Seven Penitential Psalms. It is not true that he was confined in a cell or dungeon; but at first in the lodgings of one of the superior officers of the tribunal, and afterwards in the palace of Piccolomini, Archbishop of Sienna, his disciple and friend. Finally, in December of the same year, the Pope sanctioned his retirement into the country near Florence, though prohibiting him from entering his beloved city or receiving visits from his friends. His afflictions ceased only with his life, on the eighth of January, 1642.

Much discussion has been expended on the subject of the alleged torture of Galileo by the Inquisition. As the original records of his trial have never been published, it seems impossible to arrive at an authoritative conclusion. It is certain that the protection of the Grand Duke, and more particularly the friendship of Niccolini, secured for him a less severe treatment than was generally accorded to the Inquisition's victims. Thus, we have seen that his first term of imprisonment was cut short by permission to return to the Ambassador's, and that his final sentence was speedily commuted, and he was allowed to seek an asylum with the Archbishop of Sienna. But, on the other hand, it is stated in this sentence that, much doubt having existed as to Galileo's intention, which his answers did not clear up, his judges had found it necessary to proceed to "the question," and that he had then replied, "Catholically." Now, in the code of the Inquisition, this terrible phrase,

"the question," meant, as we know, the torture—that is, the rack; and official reports are extant in which it is noted that, after being put to "the question," certain accused persons had made "Catholic answers." Remembering, then, the mystery in which the trial of Galileo has always been shrouded, and the power and malignity of his enemies; taking into account, also, what "the question" was understood to signify in the prisons of the Inquisition; I think we may reasonably infer, if we cannot distinctly assert, that the torture was actually inflicted on the illustrious astronomer.

A picture by Gigoux, a French artist of repute, represents Leonardo da Vinci, the great Italian master, as expiring on the bosom of Francis the First. The same subject had been previously treated by Minagast. Both artists took their inspiration from Vasari; but Da Vinci died at Cloux, near Amboise, on the second of May, and on that day the King was taking his ease at Saint Germain. The fact is, Vasari was misled by a phrase in Vinci's epitaph, purporting that so divine a genius merited to die "in sinu regio," which was a poetical way of saying that he died at a royal château.

In the romantic history of the Troubadours we often read of the Floral Games—*Les jeux floraux*—which were celebrated for many years at Toulouse: a kind of tournament of poets, where rival bards sang their fanciful compositions, and were rewarded, according to their merits, with garlands of flowers, and even more costly prizes. The common story runs, that they were founded by Clemence Isauze, a native of Provence, born in or about 1164. Having lost her father when she was five years old, she was educated in strict seclusion; but near her garden lived Raoul, a young Troubadour, who, as she grew up a beautiful and accomplished woman, fell in love with her, and made his passion known in songs. She replied with flowers, as he asked her to do:

*Vous avez inspiré mes vers,
Qu'une fleur soit ma recompense.*

—You have inspired my lays; let a flower be my reward. Raoul, however went to the wars, and was slain in battle; whereupon Clemence instituted—or, rather, revived, for they had been established by the Troubadours, but long forgotten—the Floral Games, to which she devoted her whole fortune.

There is good reason to believe that

this pretty little romance of love and song is entirely fictitious.

So, too, we must give up the story of Eustache de Saint Pierre, who, it was said, offered himself as a sacrifice to the vengeance of Edward the Third, at the siege of Calais, and was saved by the intercession of Queen Philippa—a lovely story, breathing the true spirit of chivalry, but resting, unfortunately, on no sound historical basis. Then there is the legend of William Tell, which no doubt has often kindled a flame of noble emulation in the hearts of patriots; this, too, I fear, must be surrendered, like other of the illusions of our youth. Dr. Ludwig Hausser, in his "*Die Sage vom Tell*," has treated the subject with true German exhaustiveness, and seems to us to prove conclusively that, though a person of the name of Tell existed, the incidents with which he has been connected have been invented, or borrowed from the Icelandic Sagas.

The history of the world, however, is so rich in examples of patriotic devotion, that we can afford to spare a Tell or a Saint Pierre without being much the poorer for the loss.

MOTHER CAREY AND HER CHICKENS.

WHO was the Mother Carey, the appearance of whose "chickens" is supposed by the mariner to foretell a coming storm? The question is often asked, but seldom answered, for nobody seems to know who she was. Perhaps we can throw a little light on the subject.

Charles Kingsley gives a very vivid picture of her. In his charming book about "*The Water-Babies*," he tells how little Tom, in search of his old master, Grimes, is instructed to find his way to Peacepool and Mother Carey's Haven, where the good whales go when they die. On his way he meets a flock of petrels, who invite him to go with them, saying: "We are Mother Carey's own chickens, and she sends us out over all the seas to show the good birds the way home." So he comes to Peacepool at last, which is miles and miles across; and there the air is clear and transparent, and the water calm and lovely; and there the good whales rest in happy sleep upon the slumbering sea.

In the midst of Peacepool was one large

peaked iceberg. "When Tom came near it, it took the form of the grandest old lady he had ever seen—a white marble lady, sitting on a white marble throne. And from the foot of the throne there swam away, out and in, and into the sea, millions of new-born creatures, of more shapes and colours than man ever dreamed. And they were Mother Carey's chickens, whom she makes out of the sea-water all the day long."

Now this beautiful fancy of Kingsley's—and how beautiful it is can only be realised by a complete reading of the story, so as to understand the attributes and functions of Mother Carey—is based upon fact, as all beautiful fancies must be.

The fundamental idea of Kingsley's picture is that of a fruitful and beneficent mother. And Mother Carey is just the Mater Cara of the mediæval sailors. Our Mother Carey's Chickens are the "Birds of the Holy Virgin" of the south of Europe, the "Oiseaux de Notre Dame" of the French seamen.

One reason for associating the petrel with the Holy Mother may possibly have been in its supposed sleeplessness. The bird was believed never to rest; to hatch its eggs under its wings; and to be incessantly flying to and fro on the face of the waters on messages of warning to mariners. Even to this day, sailors believe that the albatross, the aristocratic relation of the petrel, sleeps on the wing; and the power of the albatross, for good and evil, readers of "The Ancient Mariner" will remember. We say for good and evil, because opinion fluctuated. Thus:

At length did cross an albatross,
Through the fog it came,
As if it had been a Christian soul
We hailed it in God's name.

When the Mariner with his crossbow
did shoot the albatross, the crew said:

I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work them woe;
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow."

And once more, when the weather
cleared, they changed:

Then all averred I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist;
"Twas right," said they, "such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist."

Coleridge, we are told, got his idea from a passage in Shelvocke's voyages,

where a long spell of bad weather was attributed to an albatross following the ship.

The poet who sang:

Oh, stormy, stormy petrel!
Thou art a bird of woe,
Yet would I thou could'st tell me half
Of the misery thou dost know,

has, however, misunderstood the feeling with which that little harbinger is regarded. So have many other persons. The petrel is not a bird of woe, but a bird of warning.

The Virgin Mary—Mater Cara—was the special protectress of the early Christian seamen, just as Amphitrite had been the tutelary genius of his Greek, and Venus of his Roman, progenitors, and as Isis, the moon goddess, had been the patroness of the Egyptian navigators. The Catholic mariner still believes that the Virgin has especial power over the winds and the sea.

At Marseilles there is the shrine of Notre Dame de la Garde, greatly venerated by all the Provençal sailors; at Caen is the shrine of Notre Dame de Délivrance; at Havre, that of Notre Dame des Neiges. Brand tells us, in his book of Antiquities, that on Good Friday Catholic mariners "cock-bill" yards in mourning and then scourge an effigy of Judas Iscariot. The practice still continues, and as recently as 1881 a London newspaper contained an account of the ceremony performed on board several Portuguese vessels in the London Docks. The proceedings always closed with the Hymn to the Virgin Mary.

In Rome, at the Church of Santa Maria della Navicella, there is a small marble ship which was offered by Pope Leo the Tenth in execution of a vow after his escape from shipwreck. The first thing done by Magellan and his crew after their safe return to Seville, was to perform penance barefooted, clad in their shirts, and bearing lighted tapers in their hands, at the shrine of Our Lady of Victory. And it is related of Columbus, that on safe arrival after a storm at the Azores: "The Admiral and all the crew, bearing in remembrance the vow which they had made the Thursday before, to go barefooted; and in their shirts, to some church of Our Lady at the first land, were of opinion that they ought to discharge this vow. They accordingly landed, and proceeded, according to their vow, barefooted and in their shirts, toward the hermitage." digitized by Google

We might cite countless instances, but these will suffice to show the estimation in which "Mater Cara" was held by Catholic seamen.

How it came to be supposed that the smaller "Procellariæ" were only visible before a storm, is not very apparent. In point of fact, there is no more reason for associating the petrel specially with storms than there is for the belief expressed in the old Scotch couplet:

Seagull, seagull, sit in the sand,
It's never good weather when you're on the land.

As a matter of fact, seagulls do fly far inland in fine weather, and especially during ploughing-time. And also, as a matter of fact, the petrel lives at sea both in fine weather and foul, because he is uncomfortable on land. It is only the breeding season that he spends on shore; while the seagull is just as much at home on the land as on the sea.

The scientific name of the petrel tribe is "Procellariæ," from the Latin "procella" — a storm. It is a large family, all of which are distinguished by a peculiar tube-like arrangement of the nostrils. Their feet, also, are peculiar in being without any back toe, so that they can only with great difficulty rise on the wing from dry land.

Mother Carey's Chickens are among the smaller species of the family, and they have both a shorter bill and a longer leg than their relatives. But all the "Procellariæ" are noted for ranging further from land than any of the sea-birds. Thus they are often visible from ship-board when no other animal life can be sighted; and thus it was, doubtless, that their appearance suggested safe harbour, and consequent thanks to Mater Cara, to the devout seaman.

Why the petrels are associated with storms is thus not easily explained, seeing that they are abroad in all weathers; but a feasible supposition was advanced by Pennant. It is that they gather from the water sea-animals which are most abundant before or after a storm, when the sea is in a state of unusual commotion. All birds are highly sensitive to atmospheric changes, and all sea-birds seem to show extra activity in threatening and "dirty" weather.

There is another interesting thing about Mother Carey's Chicken, and that is, that he is also called petrel, from the Italian "Petrello," or Little Peter. This is because he is supposed to be able, like the

Apostle, to walk on the water; and as in fact he does, with the aid of his wings.

Now St. Peter, both as a fisherman and for his sea-walking, was always a favourite saint with sailors, and was often invoked during storms. He was the patron saint of Cortez, as he was also of the Thames watermen. There is an old legend that St. Peter went on board a fisherman's boat somewhere about the Nore, and that it carried him, without sails or oars, to the very spot which he selected as the site for Westminster Abbey.

In the Russian ports of the Baltic there is firm belief in a species of water-spirit called Rusalkas, who raise storms and cause much damage to the shipping. The great anniversary of these storm-spirits is St. Peter's Day. The John Dory, by the way, is St. Peter's fish, and it is said that the spots on each side of its mouth, are the marks of the Apostle's thumb and forefinger. It was called "janitore," or doorkeeper, because in its mouth was found the penny with which the Temple tax was paid. Now Peter also was the doorkeeper of heaven, and from janitore to John Dory was an easy transition.

With fishermen, as was natural, St. Peter was held in high honour; and, in Cornwall and Yorkshire, until quite recently, it was customary to light bonfires and to hold other ceremonies on St. Peter's Day, to signalise the opening of the fishing season, and to bespeak luck. An old writer says of these customs at Guisboro', in Yorkshire, that:

"The fishermen, on St. Peter's daye, invited their friends and kinfolk to a festivall kept after their fashion, with a free hearte, and no show of niggardnesse. That day their boats are dressed curiously for the showe, their masts are painted, and certain rytes observed amongst them with sprinkling their bows with good liquor, which custome or superstition, sucked from their ancestors, even continueth down unto this present tyme."

Perhaps at "this present tyme" the ceremonies are not so elaborate; but survivals of the "custome or superstition" are to be found yet in our fishing villages.

It is probable that the observers of St. Peter's Day do not know the origin of their curious customs. It is certain that sailors, as a class, do not now know why their favourite little bird is called petrel. We have tried to remove the stigma which, in modern times, has come to rest upon

Mother Carey's Chicken. Let us no longer do him wrong by supposing that he is always the harbinger of woe. He has a busy and a useful life, and it is one, as we have seen, with tender, even sacred, associations.

In conclusion, we must record as an interesting, although not an agreeable item, that in the days of the French Revolution there was a notorious brood of Mother Carey's Chickens in Paris. They were the female tag-rag-and-bobtail of the city, whose appearance in the streets was understood to forebode a fresh political tumult. What an insult to our feathered friends to bestow their time-honoured name on such human fiends!

The real Mother Carey is she who appeared to Tom and Ella in Peacepool, after they had learned a few things about themselves and the world. They heard her voice calling to them, and they looked, crying:

"Oh, who are you, after all! You are our dear Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by."

"No, you are good Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did; but you are grown quite beautiful now!"

"To you," said the Fairy; "but look again."

"You are Mother Carey," said Tom, in a very low, solemn voice; for he had found out something which made him very happy, and yet frightened him more than all that he had ever seen.

"But you are grown quite young again."

"To you," said the Fairy; "but look again."

"You are the Irishwoman who met me the day I went to Harthover!"

And when they looked again she was neither of them, and yet all of them at once.

"My name is written in my eyes, if you have eyes to see it there."

And they looked into her great, deep, soft eyes, and they changed again and again into every hue, as the light changes in a diamond.

"Now read my name," said she, at last, and her eyes flashed for one moment, clear, white, blazing light; but the children could not read her name, for they were dazzled, and hid their faces in their hands.

They were only Water-Babies, and just beginning to learn the meaning of Love.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "*Count Paolo's Ring*," "*All Hallow's Eve*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER II.

FLOSS took Paul through the park and across some fields, up a narrow green lane, shut in on each side by tall box hedges, until they reached a high wall, with a narrow door, before which Floss paused and looked at Beaumont.

"We will go in this way; it is the back way, but you don't mind, do you? And then old Miss Mordaunt won't see us," she explained, in a loud whisper.

Paul nodded. Floss opened the door, and they passed through it into the garden; surely the prettiest, quaintest garden Paul's eyes had ever rested upon, he thought. For here Nature was allowed to have all her own way, and she had amply repaid the trust reposed in her by bestowing upon the sheltered garden a luxuriance of fruit, and flowers, and vegetables which no other garden in the neighbourhood could boast. At one end was a long strip of lawn, with a broken fountain in the centre, round which the pigeons were flying; and sitting under the shelter of a great apple-tree, and near the wall where the peaches were already ripening, was Doris Cairnes.

She had changed her dress since morning, Beaumont noticed approvingly. Then she wore a dingy drab garment made by the village dressmaker, in some hideous travesty of the prevailing fashion; but that was—though he little guessed it—a sacred garment, purchased with Doris's hard-earned pocket-money, and considered by her much too good to wear on any but special occasions. It had been carefully put away as soon as she returned from church, and the old cotton, which she had made herself, substituted. The unpretending straight skirt and little full bodice did not disguise the grace and beauty of her tall, lithe form quite so much as the fashionable garment of which Doris was so proud; the sleeves were short, and showed her dimpled wrists and pretty sun-browned hands; the skirt was short, too, and displayed more of her ankles and feet than Doris herself quite approved of; Paul noticed the change, approvingly, as he advanced with his small companion across the moss-covered paths.

"Don't make a noise," Floss whispered, gleefully, "she will be so surprised."

Doris did not hear them. She was bending over a portfolio which lay on the grass, and was too much occupied in straightening out the sheets of paper it contained to notice their approach until they were close at hand. Then, as Floss involuntarily gave a stifled giggle, she started, looked up, and sprang so suddenly to her feet, that the sheets of paper were scattered in every direction.

"Oh, Floss, how you startled me," she cried, as Floss sprang forward, and she kissed the little eager face. "There, don't strangle me quite, darling," for the child's little arms were flung so tightly round her neck, and the sweet lips were kissing her so vigorously, that, between hugs and kisses, she was almost breathless; "be merciful."

"Oh, it is such a long time—such a vewy long time—since I saw you, Doris, and I have brought Paul—Mr. Beaumont, you know—to see you, too. He did see you in church, this morning, and he wanted to come, and I brought him," Floss shouted, gleefully.

At this informal introduction Doris coloured and looked up shyly at the tall, bearded man, who was looking down at her with such an amused smile in his sleepy eyes; and being reassured by something she read in his face—and which invariably inspired confidence both in children and dogs—she smiled and held out her hand, which Beaumont took and bowed over with courtly deference.

"I am afraid we startled you; allow me to gather up your sketches," he said.

He picked up the scattered sheets of paper from the grass, and, glancing at one or two as he did it, noticed that they were by no means the crude, unfinished sketches he expected to see; but that they bore signs of unmistakable talent and skill. "Why, is it possible that these are your doing?" he exclaimed. "They are very clever."

"Oh no."

Doris shook her head; but her soft eyes grew brighter, and her face lighted up at his words of praise.

"I can't draw a stroke. These are some of Laurence Ainslie's sketches. He brought them to me this afternoon."

"And who is Laurence Ainslie? Why, years and years ago, I used to know a man of that name," Paul said, and he sat down on a fallen tree, and with a smile and a gesture of his hand invited Doris

to sit down by his side, while he examined the sketches more closely. She did so. Her shyness quite vanished under the influence of Beaumont's quiet, genial manner, and she was soon chatting quite gaily to him.

Laurence Ainslie was the Vicar's nephew, she told him; he was an orphan; both his father and mother had died some years ago, and he lived with the Vicar.

"He is in a bank at—, and he hates it." Doris was encouraged by Paul's interested manner, and the delight—almost new to her—of being able to talk openly to any one of her hopes and interests. "He wants to be an artist. He is always drawing; he scarcely ever has a pencil out of his hand; and, oh, the Vicar does get so angry, when he finds the margins of his Greek and Latin books all covered with sketches, and that Laurence, instead of reading about Helen, and Dido, and—and all the rest of them, has employed his time in drawing their portraits!"

"He has, certainly, wonderful talent," Paul said, musingly. Laurence Ainslie! He knew, now, what the likeness, which had puzzled him that morning in church, meant, and of whom the bright-eyed boy reminded him. Years ago, in the old, happy days of poverty and lightheartedness, he had known a young artist named Laurence Ainslie, and had been a frequent and welcome guest at his home. He remembered, too, his pretty wife, and the child, for whom he used to take bonbons and toys in those old days. They had been friends, and they had been divided by time and circumstances, and had drifted apart, as even the best of friends do drift in these bustling, hurrying days of ours; but Paul Beaumont had a longer memory than most people, and now the remembrance of the kindness he had received from Mr. and Mrs. Ainslie, and the many pleasant hours he had spent at their house in Hornsey, came vividly back to him. It was odd, if this boy should prove to be the son of his old friends, he thought.

He asked a few more questions of Doris, who was quite willing to tell him all she knew of her boy friend, and was soon convinced that it was as he thought, and that the boy had inherited a by no means small share of his father's talent.

"You must introduce me to him, Miss Doris," he said, pleasantly, "and if I can help him in forwarding his wishes, I will do all in my power, for his father's sake. Is he a nice boy?"

"Oh yes, and so clever and handsome," Doris cried, and her face flushed and her great eyes grew so soft, and brilliant, and full of delight, that Paul no longer wondered that Lady Cecil did not care to have her at the Hall. This girl, with her flashing eyes and brilliant colour, would be no ignoble rival, even by the side of my lady's cold, statue-like beauty, he thought.

"And Laurence is a great friend of yours, eh, Miss Doris?" he said, kindly.

"The greatest, indeed the only friend I have. Aunt Joan is rather peculiar," Doris answered, shyly. "She never goes out anywhere, or has any visitors, and she would like me to lead just as secluded a life as she does herself. But she doesn't mind Laurence; he is useful to her, you see," and the sweet lips smiled rather contemptuously; "he often helps me in the garden and does our marketing for us, so she never makes any fuss about him! Oh, I don't know what I should do without Laurence; he is my only friend," the girl cried, with flushing cheeks and brightening eyes.

Paul looked at her kindly.

"Not your only friend. You would not say that if you knew how kindly Sir John was speaking of you this morning, and the interest he takes in you, both for your own and your mother's sake," he said, gravely.

"Sir John? Yes, he is very kind," Doris replied, briefly.

Paul fancied she laid a slight emphasis on the pronoun. He looked at her and smiled.

"And—my lady?" he said.

Doris coloured and cast down her eyes.

"She is very beautiful; the most beautiful woman I ever saw," she answered, gently; "but she belongs to a different world altogether to—my world. I can't understand her, or she me," the girl added, with a little bitterness in her voice, and a proud flush in her cheeks.

"You never go to the Hall, then?" Paul asked. Floss had danced away in pursuit of a butterfly, and they were alone for a moment. Doris hesitated an instant before she answered.

"Very rarely. We are best apart," she said, coldly. "I am too shabby to mix with the people I should meet at the Hall; too gauche and uncivilised, as well. Their ways are not my ways; I went, once—I met Sir John in the park, and he insisted I should return with him—

there was a tennis party, and I shall never forget how the fine ladies stared at me, or how wretched and uncomfortable I felt, until I could creep away and hide myself from their scornful glances! I don't often cry, Mr. Beaumont," and she glanced up at him, and smiled and blushed; "but I cried myself almost blind, that night, with shame and vexation, that I was so poor and shabby, and so unlike other girls! It was silly, was it not? for, after all, that is not my fault!"

Doris stopped suddenly; the long lashes fell and veiled her lovely eyes, a vivid blush sprang up in her cheeks. Was it a look which she met in Paul's eyes that brought it there, that set her heart fluttering with a mingling of delight and confusion? She became suddenly conscious that she was talking too much about herself, and bestowing too much confidence on this stranger, whose only claim to it lay in the fact that he was Floss's friend! What would he think of her? she wondered, and she blushed and shrank back into her shyness, and played nervously with her apron.

Paul did not take any notice of her confusion. He picked up one of the sketches from the grass and looked at it again. It showed decided talent, he thought, and if the boy was really—which he little doubted, for the likeness which he bore to Paul's old friend was too strong to leave much room for doubt—the son of Laurence Ainslie, he had a kind of claim upon him, for the sake of the past and the old friendship.

"He ought to study; his father would have made a great name if he had lived," he said, musingly. "Look here, my child, you must introduce me to your friend, and I will see if I can help him. I have many friends among the artists, both in London and Paris. I dare say one of them would take him into his studio for a year or two, and find out if he really has any great talent, and would be likely to succeed. If not, he had better do as his uncle wishes, and stick to the bank," he added, and then paused, silenced and startled by the strange, beautiful light which had flashed into Doris's eyes. She had clasped her little brown hands on her knee, her face was lighted up, her whole frame was quivering with nervous delight and excitement, as she bent forward and looked at him with a strange, intent gaze.

"Oh, will you really do this?" she cried. "Oh, how can I thank you! It is just

what I have hoped for and prayed for; but never hoped to get! Laurie and I have talked and planned so often, and always the plans have come to nothing, and we have talked in vain; for we are so wretchedly poor, both of us, and we could see no chance of earning any money. But this is just the very thing! In London, or Paris, he would have every advantage for study, would he not? There are schools of art, galleries, everything! Oh, thank you, a hundred times," the child cried, and before Paul knew what she was doing, or had time to prevent her, she had lifted his left hand to her lips and kissed it.

He coloured, and laughed a little awkwardly.

"My dear child, how absurd! And wait a little. Do you know what this would mean to you? Separation, the loss of—as you said just now—your only friend. Consider a little."

He watched her face keenly, as he spoke. It paled a little, and a shadow clouded the shining eyes; for a moment she pressed her lips—they had, naturally, a very sweet expression, but there was a look of strength and purpose about them, in spite of their sweetness, Paul thought—tightly together, as if in mental pain, then she answered, in a grave, quiet voice:

"I have considered, over and over again; but, if it is for his good, I am willing to let him go. Willing? Why, I would not lift a finger to keep him back," she added, with a fine scorn in her voice.

"Remember, he—the Laurence you love now—will never come back to you," Paul went on, rather cruelly. "You will send him out into the world, and the temptations and dangers that will await him there, and he will fight with them; and whether success or failure be his lot, whether he comes out of the struggle a better and nobler man, or maimed, and bruised, and conquered, the struggle will have left its mark upon him, and it is not your Laurence, the boy you love now, that will come back to you. Remembering that, will you still send him?"

"Certainly," she nodded, quaintly. "It is good for him to go, to measure his strength against others, and to try his wings. Beside," and her voice grew more confident, "I am not afraid. You see," and she clasped her hands again and looked up at Paul with a charming smile, "we belong to each other—Laurence and I; I cannot imagine either of us living a life

altogether separate from the other; his triumph would be my triumph; his failure my failure. I have no life, no interests apart from his; he is everything to me, and I to him; and yet I think on the whole," and she smiled, faintly, "I am more necessary to him than he is to me. He is easily discouraged and cast down, and he is not naturally very industrious, and wants some one to spur him on, and talk him out of his despondent moods. I can still do that, even if we are separated. I can still think of him; give him my heart's best wishes and prayers. That is a woman's lot, you know! To stand on the bank and watch those she loves best, and who are dearest to her, sail past her down the stream, into the great ocean of life; and though she may look and long, she cannot follow them, she can only wait!"

Paul felt oddly touched and interested; but he smiled, too. Was this that she pictured, truly a woman's lot, he wondered. It was certainly not the lot of most of the women he knew—of the Lady Cecils of his acquaintance! Perhaps, here and there, in some out-of-the-way, world-forgotten place, there might be some sweet soul who was content with it, some sweet unselfish soul, such as the girl by his side, who was willing to forget her own happiness in that of others, and to watch, and wait, and pray for him; but he would not find many such in his own world, he told himself. Doris regarded him gravely.

"Why do you smile? It is true," she said.

"It may be. You and I live in different worlds, my child," he said, carelessly. "But about this protégé of yours! When will you introduce me to him?—to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?" Doris considered. "It is a busy day; but I dare say I could manage to spare an hour in the evening," she said. "Will that suit you?"

"Yes; any time before seven. We dine at half-past. Shall I meet him here or at the Vicarage?"

"Oh, here, please. The Vicar would be very angry if he knew I had spoken about this to you," Doris said, quickly.

"Very well."

Paul looked at his watch. He would willingly have lingered in the quiet garden. There was a quaint charm about it, and in the girl by his side, that appealed some how to his better self. He felt more amiable, less cynical and bitter, and more

content with life just then. But the dinner at the Hall was served earlier on Sundays, to allow the domestics to attend evening service, and unpunctuality at meals was an unpardonable sin in Sir John's eyes. So, somewhat reluctantly, he glanced at his watch and rose.

"I must go. It is close on five," he said, "and we dine at half-past on Sunday. Good-bye."

He took the little hand and looked down at it critically as it lay on his broad palm. It was one of his theories that character is shown as clearly in the hand as in the face; and the hand that lay in his, small as it was, and sunbrowned, bore to his eyes a resolute, steady look about the long, lithe fingers and cool palm. He could fancy how firmly those fingers would clasp round a feeble hand; how the touch of that cool palm would bring back strength and courage to a fainting heart. Doris saw the glance, followed it, and, wholly misinterpreting its meaning, first coloured and then laughed.

"How brown my hands are! I never knew how brown till now," she said, lightly. "Let it go, please. I feel ashamed now I see it in yours."

"There is no need to be ashamed, my child. What is the matter?"

Doris had started and snatched her hand away, and was casting a half-frightened, half-defiant look towards the further end of the garden. Paul followed the direction of that glance. He saw a tall woman, shabbily dressed in an old grey gown and battered hat. She had a red and black checked shawl crossed over her bosom and tied behind her waist, so as to leave the arms at liberty; in one hand she held a pail, and in another a basket of eggs, and she was closely followed by a flock of clacking hens and chickens and ducks. She turned and looked at Doris and Paul Beaumont as she passed; and the latter thought he had rarely seen a more forbidding face. It was not an ugly face by any means; indeed, it bore traces of what must once have been great beauty, for the features were regular, and the black eyes were still bright and piercing; but the expression was suspicious and cunning, and the whole face so repellent that involuntarily Paul gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, who is that?" he said. "What an unpleasant-looking person!"

Doris made him a quaint little curtsy. There was a world of mockery and disdain in the gesture and in her mobile face as she answered, in an old, dry voice:

"That, Mr. Beaumont, is my aunt, Miss Joan Mordaunt. She does not look very amiable, does she? Not exactly the person you would choose to pass your life with, eh? But, disagreeable as she looks, she is my only relation; or, more truly, perhaps, the only one who has ever acknowledged me, or taken any notice of me."

Paul laughed.

"She does not look very amiable! Will she be angry because I am here, talking to you? Let me go and explain to her."

"It does not matter."

Doris touched his arm, and detained him as he would have left her.

"She will not be angry to-day, because it is Sunday, and I am allowed to waste my time as I like. If it had been Saturday, instead of Sunday, she would not have passed us by so quietly, I can assure you. Here comes Floss. Well, dearest"—she bent and kissed the child—"are you tired of chasing the poor butterflies?"

"I've not tired, but I've hungry," Floss replied, with characteristic candour; "and you never have no nice cakes at your house, I know, so I think we'll go, Paul. Good-bye, Doris; are you glad I bringed Paul to see you?"

"Very glad, oh, very glad!" Doris cried.

She held out her hand eagerly to Paul. He held it silently for a minute, and his eyes were fixed intently on her face. What a sweet face it was, he thought.

"Good-bye," he said, kindly. "We'll come and see you again soon, won't we, Floss?"

"Yes, we'll come again," Floss shouted. "We'll come every day."

Doris laughed; then Paul took off his hat and opened the door that led into the lane, and nodded and smiled. The door closed, and Doris was alone again. Her heart was beating with pure, unselfish pleasure; her head was throbbing, her cheeks were flushed; she caught up her sun-bonnet, and ran hurriedly into the house and changed her dress for church. She would go early; then she would see Laurence and ask him to contrive to slip away from his uncle after church, and then they would go for a walk by the river, and she would tell him the grand news. Oh, how glad he would be, the girl thought.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

JESSE VICARY'S name had not yet been mentioned at Rushbrook since Hoel had been in the house. He seemed hardly worth wasting time over when so many much more delightful topics were always at hand. Hoel's arm was going on as well as possible. He had leave of absence from the editor of "The Current Reader," and he felt he had honestly earned a holiday. The letter from his uncle, which he had forgotten to show Elva, and which he was not particularly anxious to show her, had given him secret pleasure. He saw plainly his uncle was nettled; that he recognised that the marriage he was going to make, if not likely to enrich him much in the actual present, yet certainly placed the future in a golden light. No need of any more "ifs" from his uncle.

The next day, which was Sunday, Hoel amused himself by sitting in an easy-chair by a large fire in the drawing-room, and re-reading his uncle's epistle. Elva was busy with various small duties, and had volunteered to take a class in the place of Miss Grey, who was beginning to think she had worked very long without reward, and that if the Vicar did not soon declare his intentions, he must take the consequences, in the shape of the loss of a teacher, a pair of worked slippers, and one less at the daily morning service, etc., etc.

All this reasoning was, however, im-

prisoned in Miss Grey's heart; nothing was known of it but a sad little note addressed to Mr. Heaton which spoke of a heavy cold and the anxieties of her aunt, who had seen the doctor shake his head during his last visit to herself. This had led Miss Heaton to remark:

"Really, Herbert, what nonsense! Old Miss Grey is so silly. Doctors always shake their heads; they learn that sort of thing when they take their first practice. Miss Jane Grey is as strong as a horse, and she writes to you because she knows you are so tender-hearted. Whatever you do, don't answer the note. I will write to Elva Kestell. She is doing nothing but spoon about with Hoel Fenner. Lovers do annoy me so much, I am quite glad to separate them."

"Wait till you are in that happy state yourself, Clara," said the Vicar, smiling. "However, if Miss Kestell will take the class, I shall be much obliged to her."

And Elva, in the fulness of her new joy, had said "Yes." Joy had a softening influence on her. She wanted to learn to do all the things Hoel approved of, and she had heard him admire Amice's self-devotion to her poor neighbours; so she hoped to imitate her.

"You would hardly know Elva," her mother said to Mr. Kestell. "I never thought she would give up her own will like that. They will be very tiresome lovers." All the same, Mrs. Kestell looked ten years younger, and was a great deal more among the home circle. She even found energy enough to scold Amice for going about as if she were dreaming, and asked Hoel to see if he could not reform her. Hoel was so clever at knowing the peerage, that he won his future mother-in-law's heart; her

only complaint of him was that he could not be found in Debrett.

Hoel was much interested to find himself for the first time in his life one of a family circle. It was a novel situation for him, and he noticed many things which a young man accustomed to a home-life would have overlooked. Even at this moment, whilst he waited for Mr. Kestell to fetch him for a stroll before the carriage came round, he wondered why it was that, during all this week, he had not in the least advanced in intimacy with Amice. He did not know her or understand her better than on the first Sunday he had seen her. He did not like to have his penetration baffled. Never before had he looked at a human face and read nothing on it which he could understand. Good and devoted she was certainly, but what was her motive? Was she in love with Herbert Heaton? A hopeless attachment? No. If there were any understanding between them, Elva would have told him about it.

What could make a girl with wealth, position, and everything that heart could desire, dress somewhat dowdily, visit the poor, and altogether act like no other young lady of his acquaintance? Elva seemed to take her sister's conduct as a matter of course. Perhaps it was only his ignorance of family life. Hoel was always careful never to show ignorance on any subject; and, in truth, he had but little to hide. No, he gave up this puzzle, and re-read Uncle Mellish's letter. It ran thus:

"MY DEAR HOEL,—I must thank you for your telegram sent Sunday morning, which informed me of your safety, before I knew, indeed, that there had been any accident, as I do not see an evening paper. Let me congratulate you on having sustained merely a slight injury. I hope the Company will pay your doctor's bill, as in duty bound. And now, my dear Hoel, what shall I say about your next piece of news? It was most unexpected, and I have not yet considered it in all its bearings. Till I have seen the young lady in question, I cannot say whether you are as fortunate as your lover-like sentiments would lead me to expect, lovers' praises being proverbially blind. What you say of the lady's fortune looks well on paper; but you must not think me unfeeling if I waive my remarks till I have found out all particulars from independent sources. I have heard from an acquaintance that

Kestell of Greystone was considered to be a very wealthy man, as he owns some valuable mining property in the north; but, of course, all this wants confirmation. And, successful as you have been, the small fortune left you by your father will, I fear, not satisfy the requirements of a wife brought up in the lap of luxury. I wish I were able to travel. I could then come and talk matters over with you. As this is out of the question, I hope, my dear Hoel, you will soon be able to come to me, when I shall be glad to satisfy myself that you are not committing an imprudence for want of sound advice. Always your affectionate uncle,

"MELLISH FENNER."

"Good Heavens! I hope I shall never be so calculating," thought Hoel, folding up the letter with an impatient movement. "He wants me to go to him and say, 'Uncle, I can't marry without your help. You have hinted that I am to be your heir. What will you do for me now?' No! if I had to beg for my next meal, nothing could induce me to do this. I should like to know what enjoyment the old man gets out of his hoarded gold? Patronage must be wonderful balm to the shrivelled mind if he can carry his folly as far as this. My choice has displeased my uncle just because it is not imprudent. I verily believe he has been waiting for the time when I should fall in love in some foolish fashion with a penniless beauty, to come down with his advice and his offer of help. Merciful Heavens! what a trap I have escaped! Elsie Warren would have been just the occasion for Uncle Mellish's 'mise en scène.' The old fellow has the dramatic element in his character; wants to come in as the 'Deus ex machina,' in the third Act, and say: 'Bless you, my children, if you are good I will give you jam to put on your bread-and-butter.' Upon my word I do feel glad, and sorry at the same time—sorry the poor old man has missed his great opportunity. Even now I shudder to think I might have had to eat a large slice of humble pie; but no, no, that surely would have been impossible. I, Hoel Fenner, have also my rightful pride. Ah, Uncle Mellish, you can put a child in the corner, but you cannot make him say he is sorry, or good, just when you choose. I have carefully avoided going into that corner, and it is this which upsets all your calculations. I can afford to be generous, being the winner in the race, and I will take Elva down to see him on the first

opportunity. Even my uncle's deep-laid plans and minute strategical movements will melt before her perfectly simple mind. It is no use preparing a campaign when the enemy has no intention of moving out of camp. The worst was that my uncle knew I was aware of his ideas, and delighted in that knowledge. Freedom, in my case, has had no drawbacks in the buying. Elva little knows that she has given me even more than a noble woman, and I do not want her to know it. A woman's mind should be one-fold. It's bad enough to know a scheming man; but a woman! Heaven defend the poor fellow who marries one."

Such a mental soliloquy put Hoel into a perfect state of mind this Sunday morning. He could even have faced a sermon from a Scotch minister going up to "tenthly;" much more than could he bear with equanimity and perfect composure the drive with Mr. Kestell and Elva to the pretty church in the fir-wood, surrounded by so many exquisite views.

Elva returned from her class with every feature beaming with happiness. Hoel met her on the bridge, and, for a moment, they joined hands, leant over, and gazed at the water which every day seemed to show them a new picture of happiness.

"Hoel, I am sure I cannot be meant to teach country children," she said, smiling. "I was thinking of you all the time, and I let them make mistakes, I believe, because I caught Amice looking at me with much surprise. I wonder how it was Amice grew up so good. She was born good, I believe. When we were girls together, she never disobeyed the governess or did other evil things for which I was often punished."

"I wonder she has not taken the veil, or its English equivalent."

"Amice wants to work in the poor parts of London—that is her ambition; but do not mention it. She is so shy. By the way, I met George Guthrie, and he is coming in to dinner this evening. He means to tease me about—being engaged. He is so glad that he foresaw it; but I tell him it is not true, because I don't believe I should have cared for you really, Hoel, if it had not been for that accident."

"You wanted a hero, and you won't believe that I am no such thing."

"You are more of a hero because you don't know it," said Elva, falling into the error of a young and generous mind.

"Well, I shall be a hero to the best and

sweetest wife in the land; that is all I care about, and more than I deserve. Look at that ripple, Elva, it parts our reflection, and makes you appear far off, instead of near to me."

"I hope when you are as old as papa you will love me as much as he does his wife. It is so pathetic to see love between old people. Do you know, Hoel, that all his life, since he married, I believe his first thought has been for her. I sometimes wish I could have seen that courtship."

Hoel could not sympathise much with Mr. Kestell's admiration for the invalid fine lady whose words showed no great elevation of thought.

"The constancy of man," he smiled in answer.

"Yes, that first made me understand that there was something divine in love. Now I see the carriage coming round. You must not mind Mr. Heaton being a little dull. You know, Hoel, we cannot get your grand London preachers here."

As we have said, Hoel was in a state to be pleased with everything. He even spoke cordially to Miss Heaton before the service, when she offered congratulations in a tone which meant: "I am sorry for you."

"I am very glad Elva will have some one to guide her taste," she said, not being able to hope much from Hoel's religious influence; "but I am afraid, Elva, that your father, who does not look at all well, may miss you sadly."

Mr. Kestell had gone into church, and Elva felt a pang when she remembered that she had not asked him about himself this morning. Miss Heaton always said something to make one feel uncomfortable. She had a talent for this.

"We shall have to follow the fashion, I fear," answered Hoel, gravely. "It is public opinion that settles personal taste, and really it saves a good deal of trouble."

"I believe there is a very bad tone now in the artistic and literary circles in London," said Miss Heaton, in a sad and much shocked voice.

"Yes, I fear there is. They admire all ugly shades of yellow, a colour to which I have a great dislike."

"I meant morally, Mr. Fenner. The laxity of religious opinion in town is very sad. One cannot feel too thankful that Herbert refused a London living, though, of course, we should have tried, even there, to impress a higher ideal on those about us."

"I am sure you would have succeeded," said Hoel, gravely. "A little leaven, you know, Miss Heaton, has powerful effects."

"Hoel, it is time to go in," said Elva, and Hoel followed his betrothed, feeling thankful that she, at least, had resisted Miss Heaton's influence.

Mr. Heaton's sermon was not very long, and did not weary his listeners. He reminded his congregation that the year was dying, and before the last hours of it had come, before it was too late, he begged them to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God that which be- longs to Him.

"Restitution of all things, my friends, is a grand conception, the restitution of everything that we have taken from others all our life long. Not to this congregation shall I speak of stolen goods, none of us have had this temptation; but how many of us have stolen from our neighbour things which cannot be returned! A good name, perhaps, a virtue which was theirs, and which our temper has ruined, an original thought, and basely called it ours; or their time, and thought nothing of it; their love, and have carelessly lost it. The thief on the cross does not represent the criminal class alone, my friends; but every one of us who in this world—a world which God made and filled with gifts—have laboured, and only enriched the earth by theft.

"But restitution is promised, and in our ignorance we ask Heaven, 'How is this possible? Take all that I have, and yet it will not suffice to restore to man what I have taken from him; then how shall I restore to God?'

"My friends, my parishioners, my little children, begin the divine work yourselves; begin to-day, the work of restitu- tion. Do not wait till the warfare is accomplished; restore the beauty you have taken; restore the kind word you hid, and if it leaves you poor, what matters? Christ was poor. What is temporal poverty but great riches; what is earthly loss but great gain? You will have love in your hearts, and you will have begun the kingdom of God upon earth, which is the restitution of all things."

There was one person in that little country church whose blue eyes, fixed on Herbert Heaton's face, took his words to her heart. Amice, seated among the school-children, seemed lost to all but the simple words, which, spoken from the man's heart, were therefore so powerful. Slowly

her eyes turned from Herbert's pulpit to her father's pew, where, seated near to Hoel and Elva, the old man bent forward in a listening attitude.

"If he can listen and not show any emotion," thought poor Amice, "I shall know that it is my own foolish mind. Is my idea evil or a warning? Have we somehow failed towards Jesse Vicary, or towards any one, and do we owe restitu- tion? I am willing to make it. I can give up everything I possess."

Amice's gaze was so direct, so pene- trating, that, though Mr. Kestell looked only at the preacher, he became gradually conscious of it. Without moving his head he knew as well as if he could see her, that his younger daughter's blue, strange eyes were fixed on him. All the more reason for not moving a muscle. Every nerve was strained in order to accomplish the task, by no means easy, if any one has tried it, for there is a mesmeric power in all eyes. In some, a very strong power that compels us to obey their commands, or else employ an antagonistic force against it.

Mr. Kestell never moved, and Herbert's short sermon drew to a close. Now it was over; there was a stir everywhere; and each person rose. Mr. Kestell also pushed away his hassock and stood up. Some one must have got between him and Amice, he argued, and, forgetting himself, his eyes gradually turned towards her corner. No, there were those terrible eyes, that mad- dening look. It was enough to—to— His hand trembled, and the Prayer-book he held fell to the ground.

"Another Sunday," thought Mr. Kestell, "either Amice or I will go to the Beacon Church."

"Elva, I shall walk home," said Amice, softly, after service. "Don't wait for me."

And then the girl disappeared into the wood at the back of the church.

A little later the young Vicar, coming out of the vestry, saw Amice Kestell wait- ing for him. He remembered all his sister's warning about the few minutes' conversation, but he felt glad that Amice had chosen a moment when no one was likely to hinder him.

"Ah, you wanted to see me, Miss Amice! I had not forgotten. Shall we walk down the avenue? It is quite quiet there."

He was so much accustomed to seeing Amice's strange blue eyes that, being

simple-hearted, and not very easily impressed, he was not aware of any peculiarity in them; he believed in her goodness, that was all. This he had often proved.

Amice turned towards the avenue without answering, and Herbert Heaton walked beside her, waiting a few moments for her to begin the conversation, till, fancying she wanted encouragement, he said:

"What were you wanting me for, Miss Amice? How can I help you?"

"Just now," she said, "you were preaching about restitution. Do you mean all you said—I mean, how is it possible to begin now, this very minute? Tell me."

"That depends on what kind of restitution you mean. If we have pulled down, we must build up again, brick by brick. It is not easy."

He was thinking of minute thefts of thoughts and words; he left out deeds.

"You know Jesse Vicary? His sister is with us; we have stolen her from him. How shall we restore her? Can you understand? We have from childhood protected her from outside influence; we have accustomed her to being sheltered till now she cannot face difficulties; in fact, we have enslaved her."

"My dear Miss Amice," said the Vicar, startled by this way of reproducing his sermon, "you are a little going beyond my meaning. I think Symee Vicary is a good and faithful servant, and surely she is safer with you than roughing it with her brother. Are you not exaggerating my meaning?"

"No, I think not. We have no right to keep Symee because she is useful to us. Think how much happier she will be in London, in all that poor district, able to see misery around her, and to help to do away with some of it; she will have to pinch, and to save. She will be stinted, perhaps, but then she will be helping her brother, helping to make his life less lonely. He is so good, you knew, and he wants her; but we have persuaded her to stay with us at Rushbrook."

"We cannot mean you, Miss Amice; if you think the life you have just sketched out is so beautiful, then you can hardly have wished to have kept her from it. But if some other members of your family have not thought the same, I can hardly blame them."

He smiled so kindly, that Amice could not help looking up and giving him an answering smile in return.

"You do not understand. I do think that sort of life far happier than ours. We have so much money, it is even impossible to be charitable; we cannot miss what we give. But about Symee? May I persuade her to go? I think I can. But I shall be acting in direct opposition to all the others."

"That is, then, your question? Oh! now I see your meaning. And, really, it seems hardly a question I can decide."

"And yet you said so just now. We have stolen Symee, and you will not say you think it right to restore her."

Herbert Heaton was a good deal perplexed by this curious interpretation of his words. He hardly liked to agree or to disagree without knowing more; there was a difficulty in either decision. Suddenly a bright idea struck him.

"Shall I have a talk with her brother, when next I go up to town, and see what he says?"

"How soon shall you be going?" said the girl, looking up at him earnestly.

"Before Christmas, I believe; I want to choose books for our prizes."

"That is a long time to wait."

"Are you not in danger of exaggerating the importance of your own ideas, Miss Amice?" said Herbert, gently. "Symee Vicary must be very safe and very happy with you, and poor Vicary has to fight the hard battle of life. Are we sure that it is well to make his sister share it? Now, I promise you I will go and see him, and from his answer we shall be able to judge what is right."

Amice breathed a little sigh of relief.

"Thank you, very much," she said, pausing, now they had got to the gate which led out upon the open forest-land, and from whence they could see the chimneys of Rushbrook House, "thank you, you are very good and kind; sometimes the weight of—our responsibility seems very heavy, and I have no one I can speak to about it. I suppose clergymen ought to help us, and yet they seem so far off from rich people."

Herbert Heaton's face looked troubled. Without knowing it, Amice had touched a sore point in his own conscience.

"That is true, and yet I have often tried to see how one could be more of a shepherd to all the sheep. You hardly understand the difficulty, Miss Amice; the rich would be the first to reject our help, they would call it interfering with their freedom, and I know not what else."

"I don't think so, and if there are some like myself, then they must often long for spiritual help. Think of the way we are weighted with gold. That is our curse, I know it is; doesn't the Bible say, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom,' and yet we are treated as if our way to heaven were quite plain and easy, and we required no one to help us."

"But you can very easily ask for the help. You forget that."

At that moment, Miss Heaton's prim, severe figure was seen hurrying down the avenue towards them. What she had long dreaded was before her. Herbert and that strange girl, Amice Kestell, were actually talking alone together. It was dreadful, shocking, and she had, of course, chosen this time, when no one was about and every one had gone home. Happily for Herbert his sister's watchful eyes had discovered that he had not come in, and she had, therefore, gone after him. The supposed culprits waited in silence for her approach—the silence of guilt, thought Miss Heaton. Had she not foreseen what a few minutes' conversation meant?

"Herbert, if you do not come in now, you will be late for luncheon," she said; "and you know you have to go to that class."

Amice seemed hardly to hear the austere lady's words; but she understood she had done wrong, and opening the wicket, passed out in silence.

"Miss Amice," said the Vicar, "I shall be very glad to do as you suggested. Pray do not forget that."

"Thank you," said Amice, as she hurried away.

The Vicar retraced his steps to the Vicarage in silence; but he did hear his sister's remark:

"That girl is extremely deep, Herbert, in spite of her innocent eyes and her shy ways. Mrs. Eagle Bennison told me, only yesterday, she couldn't make her out."

"She is very good," said Herbert, and Miss Heaton thought it best to mourn in silence.

"But I shall watch," she said.

NEW ZEALAND FLOWERS.

It is not true that New Zealand is relatively flowerless. Mrs. C. Hetley thought so; most Aucklanders think the same. They cut down all the native timber. Dieffenbach, who went over in

1843, as naturalist to the New Zealand Company, complains that even then there was not a tree left; "and yet," he sadly exclaims, "they would have been an ornament to the streets and public places."

Of course, too, the flowers died out; they do not like bricks and mortar. And Aucklanders, now that they have got over the early settler's rage for clearing, and have begun to go in for the picturesque, fill their gardens with English shrubs and flowers, and grow up in ignorance of what their own islands have to show in that way.

But Mrs. Hetley went to a lecture, where an enthusiast showed what he had gathered in the way of floral rarities in the mountains round Nelson, and in Arthur's Pass, and the wild Otira Gorge. Auckland was astonished; and several ladies vowed they would study botany; but when, some time after, Mrs. Hetley went to study these plants in the Auckland Museum, she found them all reduced to a dirty brown.

"That's yellow," said the curator; "this purple; and this is white."

"Dear me," replied the lady, "what a pity they weren't painted while they were fresh."

"Why didn't you do it?" suggested one of the museum committee. "It's about time, for some there are fast going the way of the native birds, and the Maori fly, and the Maori himself."

So Mrs. Hetley set to work; and Government helped—the "Public Works" giving her passes on the railways, the "Union Company" passes on the steamers; and Sir R. Sturt ordering copies of the book for libraries and public schools. The result is thirty-six rather beautiful chromos — "a triumph of art," as the newspapers say; the best thing that has been done in that way since Mrs. F. Sinclair published her Sandwich Island flora. New Zealand has plenty of flowers; that is plain enough; for these thirty-six are only an instalment. Mrs. Hetley could not afford any more. She waits to see if the British public will encourage her venture. If it pays, she is quite prepared for any number of break-neck stage-coach drives — very break-neck they are down by the Buller River, where in one place "the road is built outside the cliff, and supported on piles, which are somehow fixed into the rock. There is hardly an inch to spare, and no wall or fence, though the fall is at least two hundred feet." No wonder "your heart is in your mouth most of the

way." But Mrs. Hetley rather enjoyed it, especially being along across a river in a wooden box, at a place where the boulders were quite too bad to admit of the usual bumping drive.

She has plenty of flowers left, too, some of them far showier than any she has given us. The *Clianthus*, for instance, or "parrot's bill," a huge, scarlet pea, like a boiled lobster's claw, was spotted at once by Dr. Solander when he went with Captain Cook. Of the *Veronicas*, again, of which New Zealand has any number, she doesn't give us one; while of the orchids, instead of figuring the beautiful *Pterostylum*—like a green-flowered "lady's slipper;" or the handsome *Thelgmira*, with its blue-and-purple flowers—she gives us the *Errina*, a parasite so insignificant that it looks ashamed of itself; and the *Dendrobium Cunninghami*, which I am sure Mr. Chamberlain would not wear, even if the choice lay between that and no orchid at all. Certainly New Zealand does not shine in its parasite—or, rather, "epiphyte"—orchids.

The name *Dendrobium* calls up a vision of the Nobile of Borneo, or the *Lowii*, with flower-spikes nearly ten feet long, bearing thirty-eight or forty huge blossoms; while the Madagascar *Angoræcum* is almost as lovely, and so is the Mexican *Odontoglossum*. And the best of the kind that New Zealand produces is a plant that looks for all the world like a badly-flowering myrtle. Indeed, looking through Mrs. Hetley's book, I think there is some excuse for those who grumbled, as almost everybody from Diessenbach onwards has, at the flowerlessness of the island. A flower is not half a flower if you have to look twice for it. Here is the *Phebalium nudum*—"most charming little shrub," says Mrs. Hetley; "so aromatic that, by-and-by, we shall make a perfume out of it." Very well. Send your perfume to Paris, and get the stamp of fashion set on it, and then, no doubt, it will be so popular with American ladies that at least one fortune will be made by it. Till then I would say nothing about the *Phebalium*; for, in spite of its promising qualities, it is not a bit "distingué"—looks like a poor cross between a *daphne* and a *privet*. Of the *Loranthus*, too, Mrs. Hetley figures two; one named after Mr. Colenso, son of the Bishop, one of the most enterprising of New Zealand botanists. Both have glossy, dark-green leaves, and small scarlet blossoms, in shape exactly justifying its

name "strap-flower." Mrs. Hetley is loud in its praise: "A most beautiful plant;" and in masses hanging from the beech-trees in such profusion that the ground is covered with the fallen blossoms, it no doubt looks very well. It must look even better on the tall *Metrosideros* (iron-bark), which itself is one of the loveliest of New Zealand flowering trees. But a single spray of the New Zealand *Loranthus* is a poor thing compared with a bunch of honeysuckle, which, by the way, at first sight it much more resembles than it does the mistletoe, its English sister; for our mistletoe has no flowers at all to speak of. Fancy kissing under a tuft of red blossoms; for the "scarlet mistletoe," like most other New Zealand flowers, is in its glory at Christmas time, when it is almost as fine as the yet more glorious mistletoe of King George's Sound, the deep-orange blossoms of which have won it the name of fire-tree.

And so it is with most of the New Zealand trees; except two or three, their flowers—and nearly all except the pines and yews are flowering trees—are not very large or bright; they want to be seen in masses. But that is just how you do see them, if you go to the right place at the right time. Masses of *Pimeleas*, with spikes of white, strongly-scented flowers; and masses of *Knightsias*, many of them a hundred feet high, with dense clusters of handsome, dark-purple blossom. This is the "rewa-rewa," wood mottled red and brown, valued in old days for war-clubs, and now for furniture; it is the New Zealand representative of the *Banksia*. Masses of the *Sophora*, with blossoms like those of the "false acacia" (*Robinia*), so common in our gardens, only rich yellow instead of white. Above all, masses—whole forests—of the *Metrosideros*, of which three kinds have red blossoms, while one has its flowers creamy white. The leaves, too, are little less beautiful than the flowers. Dark-green above, some of them are nut-brown below; while others are lined with a thick, white felt, or tomentum. One kind is called "tomentosa," because this felt is its most conspicuous feature. These trees belong to the myrtle family; and, like some myrtles, the flowers are nearly all stamens, closely packed together, as in the Australian "bottle-brush" plants. Some of the "New Zealand myrtles" are tall trees, from sixty to eighty feet; others are climbers. The white-blossomed one, for instance, grows

largely on the Kauri pine, making the dark forests of the "King country" look as though there had been a heavy fall of snow.

New Zealand, then, has plenty of flowering trees; and when we remember that our woods are flowerless, save when the bird-cherry in late spring lights them up with an unexpected gleam, we had better leave off slandering New Zealand as flowerless. I do not count the elder, or guelder-rose, or dogwood, or crab, or wild pear, or hawthorn, or mountain-ash. They are all lovely in their way; but most of them are mere shrubs, and they seldom grow in masses. The only tree that with us comes up to the New Zealand *Plagianthus Lyallia*, which is also a rosaceous tree, is the wild cherry, which has the advantage—shared by few New Zealand trees, which are mostly evergreens—of being, with its rich scarlet leaves, almost as beautiful in autumn as in spring.

The fact is, India, and the West Indies, and tropical America, have spoiled us in the matter of flowering trees. New Zealand has nothing like "the resplendent *Calcophyllum*, whose long corymbs of yellow flowers, with one calyx-lobe of a splendid scarlet, can be seen blazing amid the green foliage, a quarter of a mile off." But then, the *Calcophyllum* is but "a low, straggling tree;" and Kingsley's complaint, echoing that of Mr. Wallace, is, that in these tropical forests, where the trees are so mixed—rarely half-a-dozen of the same kind together—you do not get, even very rarely, "the breadth of colour which is supplied by a heather moor, a furze croft, a field of yellow charlock, blue bugloss, or red poppy." He suggests "tropic landscape gardening;" but, in New Zealand, Nature has done the work, planting square miles of iron-bark and quintinia, and wreathing the solemn Kauri pines and "red birch" (really a beech) with white-bloomed tea-tree and rata, the "bush lawyer" and "supple-jack" with scarlet berries, and that glorious vetch, the yellow *Sophora* (Kow-bai), and half-a-dozen other flowering creepers.

The New Zealand flowering trees are not so brilliant as the West Indian. The *Lecythids*, also of the myrtle family, make a much finer show, tree for tree, with their large pale-crimson flowers—in each of which "a group of the innumerable streamers has grown together into a hood, like a new-born baby's fist"—than even the finest

of the iron-barks; but, then, you do not get whole forests of them. In Trinidad Kingsley noted "one here and there, grand and strange, a giant whose stem rises, without a fork, for sixty feet or more." Your *Metrosideros tomentosa* is perhaps only sixty feet in all; but, then, you can count it by the thousand, and you need not go far afield. At Wai-wera (hot water), close to Auckland, the river cliffs are clothed with it. No, New Zealand does not shine in the matter of colour. Is it the lack of bees to promote cross-fertilisation? Most of her flowers are white—even her gentian and her flax;* and white and yellow come very early in the history of plant-development.

Some of her plants are lamentable failures: her epacris, for instance, the "New Holland heath," in which Australia is so rich; her fuchsia, of which she has two kinds, and her green-blossomed passion-flowers. These have the excuse, by the way, that they have come to her from South America, and may well be thankful to have got all that distance even in the most washed-out, weather-beaten condition. Her reds are not as intense as those of the "Bois châtaigne," "with flowers as big as a child's two hands;" or of the "Bois immortelle," "one blaze of vermilion against the purple sky;" but there are more of them, and they are less crude; more like those art-tints that everybody has, for the last dozen years, been bound to admire.

The only place I ever heard of where you get quantity and quality, that is, a great breadth of very brilliant colour over a whole forest, is, or was, in Virginia; and of that my tradition is of the vaguest. An old Scotch gardener used to show me one of the books he had kept from better times: a thin folio, with gold-lettered title-page, and hand-painted American flowers, bananas, the great yellow cactus, and, above all, the tulip-tree. "There," he used to say, pointing to the handsome flower, "fancy a brae-side with miles on miles of that." And he actually threw up his berth—he was head-gardener at a Staffordshire Hall—and went to have a look at it before he died.

I spoke of South America. The strangest thing in the New Zealand flora is that it

* I do not mean that sedge, the "*Phormium tenax*," which is called "New Zealand flax" only because of its tough fibre, so invaluable in mat-weaving; but the "*linum*"—sister to our little blue flax, and to the red flax of gardens. It grows chiefly in the Canterbury country, and is quite worth introducing into our gardens.

has almost as many trees from the far side of the Pacific as from neighbouring Australia. There are no fuchsias in the world, save in South America and in New Zealand. On the other hand, in Australia, the pea-tribe—mostly big trees—outnumber all other families; in New Zealand, they are very few, though among them is the *Clianthus* aforesaid—“Sturt’s pea,” they call its Australian sister.

Some botanists talk of “centres of creation.” New Zealand should be one of these, for it has quite an exceptional number of species, and even of genera, found nowhere else. On the other hand, development depends on circumstances, and these, in New Zealand, are certainly more suited to ferns than flowers—damp, damp, damp.

Surgeon-Major Thompson, who married a Maori girl, and I believe “lived happy ever after,” said, thirty years ago, there are more days in New Zealand in which an old man can be in the open air, than there are in any other part of the world. “Perhaps so”—a polite negative among my Cornish friends—but, whether or not, the climate just suits ferns. They abound, of all sizes, from the little silvery fern to the tree-fern, that holds its own in the “bush” against the motley crowd of “big foresters,” including the *Aralias*, whose tropical congeners you may study in the big palm-house at Kew; where, of course, you will see Miss North’s pictures, and will regret that it did not come in her way to paint a *Metrosideros* forest in full bloom. By the way, the *Aralia polaris*—*stilbocarpa* it is called from its black, shiny fruit; would that all botanical names were as sensible—runs the *Metrosideros* very close in the matter of flowers. It covers whole tracts in the extreme south, as well as near Auckland, and has waxy yellow flowers, in umbels as big as one’s head. Yet it is an ivy, or rather the ivy, which never, in our soil or climate, shook off its creeping ways, and belongs to the order *Araliaceæ*, to which these stately New Zealanders and their tropical sisters belong.

This is comprehensible; but sometimes, I confess, the arrangement of “natural orders” fairly beats me. That the ash should be an olive seems not impossible; but that the lilac and jasmine should be classed under the same order!—it is as puzzling as that the “butcher’s broom”—that prickly shrub, which looks like a box determined to be voracious—should be a lily. Yet it is: the reason why its

claim to kinship is admitted being that it is a “monocotyledon,” that is, its seed embryo has only one lobe, instead of two, like a bean; and an “endogen,” growing, that is, by addition inside; the whole arrangement being like that of a telescope when shut up, as you can see for yourself by slicing off the stalk of an onion. Plants which have two lobes to their seed invariably “put on flesh” outside, so that the “heart” is the hardest part; whereas, in “endogens,” the outside is the hardest. In butcher’s broom, by the way, the sharp, prickly “leaves” are not real leaves, but outgrowths of the stalk; the real leaves being mere scales that can only be seen on the young shoots, so soon do they wither and drop off.

But I was talking of New Zealand ferns. They are many; whereas in England, there are a dozen “flower-displaying” (phanerogamous) plants for every fern, or moss, or other “votary of secret marriage” (cryptogam), in New Zealand the proportion is reversed. Here, when you clear a wood, there comes up white clover, or, at any rate, grass. There, if you burn the “bush,” you get a luxuriant underwood; but a second burning gives you nothing but fern, degenerating, on the sour clays which are so good for Kauri pines, so poor for corn and pasture, into club-moss. One fern deserves notice; you will find it at Kew, in the temperate fern-house (No. 3)—a spleenwort, not unlike the *Asplenium marinum*. It was this of which the Maori priest used to wave a frond over the sick man; if it broke, its “mana” was not strong enough to keep off the anger of the gods, and the patient would die, and the mourners would bind round their heads a fillet of the same leaves.

We need not be sorry that tree-ferns abound in New Zealand, for Mr. Wallace, whose experience is as wide as any man’s, says, “Nothing is so perfectly beautiful.” By the way, who ever heard of a fern growing from cuttings? Yet Mr. Payton talks of “sprouted tree-fern stems seven or eight feet high” at Taupo. The fence they form must be even more uncommon-looking than the Scotch fir and spruce hedges of South-West Norfolk.

Along with ferns are always found creepers, of which I left out the most characteristic, the *Freycinetia*—what wearily unmeaning names these botanists use!—which chiefly climbs the Kahikatea pine (a *Dacrydium*). Its flower looks like a magnolia, but it really belongs to the

same family (the Aroidæ) as our "lords and ladies," and our arum lilies; for, creaper though it is, it is one of the screw-pines—pandanus—so named because their leaves are like those of the pine-apple.

On one point everybody is agreed, the varied hues of the leaves, "from the rusty-crown of the pepper-tree to the silver-grey of the *Olearia*," says Mr. John Bradshaw, in "New Zealand of To-day." This makes New Zealand "bush" much more pleasing than the uniformly grey-coloured gum-tree bush of Australia. It is only in the clearings, where the fern, that turns brown in autumn, has got the upper hand, and in the swamps where "nigger-heads" (huge *budrushes*) are almost the only relief to the dirty-yellow tussock-grass, that there is monotony.

How is it, then, that New Zealand came to be described as flowerless, and that in many books we have long laments over the oppressive loneliness of her forests, where the sight is seldom cheered by any contrast to the eternal green, and where no bird or insect breaks the wearying calm? Partly, I think, because the globe-trotter often visits the islands at the flowerless season. From November to February a New Zealand landscape is as different from what it is the rest of the year, as is a whitethorn hedge in early June from the same hedge in August; or as a border of annuals and geraniums in August is from the same in February. Partly, also, because the settlers were English, that is, unused to forests, or even to woods of any size. A Russian, now, from Western Novgorod, living where a squirrel can travel hundreds of miles without once coming to the ground; or North Germans, from among the long pine-woods, remnants of the old Hungarian forest; or even a Scotchman, would not feel the strangeness of the bush as the Englishman (or, still more, the Irishman) does. That accounts for the low-spirited way in which a journey through the New Zealand bush has often been described. A pine forest with the trunks, from the ground to the topmost branches, covered with delicate mosses and ferns, is at once beautiful and magnificent; and it has the great advantage of being cool, though the glass stands at ninety degrees in the open. But, never to see the sun, never to put up a head of game, and to find no establie thing except the cabbage-palm, grows disconcerting, after a time, to one whose experience of woodland is

confined to Kentish coppices or Midland preserves. Such a man admires, at a distance, the sides of Mount Egmont clothed with tataras (black pine, really a kind of yew), the leaves almost black, the bark red; but he does not care to spend day after day alone, in working his way through a tataras forest.

I said New Zealand had several plant genera peculiar to itself. One of these is the *Celmisia*, a "composite" flower, of which some kinds are like asters, with flag-shaped leaves; others, on the glacier edges, are a cross between a daisy and an everlasting. Talking of everlastings, you know the "*Edelweiss*," that the Swiss make such a fuss about? Every glacier party is pretty sure to bring back a bit of it, for, if they do not find any, they buy some from a friend of one of the guides. Well, New Zealand has its *Edelweiss*. Of course it ought, for it has plenty of snow mountains. How grand they look, from Mount Cook to Mount Egmont and Mount Earnshaw, in Mr. Payton's photogravures in "Round about New Zealand." When one looks at those lower ranges, snowy still—I suppose they were done in what with us is summer—round Lake Wakatipu, one feels sure that other Swiss glacier flowers will be found there.

The New Zealand *Edelweiss*, *Gnaphalium grandiceps*, white all over, like the Swiss, differs from it only in having a few brown spots on the disc. It is also called *Helichrysum*; the everlastings of that name, so common in our gardens, come from Australia. Another dear little Alpine—flower like a wood-sorrel, leaves like a heath—is the *Forstera*, almost confined to Mount Egmont. Then there are the *Haartias* and *Pygmeas*, some grey, sedum-like cushions; others hoary, moss-like patches; and the *Gnaphalium eximium*, or "vegetable sheep," a huge velvety cushion set with woolly hairs. This was first found on Mount Arrowsmith, in Middle Island, at a height of some six thousand feet.

The Mountain Lily, too, like our grass of Parnassus—which it somewhat resembles in flower, though its leaf is like that of a coarse, big marah-marigold—grows in boggy places high up in the mountains. The mountain gentian, as I said, is white; and there is nothing answering to the deep-red dwarf-rhododendron of Switzerland. A shrubby ragwort, however, with leathery leaves—several of the New Zealand ragworts grow into respectable shrubs—is one

of the Alpines, and its foliage, bright-green above, rich brown below, is finer than that of any Swiss glacier plant.

USE AND ABUSE OF FAME.

It has been too long the fashion to regard notoriety as something to be desired, like wealth, a fine figure, or a loveable disposition. It matters but little why a man is notorious. He is esteemed by a multitude of foolish folk a great and admirable being if only his name be a commonplace on the popular tongue, or familiar with the paste of the advertising agent's brush. Perhaps, upon the whole, no one gets upon so high a pedestal of fame as the extraordinary criminal. He may be a successful burglar, who has cracked as many cribs as nuts in the course of a long and chequered life. Or he may be a methodical murderer whose manner of murdering is particularly diabolical, and who shows quite singular skill in evading the police, who are so anxious to hang him. It is all one. He is a byword to conjure with. The plebeians of the land revere him as if he were a divinity. They whisper his great name to their children even as our grandsires mentioned in hushed tones the dreadful word "Bonaparte" in our youthful ears, what time we sat upon the grandpaternal knees wrestling with the grandpaternal whiskers. They do not know what effect the word may have upon their auditors. The children may have dispositions which make them prone to emulate the doer of uncommon deeds, whether these be worthy or unworthy of a virtuous man. Or they may be of a timid cast, so that the famous felon comes to them in nightmare, and horrifies their broken slumber with hideous feats done by a bloody knife. It is, as we have said, all one to the majority what gives the man his reputation, and also what ensues from the admission of his claim to be respected.

Perhaps it may be said that, as a rule, fame, even when acquired for honourable deeds, works mischievously upon the character of a man. He did what he did without thought of the consequences. It may have been a speech of exceptional merit in an epoch of peculiar difficulty; or an unconscious feat of heroism; or a book of undoubted originality, a striking picture, etc. If the subject is a woman, perhaps her fame comes to her as the

surprising heirloom of a sweetly pretty face.

Be the cause what it may, the clang of the tongue of the people in eager and delighted eulogy comes to put it to a hard test.

Though, hitherto, a politician of unblemished conscientiousness, the famous speaker may now drive, even against his will, down the stream of mere partisanship. His talents have been declared. He is a weapon worth hiring. The bait is offered him; and from that time forward he is no longer his own master. He has sold his abilities and his reputation for a mess of pottage.

Even the hero may be debased by the clapping of hands which rewards his heroism. He may become a professional hero; a being on view like one of Mr. Barnum's elephants; and thus he belittles his one glorious achievement—done on the spur of the moment, at the instigation of his better nature only—by repeating it for the stupefaction of the mob, whose sixpences and shillings with steady certitude gradually buy back from him the certificate of honour which he has gained.

What, too, of the fame that attends upon the author who, having shut down his inkpot, and cast away his pen in the full assurance that he has given all his talent to the world, awakes one morning to be told by his valet that he is a famous personage? It is probable this gentleman will be wary in the enjoyment of the fame that is offered him. By his profession he has been taught some of the tricks of life and the world. He is not to be snared and ruined by one hot impulse. Such tribute as the world offers him he will receive, to the last grain, with measured calm of manner. No man seems less liable than he to fall a victim to his happiness. Yet fall he does, like the rest. He is content with the full bowl of eulogy which is presented to him. Nevertheless, he is not content that his fame shall rest upon the strong foundation of his single great book. He writes other books—tosses them off as a printer prints his sheets; and looks at the world like one who says: "Am I not a wonderful man?" But the world is not to be trifled with thus. Straightway the famous author begins that disagreeable course of medicine which every man has to undergo who seeks increased fame at the cost of relaxed effort. And so he, also, after awhile, realises that he was better off before he attained the summit of the

hill whence, ever since, he has been descending upon the other side.

Is it so very different in the case of the beautiful woman who absorbs the world's compliments with such greed and relish? No doubt she has a charming decade or so of life. She treads on crushed rose-leaves wherever she goes—for a time. Her nostrils inhale the incense of flattery and admiration. But all too soon for her pleasure, she understands those words of Burke's, that, "love approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined." It would have been better for her never to have been born than to have surrendered herself to her fame as she has. She has become the world's idolatress, even as the world was—no longer is—her idolater. But now that her complexion is somewhat faded, in spite of pigments, and her expression has none of the sweet ingenuousness which, at the outset of her career, was her dearest charm; now that she is five-and-thirty, instead of twenty, she begins to rue that destiny which was erstwhile so intoxicatingly delicious. She has helped the world to pass a few pleasant days, or years, and now she is done with, and cast into the river of Lethe, as one throws a soiled glove into the corner when the ball is a thing of the past.

Among the other drawbacks to fame is the sacrifice of a pleasure which Goethe compares to health, inasmuch as it is only perceived when it is lost: "the pleasure of mixing indiscriminately in the crowd at one's ease, and without fear of being remarked."

Of course a man must be quite undeniably a great person ere he can taste of this drawback. It is not the author of a notable book, or even the exceptional felon, who may prove this flavour of bitter in the cup of his joy. The "fashionable beauty" will know something of it. For she has taught herself a certain gait or carriage which commands notice, and acts as a herald to her other charms. But to her it is not a defect; it is rather one of the privileges of her face.

One must be so famous that one's features are caricatured weekly in "Punch," that one is compelled to act as a sponsor to neckties, and braces, and portmanteaux, and that it is impossible to go even to a village remote from the railway and fail to hear one's name bandied about by tipplers in public-houses, either as a subject of execration or unbounded praise—all this, and more, must be the portion of the man who

cannot hope to go into a crowd without being recognised, and who never knows when to keep his hat on his head rather than appear churlish and oblivious of even the faintest salutations of respect.

Such a terrible position in life is certainly to be deprecated by the person who likes to go to and fro among his fellow-men, forgetful of himself. It is necessary to have the bump of self-esteem developed to an inordinate size—even to the degree of deformity—ere it becomes even tolerable. The person so situated towards the world is for ever acting a part. He has almost, indeed, to sleep in character. He must be prepared, even in his dreams, to bow with the utmost affability at the least approaches of this phantom or that, which catches his eye, and to take off his nightcap to his bedroom candle rather than seem remiss in civilities, though these are of an indefinite character.

To some of us, exile to the Falkland Islands were preferable to the unceasing responsibilities of such fame as this. And even those to whom it seems like the very breath of life must, now and then, find its trials irksome, and have a suspicion that they are playing the fool to a large audience; neither a dignified nor a satisfying occupation for long. How is it possible, indeed, for a man of well-balanced mind to continue indefinitely to venerate a thing like fame—"formed like Venus, out of no more solid matter than the foam of the people, found by experience to have poisoned more than ever she cured"? 'Tis like surfeiting upon syllabub, which, though sweet and palatable enough in the beginning, by-and-by brings inflation and other disagreeables in its train.

The words of Francis Osborn, the Puritan, in his "Advice to a Son," declare to us a new defect in this armour of fame, which we are, generally, so eager to put on. "Be not," he says, "'liquorish' after fame, found by experience to carry a trumpet, that doth for the most part congregate more enemies than friends."

Very little reflection enables us to see that a man must be sure he has good lungs ere he can hope to continue sounding this trumpet to his credit. In other words, he must be a very Titan in worth or abilities, and also in constitution, if he wishes to maintain himself in the state of superiority to his fellow-men which his notoriety claims for him. Woe to him if he acquire laudable fame on an inadequate basis. Either he will be condemned all his days to make

agonising efforts to keep the reputation he conceives he has gained, and ever at heart be gnawed by the consciousness of his hypocrisy, or, he will soon fall with a resounding crash from the pinnacle to which chance or the concentrated straining of a lifetime may have lifted him.

What is thought of the schoolboy who snatches and appropriates for his exclusive use the toothsome plum-cake which has been sent to the school to be divided between five or six of his mates? Do his playfellows look up to him as a fine fellow, for whom it is both a pleasure and an honour to fag, and for whom they would do all things—even the exercises, for their own personal share of which they have so profound a distaste? It is most improbable. Only if he be a stupendous bully, with the frame of a giant, and the muscles of a coalheaver, or a boy whose other qualities command irresistible reverence even from their irreverent minds—only then will they tolerate so gross a breach of the proprieties, and such an insult to their stomachs.

Well, the common bidder for fame is in a case not so very dissimilar. He has a multitude of rivals, some better, and some worse equipped than himself. If they succeed, he does not feel very charitably towards them. If he succeeds, he must expect that they will have the same feelings for him. This one will charge him with presumption; some one else will call him a charlatan; a third will ridicule his personal peculiarities; and a fourth will loudly prophesy his speedy downfall.

It is with him as it was with poor Charles Lamb when he went to Drury Lane, hoping to hear the theatrical world crown his little play with the laurels of honour. The play was a failure; and Lamb went groaning homewards.

"Mercy on us," he afterwards wrote of this ghastly experience, "that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas; and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them."

Was Charles Lamb quite sincere in giving such emphasis to the aim of his

labours? Did he really toil at his little play solely that he might gain the sweet self-assurance of being a benefactor to the race, in being one of its entertainers?

The question is asked, not in depreciation of our precious Elia, but to put the man who aspires for fame and who achieves fame on the same footing with him. If the writer of a play has to endure so much vilification and abuse, shall not the famous one, who stands all of a sudden a head and shoulders above his coevals, come in for the like treatment? It is good discipline, if he be strong; even as, if Elia had had genuine dramatic talent, he would have profited by the jeers of the mob at the crudities or improbabilities of his play. But if he be famous on false pretences, he had better put wool in his ears and abase himself with all speed.

It is in the pursuit of fame as with one's actions in all the various arenas to which we are led by the vicissitudes of life. If the motive which makes us seek the engagement be magnanimous, we shall never be humiliated, whether the consequences soothe or vex our self-love. The words recorded by Aulus Gellius as spoken by the philosopher Musonius, are apt here: "If you have accomplished any honourable purpose, though with labour, the labour passes, the advantage remains; but if, for pleasure's sake, you have done a base action, the pleasure flies, and the baseness remains."

Indeed, the test as to the worth of a man's fame may readily be applied to himself on these principles by the famous individual. If his notoriety disquiets him, otherwise than because he is by nature of a modest disposition, it is a notoriety built upon discreditable premises. With him the profit passes, the labour alone remains. His very fame is a curse to him, inasmuch as it is the record, in letters of brass, of the infamy by which he has come at it. In the contrary case, he may be as serenely happy as his circumstances and temperament will allow him to be.

It is generally both a thankless and unprofitable task to be didactical; to work towards the moral in this or that thrilling romance, or in an essay or a poem founded upon human action. But the moral will, if it can, obtrude itself. Perhaps it is in the nature of things that this should be so. Were we a society of a thousand million beings to whom the mere word "imperfection" was a meaningless phrase, it would no doubt be different. Then we

should, instinctively, it is to be supposed, look only for artistic excellence. It is, however, more probable, in reality, that we should lead very dull lives, unenlivened by any such efforts of genius as the intellectual masters among us nowadays make for their profit and ours. A never-ending anthem of self-praise would surely pall upon our ears sooner or later; and it is difficult to affirm what else could be the outcome of our artistic faculties, did we all exist in a state of complete perfection, both mental and physical.

The moral, then, will assert itself; if not boldly, then in a shy, gentle way that is hardly less effective than the advertisements of audacity.

Fame is only acceptable if the cause of it be honourable; and then only if we are able to bear its tests and responsibilities. The "sage Academicians," who "sat in solemn consultation on a cabbage," were famous fellows so long as they kept to themselves; but their discussions about the vegetable world were nothing to outsiders.

If it be an infirmity to desire to be famous, it is at least an infirmity of a kind that befits us in our infirm state of imperfection. The noble mind that has passed so far out of the sphere of common human influence to be able to regard even fame as a bubble not worth the pricking, must have some divine qualifications to compensate it for the loss of the most excellent stimulant to good works that abides among us as an auxiliary against evil; else it is in a sorry case. Of course, however, it is injudicious to make straight for Fame for Fame's sake. She, like all her sex, is coy, and somewhat uncertain in the distribution of her favours; and, to most of us,

She comes unlook'd for, if she comes at all.

SERPENT MYTHS.

It is somewhat remarkable that, despite the faithful and regular reappearance of that old familiar friend, the sea-serpent, nobody has yet theorised him into the survival of a myth. To the genuine myth-hunter the familiarity of the object is certainly no bar; nor, indeed, are the shafts of ridicule occasionally levelled at it. He finds in the most everyday custom, in the most common colloquial phrase, traces, clear as daylight if read aright, of his favourite myth. And one is bound to confess that, when put to it, he can give a very plau-

sible explanation of his discovery. Why, then, leave the sea-serpent unutilised? There is, probably, no myth—unless that more immediately connected with the productiveness of Nature be excepted—more universal and far-reaching than that of the Serpent. To the enthusiast it is eloquent in country dance, in Tor, in hill and valley—nay, in the very emblems of Christian Art. Of each and every of these he affirms with rapture that "the trail of the serpent is over them all."

When the amorous Anthony referred to the

Queen, with swarthy locks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold,

as his "serpent of old Nile," he paid her the delicate compliment of ranking her amongst the divinities; in the charming lullaby song in "Midsummer Night's Dream"—

Ye spotted snakes with double tongue
. . . Come not near our fairy Queen,

it may be urged that there is a reference—dim, though unmistakable—to the earlier traditions of Eden and the Serpent, whose subtle tongue wrought such woe on the mother of all living. But, in all sober seriousness, it is well-nigh impossible to name any nation in whose mythology the serpent does not play a prominent and mysterious part. In Egypt are found sculptures in which the juxtaposition and attitudes of the serpent, the man, woman, and tree are, to all intents and purposes, a pictured illustration of the Account of the Fall; in Central Africa has been discovered an idol on whose head is carved a snake; the Medusa's Head, at Tegea, was horrid with twining serpents; in the Peloponnesus—by derivation "the Island of the Serpent god"—have been found three sculptures, each representing a tree and a serpent; Romans, Parthians, Vandals had each a dragon as a military ensign; "Arthur, the blameless King," wore on his helm the "Dragon of the great Pendragonship."

In China and Japan the dragon is the imperial symbol; in Mexico human sacrifices were offered before a huge dragon, and the knife with which the officiating priest tore out the palpitating heart was ornamented with a carved serpent; the thousand-headed serpent supporting the universe is a frequent feature in the temples of Upper India.

That there is an esoteric teaching underlying the many fables in which the serpent plays a part, goes without saying. The

orthodox believer will find strong confirmation therein of the truths of Revelation; the neo-Pantheist will, doubtless, deduce from the same source proof positive of his own rendering of the dictum, that

In all ages
Every human heart is human.

And, undoubtedly, this aspect of the subject has its charm, if only that its consideration brings us into touch with so much deep research, recondite learning, daring and invincible imagination. The study—even the most cursory and superficial—is bewildering in its ramifications. We shall find, cited as witnesses, the Rock Temples of India; the inscriptions in the Sinaitic Valley; the most ancient and mysterious of the sculptures of ancient Egypt, of Babylon, of Mexico; the mythologies of ancient Rome, of Greece, of Persia, India, and Arabia will be summoned to supply their quota of evidence. The Round Towers of Ireland; strange historic villages of sunny Brittany; our own colossal monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury, have each their tale to tell.

The sinuous threadings of the country dance perpetuate, some will tell us, the movements of the "Gliding King," of Druidic ophic rites; the very ring, given and received in Christian marriage, is—unless we hold to the other great school of mythical interpretation before-mentioned—but the old symbol of a coiled serpent, emblematic alike of Deity and eternity. The garlands, twined from head to foot round the village Maypole—once a sight as common as it was pleasing throughout the length and breadth of the land—bear no very strained relationship to the twined serpents round the Caduceus of Apollo. An obelisk, whether native or imported, conveys, by its name and shape, the assurance that the original was erected in honour alike of the serpent-god, El-ob, as of the sun, whose rays it typifies.

When, in popular language, a witch was described as a hag, it was equivalent to styling her a serpent, one of whose attributes was, of course, devilish cunning and power. The same word, by the way, is preserved in two localities in which Druidic—or ophic—monuments still stand. In Wiltshire, archaeologists tell us, the head of the serpent, whose folds are represented by the circles of monoliths, was on Hackpen Hills; in other words, on the hills of the head (pen) of the serpent (hak).

At Carnhac, in Brittany, is another similar temple. Here again the name,

Carnhac, the hill of the serpent, suggests the original object of the building; while, strangely enough, in another part of the country there is a village called Balz—scarcely concealing the original Bel—in which is a small altar, believed to have been erected to the Assyrian Bel, whose emblem was a snake or dragon. Indeed, Avebury, in our own country, where the Druidic remains before referred to, was, according to reliable authorities, formerly written "Aubury," in which form it presents traces both of serpent and sun-worship, "aub" being the same as the Hebrew "Ob," serpent, and "ur," meaning fire.

The frequent participation of the serpent in the classical myths is well known; and the resemblance such participation bears to the Scriptural account of the Tempter's share in the Fall, is sufficiently striking to warrant the belief that these myths owed their origin to corrupted traditions of the sacred story. On two occasions Jupiter assumed the form of a dragon, whereby to seduce the object of his amorous attentions from the path of virtue. The gardens of the Hesperides were guarded by a similar monster, showing the connection of ideas of the Serpent and the Garden, though, by a not unusual metonymy, the particular function of the former is changed. In the Scandinavian Eddas we read that round the root of the world-ash, Yggdrasil, is coiled the monstrous serpent, Nithbögg, ever gnawing at its life, on which all existence depends.

Countless are the stories in which heroes—saviours of men—slay serpents, and almost invariably is the immediate object the rescue of a woman held in thralldom. Of such were Perseus, Hercules, Saint George, and the Persian hero, Feridun. With regard to this last, it is curious to remark that he was contemporary within a few years with the son of the mighty Tahmura, whom many authorities hold to be Nimrod. In other cases it is a god that kills the dragon or serpent, as is told of Apollo, Horus, Krishna, Thor. But, as the conception of the wisdom of the serpent became emphasized, this attribute was bestowed upon the slayer, who in time came to be worshipped under the symbol of a serpent. So prevalent, indeed, had ophic worship become, that it is matter of comparatively recent history that, amongst the Gnostic heretics in the early days of Christianity, were some who professed to combine the two religions, and

who, when celebrating the Eucharist, allowed a serpent, kept for the purpose, to glide around the sacred Elements, thereby, it was affirmed, perfectly consecrating them.

The Persian deities—Ormuzd, the good, and Ahriman, the bad influence—were represented by serpents contending for the Universe typified by an egg; the Egyptian god, Cneph, was also represented by a serpent, with the same world-egg in his mouth; Thoth, the prototype of Æsculapius, had the same symbol; Cadmus, the fabled teacher of letters and slayer of a dragon, was also worshipped under the form of a serpent.

In Arabia, the same word that signifies serpent signifies also adoration. The Celtic word "draig" means supreme power, as well as dragon. The old Irish name for August was, practically, the same as the Egyptian, being, in the one case, "Taith," and, in the other, "Thoth;" both names of beneficent deities.

To this very day the rites of Obi, practised by the Negro races, baffle explanation; yet name and practice alike proclaim that its hierophants profess to be actuated by the same spirit power, "Ob," as Saul sought when he commanded that "one with a familiar spirit" should be sought out for him. How far either or both, how far, indeed, most of the exoteric procedure, with its apparent supernatural sanctions, of not only the ophic, but of most other rites of the early world, owed their existence to the comparatively familiar aids of mesmerism and ventriloquism, scholiasts must settle. The former of these, with its kindred mystical forces, called odic, or psychic, is still inexplicable; and Hamlet's oft-quoted observation to Horatio, expresses about as much as we "in the foremost files of time," know about it. The existing relics and evidences of serpent worship speak to us eloquently of the time when "the large utterance of the early gods was vocal on the fresh earth," and tell of a faith which, like other dead creeds and forgotten worship, was, perhaps, for its votaries to be counted amongst the

Strivings, yearnings, longings,
For the good they comprehend not.

DEATHS BY MISADVENTURE.

"PALE Death with equal foot strikes wide the door of royal halls and hovels of the poor." Thus literally does one of the

noble army of translators render into English the well-known lines of the great Roman lyricist. Well, they state a fact which no one can dispute, not even a Positivist: that the grim Shadow is no respecter of persons, the history of the world would have impressed upon our consciousness, if our personal experience had not only too certainly confirmed it. In spite of their "Elixir Vitæ," the mediæval Rosicrucians could not escape the universal doom; and the mystics or fanatics who, even in our own time, have supposed themselves privileged beyond their fellows, have, sooner or later, been disagreeably awakened from their delusion. It is no less a fact, however, that death does not appear to all of us under the same aspect. Sometimes he is the King of Terrors; sometimes an angel with healing on his wings. Sometimes he brandishes an envenomed dart, and lays a heavy grasp on his shuddering victim; sometimes, and happily more often, he realises the beautiful ideal of the poet, and as "the mildest herald by our fate allotted," leads us homeward with "a gentle hand." If we consider all the hazards, all the imminent accidents by flood and field to which we are exposed from infancy onward, we shall wonder, perhaps, that, to so large a proportion of mortals, he appears in the latter guise. But this is not our business here, nor is the theme one on which even the most original and powerful intellect could possibly strike out any new truth or fresh illustration. Let us frankly confess that humanity has exhausted it, as would needs be the case with a subject in which humanity had so profound a concern.

The writer's attention was recently caught by a paragraph in a newspaper, headed "Singular Death." It told, in a few brief lines, the miserable end of a poor fellow who had fallen into a vat of boiling oil. This set him a-thinking over the strange circumstances under which the "dread summons," as Calvinistic theologians phrase it, has often been addressed to his fellow-men; and with the assistance of biographers and historians he has here brought together a number of examples which, it is probable, will interest the reader. We are not prepared to say that the alleged causes were always the real causes. In this respect the responsibility rests with our authorities; and it is as well to note the curious tendency of biographers to surround the death of their heroes with a certain amount of pomp and circum-

stance. As they cannot dismiss them in a chariot of fire, like Enoch, they love to send them out of the world in the midst of a terrible storm, like Oliver Cromwell, or with a broken heart, like Amaury, the famous heretic of the twelfth century. They represent them as expiring of joy or grief, of devotion or melancholy—anything rather than admit that they died of pneumonia or pleurisy, or, like Count Cavour, of the doctor. Therefore, the following instances must be taken, as we take a good deal besides in historical and biographical literature, "on trust." But there is little doubt, we suppose, that Sir John Cheke, the famous scholar, "who taught Cambridge and Prince Edward Greek," died of remorse at having been base enough, under compulsion, to abjure his religious belief. It is less certain that Lami, the Benedictine monk, gave up the ghost because a young man he had rescued from heresy unfortunately relapsed. As Lami was seventy-five years old at his decease, old age would seem a sufficiently adequate cause.

Viglius, a German juriconsult, mentioned in the "Biographie Universelle," died at the age of seventy, through the ingratitude of the Prince whom he had loyally served.

There was an Arabian grammarian of the eighth century, named Sibouyah, who took so much to heart the decision against him of the great Khalif, Haroun-al-Raschid, on a nice point raised in controversy with another grammarian, that he also took to his bed, and refused to be comforted.

A like susceptibility is ascribed to the Spanish theologian, Gregorio de Valentin, when Pope Clement the Eighth accused him of having falsified a passage in St. Augustine. But as he had burned the midnight oil for many years, excessive study may be held to have hastened his departure.

One can more readily credit the statement that the historian Avigny died of vexation at the changes which Lallemont had made in his works. It is, no doubt, a sore trial to a writer to see his well-loved conceptions mutilated or transformed by editorial irresponsibility. Usually, however, this sort of thing is practised on the dead, not the living, author; for, as dead men tell no tales, so dead authors cannot turn on the ruthless barbarians who have cut them to pieces.

Elphinstone, the Chancellor of Scotland, fell "sick unto death" on hearing the dis-

astrous tale of Flodden Field. Nor is he the only patriot whom the misfortunes of his country have hurried into a premature grave.

Falkland, in his deep despondency, sought the boon of death at Newbury Field. Before the battle he told one of his friends that "he was weary of the times, and foresaw much misery arising to his country, and did believe he should be out of it one night."

Everybody knows that exquisite passage in Clarendon, which tells of his chivalrous friend's intense longing for peace. "Sitting among his friends, often, after a deep silence and frequent sighs, he would, with a shrill and sad accent, ingeminate the word 'Peace, peace,' and would passionately profess that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart." To a man in this kind of mood a musket shot was welcome enough; but one could wish he had been of tougher temper.

It is sometimes said that Pitt was killed by Ansterlitz. Lord Macanlay thought that "an abiding cause of his death—certainly one that tended to shorten his existence—was the result of the proceedings against his old friend and colleague, Lord Melville." The same authority vouches for the injurious effect which the news of Austria's disaster exercised upon the failing health of the great statesman; and it is probably true that, weakened by hereditary disease, he had not sufficient strength to rally under so fatal a blow to his projects. So when we read of the Italian philosopher, Rhodiginus, succumbing to his sorrow over the capture of Francis the First, at Pavia; of Inigo Jones, unable to survive the execution of Charles the First; of the physician Fabricius, prostrated by the wars of Denmark (in 1807), and know that the first was seventy-five, and the second eighty-nine, and the third upwards of seventy, we may admit that patriotic sympathy was the immediate cause, while holding that the infirmities of old age must also be taken into account.

We can find no sufficient evidence to justify the statement, made by a French writer, that Ireland, the Shakespearian forger, died in an excess of penitential susceptibility. A good many Shakespearian commentators might profitably have imitated his example—if such an example had been given; but the critics of Shakespeare

seem, as a rule, to be like unto the sinners described in—we believe—one of Watts's hymns, whose foreheads are "lined with brass," and their "hearts made of steel." Who ever heard of any one of them—not even J. P. Collier—repenting of the wrongs they had done to the great master?

Duprat, Bishop of Clermont, died—at the age of seventy-two—because the canons of his chapter would fain compel him to cut off his beard; Corelli, the musician, because Scarlatti told him he was not playing in the right key. This is the story as related by Herr Paul David, in Sir George Grove's Dictionary. "Corelli was leading the performance of a composition of Scarlatti's, when, in a passage that was probably not well written for the violin, he made a very conspicuous mistake, while Petrillo, the Neapolitan leader, who was familiar with the passage in question, executed it correctly. Then came a piece in the key of C minor. Corelli, already disconcerted, led it off in C major. 'Ricominciamo!' (Let us begin again!) said Scarlatti, with his usual politeness; and poor Corelli started once more in the major; so that Scarlatti was at last obliged to point out his mistake. Corelli felt this incident as a great humiliation, and left Naples immediately. Returning to Rome, he found that a new violinist, Valentini, had won the admiration of the public, and, considering himself slighted and superseded, took it so much to heart that his health began to fail."

Valerius Maximus asserts that Sophocles, at the age of ninety, having read before the judges a new tragedy, waited with keen impatience the result of their deliberations; and when he was awarded the prize by a single vote, was so overcome with joy that he soon afterwards expired. Our playwrights nowadays are not quite so sensitive; besides, they can always vent their feelings—in letters to the papers.

The story of the woman in white—not Wilkie Collins's—who announces the death of Princes of the House of Brandenburg, is well known; but the following anecdote in connection with it is not, we think, quite so familiar. Frederick the First, one day, was lying asleep on his couch, when his wife, Louisa of Mecklenburg, who had lost her reason, escaped from her keepers, made her way to his apartment, and, though bleeding from a wound she had received in contact with a glass door, threw herself with violence upon him. The King, from whom her malady had

been concealed, was so struck by her appearance—clothed in white garments, and covered with blood—that he supposed her to be the traditional white lady; and the shock brought on a violent fever, of which he died, six weeks afterwards.

Of remarkable deaths, deaths through singular accidents or misadventures, the list is almost endless. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, was slain by a tile hurled at him by a woman's hand, as he entered a captured town in triumph. Anacreon, in the eighty-fifth year of his age, was choked by a grape-stone. Fabricius, it is true, doubts the authenticity of the story; but Coelius Calpagninus alludes to it in his epitaph on the wine-bibbing, love-making poet:

Those lips, then, hallow'd sage, which pour'd along
A music sweet as any cygnet's song,

The grape hath closed for ever

(*acinus sub Tartara misit*) Cambyeses, when he invaded Egypt, entered one of its temples, and, to show his contempt for the god, struck at an image of Apis, and gashed it in the thigh. Some time afterwards, receiving information of the revolt of Smerdis the Magian, he threw himself on his horse, to lead his army at once against the traitor; the sheath of his scimitar dropped off as he mounted, and the naked blade wounded his thigh exactly in the place where he had struck the god of Egypt. The wound mortified, and the King survived but a few days.

Sir Philip Sidney, on his death-bed, wrote a poem, "La Cuisse Rompue," in commemoration of the wound of which he was dying. As he rode to the field of Zutphen he lent his cuisses, or thigh-armor, to one of his friends. In the charge he was wounded by a musket-ball in the exposed thigh, and died of the wound a few days afterwards.

To adapt the action to the word is one of the elementary principles of elocution; yet it has its disadvantages. Thogrul the Third, last Sultan of the Seljukian dynasty, was preparing to attack the Sultan of Kharisma, when he began to recite some verses of Ferdusi: "With a single blow from my mace, I opened to my troops a path into the midst of my enemies; and so vehement were the efforts of my arm that, without quitting the saddle-bow, I made the earth revolve like a windmill." Unfortunately for himself, Thogrul, while repeating his strophe, discharged such a stroke with his mace on his horse's legs that the animal fell, and

threw him. While he lay stunned, one of the enemy rushed upon and killed him.

In like manner, Taillefer, a famous Norman warrior, rode in advance of Duke William's line on the field of Hastings—

Singing aloud a lusty strain
Of Oliver and great Charlemain—

three times hurling his heavy lance in the air, and three times deftly catching it—like a juggler with his knives and balls—until he was surrounded by the foremost Englishmen, and, bravely fighting, fell.

One might tell "sad stories of the death of Kings." Of the mysterious arrow from an unseen bow, which struck William Rufus lifeless in a leafy glade of the New Forest; of the cross-bow shaft, aimed by Bertrand de Gurdun, which planted its iron barb in the arm of Richard Cœur de Lion; of the shrieks that rang through Berkeley's roof, "shrieks of an agonising King," when Edward the Second was foully murdered. But these are the commonplaces of popular history.

Less familiar are the circumstances which attended the death of Henry the First, King of Jerusalem, and Charles the Eighth, King of France. The former was washing his hands before dinner, while standing near an open window, on the topmost story of his palace. Some traitor's hand suddenly pushed him forward. He fell through the window and was killed. His attendant, who was holding a napkin ready, jumped out immediately, lest he should incur suspicion as his murderer; he escaped with a broken leg. Charles the Eighth was at the Château d'Amboise, in April, 1498, and, with his Queen, Anne of Brittany, went into an outer gallery, one day, to watch the tennis-players in the castle moat. He stood there a long time, chatting to his confessor and chamberlains, and he had just expressed a hope that he had never been guilty of sins mortal or venial, when he suddenly fell back speechless. A common mattress was hurriedly brought, and the King was laid upon it. Three times he recovered his speech, but only for a very brief interval; and before midnight he was dead.

Leo the Fourth, Emperor of the East, had a great passion for jewellery. The Byzantine histories relate that while he was attending Divine Service in the Chapel of St. Sophia, on September the eighth, 780, his gaze was arrested by the lustre of the precious stones in a crown which the Emperor Maurice had placed above the high altar. He immediately ordered it to

be taken down, placed it on his head, and returned to his palace, feeling every inch an Emperor. But its enormous weight wounded his forehead, and brought up sores, which, rapidly putrefying, caused his death on the same day. A just punishment, say the historians, for his act of sacrilege.

The death of Leo the Fifth, or the Armenian, is thus described by Gibbon. We quote his words, because it is impossible to improve upon them. "On the great festivals a chosen band of priests and chanters was admitted into the palace by a private gate to sing matins in the chapel; and Leo, who regulated with the same strictness the discipline of the choir and of the camp, was seldom absent from their early devotions. In the ecclesiastical habit, but with swords under their robes, the conspirators mingled with the procession, lurked in the angles of the chapel, and expected as the signal of murder, the intonation of the first psalm by the Emperor himself. The imperfect light, and the uniformity of dress, might have favoured his escape while their assault was pointed against a harmless priest; but they soon discovered their mistake, and encompassed on all sides the Royal victim. Without a weapon, and without a friend, he grasped a weighty cross, and stood at bay against the hunters of his life; but as he asked for mercy: 'This is the hour, not of mercy, but of vengeance,' was the inexorable reply. The stroke of a well-aimed sword separated from his body the right arm and the cross, and Leo the Armenian was slain at the foot of the altar."

Then there was the Emperor Nicephorus, who was slain within a fortress which he had erected in his palace as a protection against traitorous attacks. The conspirators were led by his wife to the imperial chamber, where the Emperor slept on a bearskin spread upon the floor. He was awakened by their loud intrusion, and thirty daggers glittered before his eyes. But the history of the Eastern Empire reeks with the blood of Princes; and it would simply horrify the reader if we repeated the details of successive murders. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!" In past times it had much difficulty in keeping its place on the shoulders to which it belonged; and the annals of every country are full of the violent deaths of its Sovereigns. Even in our own day we have seen something of the insecurity that besets the occupant of

a throne in the fate of the Mexican Emperor Maximilian, and Alexander the Second of Russia.

Kings, however, have sometimes died in meaner fashion; "pallida mors" assuming the shape, for instance, of indigestion. Did not a dish of lampreys kill Henry the First? And was not over-eating fatal to George the First? "Pallid death pressing upon him," as Thackeray says, "in his travelling chariot on the Hanover Road. What postilion can outride that pale horseman?" Both Frederick the Third, Emperor of Germany, and his son, Maximilian the First, died through excessive indulgence in melons; Baldwin the Fourth, King of Jerusalem, died of leprosy; Philip the Third of Spain, of the etiquette which left him to be roasted before a flaming brazier, because the official could not be found whose special function it was to remove it; and Stanislas Leczinski, King of Poland, of the terrible burns he received through his dressing-gown accidentally taking fire.

With two or three instances of that most melancholy of all fates—being buried alive, I shall bring to a close my illustrations of a gloomy theme. Zeno, Emperor of the East, was subject to epileptic attacks whenever he sinned against the laws of temperance. On the night of April twenty-ninth, 491, having drunk to excess, he fell into so violent a syncope that his chamberlains supposed him to be dead, and having stripped off his robes, left him lying on the floor. At daybreak, his body was wrapped in a shroud, and, by order of the Empress Ariadne, conveyed, without funeral pageantry, to the imperial mausoleum, where a heavy stone was laid upon his grave. She then posted sentinels outside, with strict injunctions to permit no person to enter, nor were they themselves to enter, under any circumstances whatever. Her orders were obeyed; and though for some hours their ears were rent by the groans and cries of the miserable Zeno, who had recovered from his stupor, the soldiers went not to his deliverance. On the tomb being opened, some days later, it appeared that in his agony the poor wretch, with ravenous teeth, had torn the flesh from his arms.

Paulus Jovius, and some of his contemporaries, assert that, when, shortly after the death of "the subtle Doctor," Joannes Scotus, his tomb was opened, the persons in attendance were surprised to see that the corpse was displaced and

turned round; whence it was supposed that the unhappy scholar had been interred while lying helpless in a trance, or lethargy.

Hamadomi, an Arabian poet of the ninth century, surnamed Badi-Alzeman, or the Wonder of his Age, was seized with apoplexy—in 1007—assumed to be dead, and duly buried. His cries, when he regained consciousness, were overheard, and he was promptly rescued from his death-in-life; but the shock he had undergone proved too much for his weakened vital powers, and he died in grim reality a few days afterwards.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "*Count Paolo's Ring*," "*All Hallow's Eve*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

"PAUL, is this news I hear about you true?"

It was Lady Cecil who spoke, and she asked the question with a shade more of amusement and interest than usual in her languid voice. There had been a dinner-party at the Hall that evening—one of the formal, stately dinner-parties in which Sir John's soul delighted, and which Lady Cecil loathed with all her heart. The guests were, for the most part, country squires and their commonplace dowdy wives, who were content to vegetate eleven months out of the year in their ancestral halls, and spend the remaining month at Brighton or Scarborough; from both of which gay resorts they returned with the comfortable sense of having done their duty to society, and with a more profound appreciation of the comforts and advantages of their homes, and their own superiority to the giddy votaries of pleasure than ever.

For these, and such as these, Lady Cecil had the most profound contempt. The mere sight of their dowdy, ill-made dresses gave her the horrors; and their conversation, which she declared never rose above the misdeeds of their servants and the ailments of their children, bored her beyond endurance. She was not always so careful as perfect good breeding required to conceal this, and the honest country ladies felt that they bored and wearied her, and that she looked down upon them, and were, in consequence, a little afraid, and yet half-contemptuous of her.

This particular dinner-party had been even more wearisome than usual, Lady Cecil thought, as she sat in her low chair during the dreadful hour which intervened between the close of dinner and the gentlemen's return to the drawing-room, and played with her fan, and made a languid attempt at conversation with her guests, who she was perfectly aware were criticising her exquisite toilette, and making mental calculations respecting its cost. Really, these women were too trying, she thought. And she mentally resolved that, no matter what Sir John might say, or how angry he might be, a second dinner-party which he had already proposed to give during the following month, should not take place. There was a limit, even to her endurance, my lady told herself.

The long evening was over at last. One by one the carriages had driven away from the door; Sir John had retired into his study to smoke his pipe, and to meditate gleefully over the successful entertainment; and now my lady was standing on the terrace alone. One beautiful bare arm rested on the balustrade; the moonlight fell on it, and on her dress of shimmering satin and lace, and on her golden head, and gave an almost ethereal beauty to her fair face.

Paul felt his heart beat a little quicker as he came slowly across the terrace and joined her, and she turned and gave him one of those slow smiles of welcome which had been so precious to him once in the old days. Oh, those old days! How far off they seemed to him now. Her greeting startled him a little. He elevated his brows.

"Nay; how can I answer till I know what the news is?" he said, lightly.

"Only this."

There was a little mockery in Lady Cecil's smile as she looked up at him.

"They say that you—you of all people—have turned philanthropist. That you have unearthed a genius in our quiet village, and with an innocent enthusiasm which I did not give you the credit of possessing, have adopted, and are going to train and educate him. Is it true?"

"Partly so. The boy is the son of an old friend of mine, Laurence Ainslie," Paul answered, carelessly. "My friend was an artist; but he died young; and his son—the boy you speak of—has inherited, only in a much greater degree, his father's talents. He is a genius. Oh, you may laugh if you like; but a greater and more

competent judge than I profess to be has pronounced him so. I sent some of his drawings to—the great art critic, you know, and he is delighted with them, and prophesies a great future for the boy, if he has opportunities of study. So, partly for the sake of my old friend, and partly because I have more money than I know what to do with, and, not having, like some men, any inclination to fool it away over theatres and race-horses, I am going to try a new method of getting rid of it, and give the boy a chance."

"It will be only money wasted."

Paul shrugged his shoulders.

"Very possibly."

There was a short silence. Lady Cecil leant against the balustrade; the moonlight fell on her fair face, and showed—only Paul was too preoccupied or too careless to notice it—that it wore a dark, troubled look; that the perfect lips were set closely together, as if in mental pain; that the blue eyes had lost their ordinary cold expression, and were dark and sad. She did not speak for a moment, only leant on the balustrade and played with a broad band of gold set with diamonds and opals, which she wore on her left arm.

"Do you know, Paul," she said at last, "that there are people who attribute your kindness to Laurence Ainslie to another motive than pure philanthropy, or love of art, or even of affection for a dead friend? It was a pity you did not accompany me to Lady Hill's At Home, yesterday afternoon, for I can assure you, you and your affairs formed the principal topic of our conversation."

"Rather, you should feel grateful that I was not there," Paul answered. "I notice that conversation is often apt to languish at these At Homes. You ought to feel thankful that I supplied you with a topic, no matter how unworthy."

His brown face had flushed a little, but he spoke very composedly; and he struck a match and lighted his pipe as he said the words.

"Though I am at a loss to understand what interest I or my affairs could be to any one there," he added.

Lady Cecil laughed softly.

"My dear Paul! In the first place, you are a stranger. No one knows anything about you, except that you are my friend." Her voice softened as she said the last word. "And to the good people here, who know considerably more of their neighbours' affairs than the said neighbours

do themselves, a stranger is a perfect god-send. Then, apart from that, more than one action of yours has given occasion for gossip. Why, do you imagine"—and now the restless fingers paused, and she turned and looked him straight in the face; the softness had vanished from her blue eyes; there was a steely glitter there instead; and her voice, too, sounded cold and hard—"that your frequent visits to the Red House, your long tête-à-tête interviews with Doris Cairnes have passed unnoticed?"

Again Paul started and coloured. It was quite true that during the last fortnight he had spent many pleasant hours in the old garden, sometimes alone with Doris, as often with Laurence Ainalie as well. There was to him a singular charm about the garden and its fair, young mistress, a charm which he could not define, but which strengthened with each visit. He told himself that it was purely a philanthropical interest in the enthusiastic boy-artist and his faithful admirer that took him there; that it was pleasant to one like himself, who was verging on middle age, and had outlived all the stormy emotions and passions of youth, to meet with this boy and girl to whom life was full of delightful possibilities, to whom failure in anything on which they had set their hearts seemed a thing impossible. It made him feel young again to listen to their eager talk, he told himself, half sadly, half-cynically, for it recalled days long past now, when he, too, had been as young, and ardent, and hopeful as they were now! He told himself this, and tried to believe it; but yet he was faintly-conscious that lately it had been somewhat of a disappointment to him if, when he reached the door which led into the garden—where at a certain hour of the evening he was pretty sure of finding Doris sitting with her sewing under the apple-tree—on opening it, he saw not only Doris, but Laurence also under the tree.

There had been a few evenings lately when Laurence failed to appear; he was busy now in making preparations for his departure, and saying good-bye to his friends; and Paul and Doris had spent a few quiet, happy hours together tête-à-tête, hours to which Paul looked back with a strange pleasure, but which he had no idea Lady Cecil had ever heard of! It was something of a shock now to him to find that they had been noticed and commented upon; and he coloured a little angrily as he answered:

"The interviews to which you allude have rarely been tête-à-tête, Lady Cecil; as a rule, young Ainalie has been present at them. But even if it were otherwise, I quite fail to see what cause for gossip they afford. Surely between a man of my age and a child of Doris's, friendship may be permissible. Why," said he laughed, "I was forty-two last June, and she cannot be more than sixteen at most."

"Seventeen, Paul. And a girl is a woman, not a child, at seventeen," Lady Cecil replied, quickly. "Well, reason or none, you have set gossiping tongues wagging about you. You see, the girl's position is a most peculiar one. She is a lady by birth, yet has had the education and training of a village girl. She has never mixed in any society, has had no companion or protector but old Miss Mordaunt, who, if she is not quite mad, is next door to it! I dare say you are the first gentleman Doris has ever known, and you can be very fascinating, Paul—ah, who should know that better than I!"

She laughed, but the laugh was very sad; and again her blue eyes softened as she put her hand on his arm and looked up at him. Paul felt touched by the unwonted display of emotion. He bent and kissed the white hand.

"You always thought too much of me, Cecil," he said, softly, for the first time since her marriage omitting the formal prefix to her name, "far too much."

"Ah no; I sometimes wish I had thought a little more, that I had been bold enough to defy Fate, or patient enough to wait—"

She did not finish the sentence, and she took her hand from his arm, and clasped it over the other again as it lay on the balustrade. Paul puffed moodily at his pipe, and bent his brows impatiently. What was the use of raking up that old, half-forgotten tale, he wondered? Women were so fond of that kind of thing. The love once so passionate, had been dead and buried long ago, and the grass had grown over its grave, and hidden it for ever from sight. What object could be served by opening the grave, and exposing the dead in all its hideous loathsomeness to sight again? His voice was rather hard as he answered:

"It was your own choice; you set wealth above love; you fancied that the riches you coveted would bring you greater happiness than the devotion which I offered to you then; which, if you had accepted it, would have been life-long. You made

your own choice; if the result is not quite so successful as you expected, you have only yourself to blame."

"I know that; but do you think the knowledge makes my burden any easier to bear?" Lady Cecil cried. "Oh, there are moments when I have loathed the riches for which I sold myself, when I would have welcomed poverty if only freedom came with it," she cried, and her blue eyes flashed, and her cheeks flushed, and her beauty, intensified by strong emotion, grew so dazzling that Paul stared at her in mingled admiration and surprise. But her passion, somewhat to his surprise, awoke no corresponding passion in his mind. He was amazed to find how cold and self-possessed he was! How utterly a thing of the past his love for her had grown! He frowned, half turned from her, and looked towards the house. The study windows were open, for the night was sultry; the blinds were undrawn, and in the distance Paul could distinctly see Sir John's burly form lying back in his great chair fast asleep. A profound compassion and kindness for him filled Paul's heart at that moment, which even my lady's beauty was powerless to change into any warmer feeling. His voice was so cold when at last, after a long pause, he answered her, that she started and shivered, and drew a little apart from him.

"Now, indeed, you are talking foolishly," he said. "Why you, of all women, should be the last to gird at fate. It has given you all the good things necessary to a woman's happiness! You have riches, a beautiful house, a husband who idolises you, the dearest little child in the world! What more can you want! There might be some excuse if I grumbled—I, a lonely man, who have no one to care for me, neither wife nor child!"

"You have your freedom, at all events."

"Ah, freedom! We do not count it such an incalculable blessing as you women seem to imagine," Paul said, lightly, "else we should not be so ready to relinquish it at the glance of a pair of bright eyes, or a wave of a white hand."

"You mean to keep yours, Paul?"

"Till I am tired of it. Yes."

"Or till you meet some woman for whose sake you will be willing to resign it! Have you met her already, Paul? They say that one reason why you are so eager to send young Ainalie to London is—to rid yourself of a rival!"

Lady Cecil's voice had grown very hard

and cold; the steely glitter came into her eyes again as she looked full at Paul, and saw the dusky red that came at her words into his cheeks, and the angry light that flashed into his eyes. He turned round upon her almost savagely:

"Who says so?" he demanded, sternly. "It is a foul lie, whoever said it." And then he laughed: "It is not worth being angry about," he added.

"Certainly not. I said it was absurd—perfectly absurd—to think that you, of all people, could be attracted merely by a country girl's pretty face," Lady Cecil answered coldly. "Your taste is much too fastidious. It would require something more than Doris Cairnes possesses to satisfy it."

But Paul, oddly enough, did not seem inclined to echo the sentiment. He laughed; but his eyes grew very soft, and absent, and dreamy, and like the eyes of one who sees in fancy some pleasant vision, as he answered:

"I don't know about that. Doris Cairnes would satisfy the most fastidious taste for that matter. She is just the most perfect little lady it was ever my lot to meet. I can't say more than that, can I? That includes everything; includes every womanly gift and grace."

Some inflexion in his voice, or, perhaps, the softened expression in his eyes set Lady Cecil's heart aching with a strange, fierce pain. He had been hers so long; he had never cared for any one but her. Had he not told her so, not so very long ago, on one sweet May evening as they rode in the Park together, soon after his return home. She had questioned him respecting his plans for the future, and had hinted that probably marriage was included in them; and he had turned and looked at her. Oh, how the memory of that look came back to her now, to sting her with a yet keener pain! "Don't you know that you have made that impossible for me?" he had said. "No one else has taken your place."

No one till now. Oh, it was unbearable to think that she should, after all, be supplanted by a little village girl—a child who had only innocence and sweetness, not even beauty, to recommend her: that she had lost him altogether! She turned her eyes full upon him. They were blazing now with passion, and they seemed as if they would read him through and through, and penetrate into the innermost recesses of his heart.

"So it is true after all, and rumour does not lie for once," she said, in a fierce, quick voice, so different to her usual languid, sweet accents, that for an instant Paul doubted whether it was really Lady Cecil's voice that spoke to him; "and you have learnt to love again? Well, it is only what I expected. I was not fool enough to believe in any man's constancy; but of a truth I would have preferred to be supplanted by a more worthy rival! It speaks little for me that such a baby-faced chit should have won you from me!"

The disdain and contempt in her voice, the passionate contempt in the glance which she flung at him, first irritated and then filled Paul with an odd pleasure. The words were like a revelation to him. Till now he had been almost ignorant of the true nature of the affection he felt for Doris; had never asked himself any explanation of the intense pleasure which the mere fact of being in her presence brought to him—a quiet, tranquil pleasure, quite different to the old mad delight of his first love dream. That was all passion, and fever, and unrest; this, calm, and peace, and tranquil pleasure. He had told himself so often that love was dead for him, that it and youth had died together, and that for neither was a resurrection day possible. But now, at Lady Cecil's mocking words, a veil seemed suddenly to be torn from his heart, and he knew that not only was it possible for him to love again, but that love had already come to him.

Lady Cecil could not quite understand the look which came into his eyes as, after a moment's silence, he answered her briefly:

"There can be no talk of love between you and me now, Lady Cecil. Your husband is my friend, and you also. Is it not so? Come, why should we quarrel?" He held out his hand to her with a frank smile. "We were lovers once, it is true, and you treated me none too well; but I bear you no grudge. Let us be friends still. And if sometime," he laughed, but his voice grew deeper and sweeter, and his eyes brightened under their thick brows, "I do get tired of a lonely life and persuade some nice girl to take compassion on me—well, I am sure you will be the last to grudge me a little of the happiness which I once thought you had made impossible to me for ever."

Lady Cecil hesitated, and looked at him doubtfully. The words had awakened

softened echoes in her heart, and already she felt half ashamed of her wild words, and longed to recall them. So she accepted the flag of truce which he held out, though she was by no means satisfied that her suspicions were not correct. Yet, after all, what had she to fear from a child like Doris? A mere child, whose pretty hair and eyes might attract a passing glance of admiration; but who was quite powerless to win the love of a fastidious man like Paul Beaumont. No, it was clearly absurd to think of her in the light of a rival! Rumour, as usual, had lied. So she smiled graciously, and, feeling a little ashamed of the emotion she had allowed herself to show, laid her fingers lightly on Paul's hand.

"I should be the last one in the world to grudge you any happiness, Paul, whether it came through me or some other person! I was angry, I confess, for a moment, that you, of all persons, should have given occasion for idle gossip, and that in connection with a girl like Doris Cairnes; but I ought to have known you better. Now, I am going in. The air is a little chilly."

She gave him a gracious smile and bow, and, crossing the terrace, entered the house, leaving Paul still standing by the balustrade. He was in no hurry to follow her example; the night was calm and beautiful, the wind soft and balmy; in the moonlight he could see the chimneys of the Red House peeping among the trees. A sudden thought struck him. He leaped lightly over the balustrade and walked quickly across the park, till he reached a more open spot, from which the pretty old house was distinctly visible. The moonlight shone on the windows and on the wealth of creepers—ivy, and clematis, and climbing roses—which flung themselves round every door and window, and wondered in which room Doris was fast asleep.

"Heaven bless her, my poor little love," he said to himself. "She has a hard life now; oh, how I will alter it all for her, by-and-by, if I can win her love!"

There was not much doubt in his mind on the subject, or else his face, and the triumphant smile which curled his lips, belied him. What girl would not be glad to escape from the drudgery of a life such as Doris led, would not willingly welcome love and happiness, and the perfect life which they would bring?

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Yelland,"
"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXV. WHO IS JOHN PELLEW?

THIS Sunday evening at Rushbrook was an especially cheerful one. Mrs. Kestell was enjoying the novelty of having an attentive son. Elva was sitting near her father, glad to see him smile at the attacks made upon her by George Guthrie; and this excellent bachelor was amusing himself by watching the little attempts at private talk in which Hoel and Elva indulged. There was a combined hunt for some music, and the search for a book Mr. Kestell asked for; and all these little scenes—the sign of happiness in lovers—were, of course, so much ammunition for his small shots.

"Now, Fenner, you must agree that a railway accident is a most convenient pleader for a lover," said George Guthrie, after dinner, as they sat round the fire. "If I had happened to be in your place on that eventful Saturday, I have not the smallest doubt that the fair Elva would have turned her affectionate heart towards me. Have we not teased each other, which is equivalent to love, from our earliest infancy?"

"Your infancy!" said Elva laughing, "I don't remember it."

"On the contrary, I am still in infancy. My cousin, Mrs. Eagle Bennison, says I am still a child; and this I consider is a compliment delicately veiled in metaphor. Does it not mean the most bewitching simplicity? Do not all mammas treat me in the most confiding, touching manner; would

they not trust me with their choicest buds and their tenderest blossoms?"

"Well, certainly, you are very safe, George," said Mrs. Kestell, smiling; "because every one knows you are a confirmed bachelor. Mrs. Pigot said so only the other day. It is so convenient to have unattached men at hand."

"Yes; there it is again. A confirmed bachelor! I have heard that phrase a hundred thousand times; and yet I feel in my manly bosom the— How shall I put it, Fenner?"

"Put it delicately, please," said Hoel, "in the presence of these lovers."

"Truthfully, I should say," added Mr. Kestell, "to the best of my belief, George, you have never been in love; and, strange to say, I have never heard you even accused of such a crime!"

"Now, quiet Amice, you are the youngest in this room. Out of the mouths of babes let us hear truth. Have I, or have I not, shown the signs of a long-standing malady called love?"

Amice's blue eyes looked gravely into his face, and every one, except her father, laughed at her earnestness.

"Yes, I think you did once love some one, or you could not pretend to be so heart-whole."

"Unrighteous judge!" cried George, laughing, and only Amice noted that the faintest shade of colour rose to his cheeks. "Hear her, ye witnesses! Now Elva, what say you?"

"That you certainly know nothing about it, and had much better let the subject alone."

"Then you won't hear the 'Poem of a Bachelor,' which I wrote out during the small hours of the morning? Think of this sleepless activity, Fenner, and envy

me! I dare say, now, not an idea comes to you in sleep!"

"Let us hear your verses," said Mr. Kestell, stroking Elva's soft hair. When near to her, his face always brightened up, as if her very touch gave him comfort and strength.

"The title is, 'A Heart to be let.' Mrs. Kestell, have I your permission to recite these lines, which, I assure you, are admirable?"

"Certainly. When I was young I knew a man who was very clever at impromptu. You had only to give him the subject, and he gave you the verses."

"But, dear mamma, don't believe in George's impromptu. If it is his own, he has been years writing it; but most likely it is only an adopted child," said Elva, laughing so happily that the merriment was catching.

"Some adopted children know not the difference. It is all humbug about recognising the affinity of next of kin—poetic nonsense. Humph. Listen, lords and ladies gay:

To be let, at a very desirable rate,
A snug little home in a healthy state,
'Tis a Bachelor's heart, and the agent is Chance,
Affection the Rent—to be paid in advance.
The owner, as yet, has lived in it alone,
So the fixtures are not of much value; but soon
'Twill be furnished by Cupid himself, if a wife
Take a lease for the term of her natural life.
Then, ladies, dear ladies, pray do not forget,
An excellent Bachelor's heart to be let!
The Tenant will have few taxes to pay,
Love, honour, and (heaviest item) obey.
As for the "Good will," the subscriber's inclined
To have that, if agreeable, settled in kind;
Indeed, if he could such a matter arrange,
Provided true title by prudence be shown,
Any heart unencumbered and free as his own.
So ladies, dear ladies, do not forget,
An excellent Bachelor's heart to be let!

Now what do you think of my poem?
Is it not pithy, and much to the point?"

"I should like you to prove your title to it, first," said Elva. "Hoel, do you believe it is his?"

"I hope not," said Hoel. "I shall have to say as did our chief editor once to a conceited poet: 'Sir, your verses show no promise of future fame; so, for the present, they are worthless.'"

"Talleyrand did it better," said George. "Do you remember, Fenner, the poor poet who was reciting his own verses to the great wit? Talleyrand, perceiving a man yawning a little way off, said, pointing him out politely to the reciter: 'Not so loud, dear sir; he hears you.'"

Hoel had forgotten the story, which

made every one laugh. Certainly, George Guthrie was a very mine of good stories, which before now Elva had been heard to declare he invented.

"Your cousin must never find the house dull when you are in it," said Mrs. Kestell. "Has she many societies now to look after?"

"The Taps at present reign supreme. Actually Miss Heaton has made friends with the Squire's wife on this subject. By the way, Elva, this lady much disapproves of your engagement; and I did not soften the matter by suggesting she should follow your example. Imagine, Mr. Kestell, the brave man who would lead Miss Heaton to the altar!"

"Isn't it a chance for the bachelor?" said Hoel.

"Well, so I thought this morning after service; and as I walked a little way with her I quoted worthy Samuel to her—in vain. She cast only reproachful glances upon me, and said she was going to look for Herbert. What an eye she keeps upon him."

"George, how ridiculous you are! What did you say?" said Elva.

"My dear Elva, it was only the second part of a poem. I left out the prologue, which I considered a little too moral. I dare say none of you study Samuel Johnson as I do. I walk on the ancient paths, and leave Browning for the modern Hoel Fenner."

"And pray what was the second part?" said Mr. Kestell.

"Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five;
For howe'er we boast and strive,
Life declines from thirty-five.
He that ever hopes to thrive,
Must begin by thirty-five;
And all who wisely wish to wive,
Must play for Heat-on thirty-five.

I only altered the last line, which you see is a little lame. I had ideas of working out the motive of Thrals. Indeed, I might have turned it into Thraldom, but I feared to offend. You know even Samuel made puns in his moments of relaxation."

"I don't wonder Miss Heaton scorned you; really, George, you are incorrigible! Miss Heaton already thinks that Amice and myself are bad specimens of modern education. And as for you, she must fancy you are beyond reform."

"How were your lines received?" said Hoel.

"Why, much in the same way as Archelaus answered the worthy barber

who said, 'How shall I shave you?' 'In silence,' replied the sage."

"I fear it did not crush you," said Elva. "I never was able to do that, though I began, as you know, in infancy."

"Miss Heaton succeeded, nevertheless. By the way, Mr. Kestell, have you heard how that poor fellow is—the one you went to see at Greystone? I asked Smith, who knows everything, when I was there yesterday, and he said the man Joseph Button was in a bad way. I think when there are not many customers, Smith studies his old books: reads up Samuel, I fancy."

Mr. Kestell turned his face slightly towards George Guthrie, as he answered:

"Did you go and see him?"

"I? Oh, no. That special public-house having a bad name, I was afraid of the risk to my good character by being seen there; but your philanthropy has got into the 'Greystone Advertiser'!"

"Really, Josiah," said his wife, "you are too good to all those people; they impose upon you."

"Button, you know, was once in my employment. Poor fellow, I turned him off for drink; still, I have a regard for him. I am sorry he is in a bad way."

"I expect it was more the shock to his nervous system than anything else," said Hoel. "I hear all the other sufferers have been moved; but this Button, who was least hurt, remains behind. I suppose, therefore, that in spite of bad repute, mine host is kind."

"I should like to go and see this poor man," said Elva, returning to sit near to her father. "I can't help feeling thankful that you or Hoel are not in his place."

"No, no; certainly not," said her father, quickly. "Hoel, you must not let Elva go to that place. It would never do."

"But with Hoel, papa, what could hurt me?"

"No, dear; I would prefer your not going. I shall go again myself to-morrow, or Tuesday, and see about him. This week I shall go into Greystone as usual."

"You have not looked so well this week, papa. You ought not to bother about this poor fellow; but of course I won't go if you don't like it. Hoel shall go alone."

"Don't trouble him about that. Button, I expect, is quite happy in a place where he can get drink. I warned him against it; but in vain, I fear."

"Surely, then, he should be got out of it as soon as possible, and before he gets

drowned," said George. "I am sure, Mr. Kestell, you had better use me as your messenger. I expect my character has this evening been so impugned that there is nothing much left of it. Even the Taps would refuse to begin their work on me; and I am ready to be sent on a 'sleeveless errand,' as old Mrs. Joyce says; and if you bid me, I will bring back some of the articles required of fools in the old days—pigeons' milk or stirrup oil."

"I promise my messengers no such difficult task. I told this Button to call here when he was well enough, and I know his interest will not allow him to forget this duty."

Mr. Kestell laughed a little.

"Well, just as you like. Now, Elva, when are we to have some sacred solace, or, as an Eastern poet says, when may we listen to 'the love-struck nightingale's delightful strain'?"

"George, you do not deserve to hear any music. As to your Eastern names, I prefer plain English."

All the same, Elva rose and went towards the piano, whilst George answered:

"My language is too ornate to please you, I see. I am——"

"I ask not proud philosophy to teach me what thou art. Still, as Hoel has never heard Amice sing, I shall give him the treat. Please don't refuse, Amice," said her sister, going up to her.

Amice rose from her low chair in the shadow of the curtain, and went toward the piano, but with evident reluctance.

"I am glad you can rout out Amice a little," said Mrs. Kestell, sadly. "She gets quieter every day. We shall have to wait for Mrs. Fenner to take her out. By the way, Josiah, do you know that I have been getting up the county families this afternoon, and I find that Mr. Fenner is connected with the Pellets? You knew some of them, didn't you? I fancy before we married you talked of one of that family?"

Elva and Amice were by the piano hunting for some music, but at this name Amice slowly raised her head, and looked towards her father. Was it her fancy that his hand appeared slightly to shake as he put down on the table a book he held in his hand?

"Indeed! I didn't know that Fenner was acquainted with any of that family. Not that I was very intimate with them; they were from the Midlands; but I once had some business connection with one of

the Pellewa. Still, they are a large and scattered family. I know nothing of them now."

"I am aware of the fact of relationship," said Hoel, "and that is all. I must own to a certain idleness in keeping up with mere connections. My uncle is a great antiquarian in respect of families, and could, I am sure, go through all of them; but he kindly spares me, knowing my supreme indifference to such genealogies."

"Indeed, Hoel," said Mrs. Kestell, "you are quite wrong. Cousins are very useful people, you owe them nothing, and want nothing from them, and yet, as the French say, 'On a souvent besoin d'un plus petit que soi.' What do the Pellewas consist of now? Do you know, Josiah?"

"It was a John Pellew who bought that land," thought Amice, putting the music on the stand; she would not, however, have dared to say this aloud. "Papa said he had business transactions with him. Then, perhaps it was merely that he bought Westacre Lands from him. There can be nothing strange in that. Oh, it is my horrible, wicked fancy!"

She shivered a little, and said to Elva:

"I don't feel inclined to sing, Elva, to-night. Besides, sacred music may not be to Mr. Fenner's taste."

"Why don't you call him Hoel, dear? He won't like your being so formal. But you must sing. George, come and take a part in this trio, and leave county families alone. Mamma and Hoel can discuss them afterwards."

George Guthrie rose and came to the piano. He was quite serious for him, as he took up a sheet of music and bent a little towards Elva.

"Your father looks very unwell to-night, Elva. That Doctor Pink has not done him much good, has he? Like the rest of his profession, I expect he is quite——"

"Indeed, you are mistaken. Doctor Pink has almost cured papa of that sudden dizziness he had last week. It was the accident that upset him again a little."

"Well, you ought to know best; but just this moment I noticed an expression of pain come over his face. Perhaps he is tired with our nonsense. Let's sing. Come, fairest nymph, resume thy reign—or thy piano. What shall we sing? And pray, Amice, look more cheerful. How can you expect to find a lover if you look so like a ghost? Well, here I am,

Gaily the troubadour touched his——"

Elva came down with a strong, powerful

chord upon the piano, and soon the three, who had often sung together, began a sacred trio.

When the singing ended, Hoel could not help taking more notice of Amice. Certainly he had not heard such a voice before in a private drawing-room. The full, deep, rich contralto was quite out of the ordinary run of untrained voices; but the sadness and pathos were almost too pathetic. "I prefer my Elva's voice," he thought to himself, though he recognised the greater merits of her sister's singing.

Mr. Kestell now asked his wife if she were tired; and, as usual when she was downstairs, he gave her his arm in the courtly, lover-like manner which struck Hoel, whose politeness was entirely different from the courtliness of the last generation. But in Mr. Kestell's manner to his wife there was even more than that fascinating, courteous attention of our grandfathers. There was the tenderness of a grown-up person to a child.

Hoel noted it with appreciation.

"I must go," said George, when Mr. Kestell returned. "I won't ask the maimed to accompany me. Suppose, Fenner, you slipped coming home over the bridge, and to-morrow morning you were found drowned in the Pool, what would the world say of me? How suspicion would cling to me in spite of innocence, and Elva would pursue me to the death."

"Your conscience would not be very tender," said Elva; "but you may also suppose we should have a search-party before morning."

"Come, Guthrie, I will walk with you to the bridge," said Mr. Kestell.

He moved a few steps towards the door, and a curious and quite unmistakable pallor overspread his features. Elva hurried up to him.

"Papa; what is the matter?"

Mr. Kestell seized hold of the back of a chair with one hand, and passed the other over his forehead.

"A little dizzy, my dear. It is nothing—nothing." Elva snatched a bottle of salts from a side table, and gave them to her father; but he put them aside. "No, no, dear; a little fresh air will restore me. Come, Guthrie."

The two went out, and Elva remained motionless, looking after her father with an anxious expression till Hoel came to her and made her sit down.

"Dearest, don't be anxious about your father; he says it is nothing."

Elva looked up gratefully at Hoel's gentle words. Both forgot Amice's presence.

"Hoel, I can't bear papa to be ill; I feel as if somehow it were my fault; I have not looked after him enough. He is so good, so thoughtful. I half fear he may hide his symptoms from me for fear of giving me trouble, as he does from mamma. But it would be cruel of him if he did this."

There was no doubting the great love between father and daughter. But Hoel for a moment felt a little jealous. Did Elva love him well enough to leave father and mother?

Though no one thought of Amice in her corner, she was passing through a worse experience than Elva. She thought: "How Elva loves him! And I—I am trying to hurt him. I have made a vow to find out. Suppose there is nothing to find out? But suppose there is? What will Elva say of me, think of me? And yet justice is greater than love. Must I lose her love to help on a stranger? Oh, that I should be placed in such a position! It cannot, it cannot be possible."

She folded her hands, and pressed them against her throbbing temples, and hid her eyes. She, too, experienced a strange giddiness; the objects round her appeared in a dull, red hue. Even though she pressed out the lamp-light, there came before her mental vision quite distinctly, written in red letters on a dull, black ground, the two words, "John Pellew."

That name again—she had seen it on the parchment—had it burnt itself into her brain? Who was John Pellew?

With a little cry of pain, suppressed almost before uttered, she left her corner, and advanced into the room where Hoel was bending over his betrothed. He turned round startled when Amice's cold fingers touched the hand that lay on Elva's shoulder; and yet Hoel was neither nervous nor easily startled.

"Mr. Fenner!"

"Good gracious!" he said, involuntarily. "I had forgotten you were here."

"Mr. Fenner, tell me, who is John Pellew?"

Elva looked up, too, and her quick eyes saw the far-away, startled look in her sister's eyes, which had before frightened her. Brave, and quick to reason, she felt Hoel must know nothing of it, and she laughed.

"Dear me, Hoel, pray tell Amice what

she wants to know; sometimes she gets a thing into her head, and she goes on worrying till she has found out."

"Indeed, I wish I could tell you; I suppose I must not ask why you want to know? The truth is, the Pellews are only second cousins, once or twice removed, and the members of that section of the family have had many misfortunes, and are not profitable to their acquaintances, I expect, or else Uncle Mellish would have invited them to his house. John is a family name; so you may imagine they are not exactly original-minded. There's a John in every generation; but never the eldest son, who has to bear the name of Hilton before the Pellew, and also another name. I forget what it is, but Biblical, I know; but it is generally dropped for the Hilton. That is all I know; but if you take an interest in the Pellews, I promise to hunt them up."

"Thank you," said Amice, and then Elva took her arm, wished Hoel good-night, bidding him wait up for her father, and see him safe upstairs. Had it not been for Amice she would have done this herself; but she dared not leave her in her present strange state of mind.

DWARFIANA.

DOUBTLESS Captain Lemuel Gulliver somewhat heavily taxed the credulity of his readers when he described the people of Lilliput as being no more than six inches in height; but a belief in the existence of a race of similar diminutive human beings, called Pygmies, was widely prevalent among the ancients, and appears to have survived among the moderns until a date even later than that of Swift's famous satire. Most of the early books of voyages and travels contain some reference to such a race. Sir John Maundeville, for instance, says that in one of the "isles of the sea" there are "dwarfs which have no mouth, but instead of their mouth they have a little round hole," so that they are obliged to suck their food through a straw; while elsewhere there is a land of pygmies who are only three spans long, "and they are right fair and gentle, both the men and the women. They live but six or seven years at most, and he that liveth eight years is considered very aged."

Van Helmont relates that he had re-

ceived information of a race of pygmies inhabiting the Canary Islands; and others have asserted the existence of such a race in Abyssinia. In Purchas's "Pilgrimes" we are told that in Iceland pygmies represent the most perfect shape of man; that they are hairy to the uttermost joints of their fingers; that the males have beards down to their knees; but that although they have the shape of men, these little people have little sense or understanding, and instead of speech make a hissing sound like geese.

As late as the close of the sceptical eighteenth century, we find a somewhat similar account in the narrative of Rochon, who voyaged to Madagascar about 1770. He asserts that for some time he actually lived amongst a race of dwarfs inhabiting the centre of that island. They were a clever, witty, and bold people he says, and the average height of the men was three feet five inches, while the women were slightly less. He adds, moreover, that Nature had been good enough to cause the vegetation of the country to grow correspondingly small for the little folks' convenience. Travellers' true tales proverbially used to be taken with a grain of salt, and Rochon, like Sir John Maundeville, seems to have been fully alive to the fact that "men have great liking to hear strange things of diverse countries."

The smallest existing race of men of whom we have any real knowledge, is that of the Bushmen of South Africa, whose average height, according to Mr. E. B. Tylor, is four feet six inches. There is, indeed, a tribe inhabiting the region near Lake Ngami, whose height is asserted to be no more than four feet one inch, but of them we have no very reliable information; and the so-called forest dwarfs who impeded Stanley's march in Central Africa last year, were probably the Akkas, who are believed to measure about four feet ten inches in height.

There is no reliable evidence that among our ancestors, recent or remote, there ever existed a race of people whom it would be correct to describe as dwarfs. The remains of antiquity show that human stature has probably rather increased than diminished, but to so slight a degree that Silbermann and other authorities hold that the average height of the human race has remained unchanged since the Chaldean epoch, four thousand years ago.

But, although no race of dwarfs exists, or, probably, ever has existed, numerous indi-

vidual specimens have flourished in all countries, and in all ages. We find dwarfs mentioned among the attendants kept by ancient Egyptian nobles, as also among the appendages of a Roman noble's household. Domitian even managed to get together a company of dwarf gladiators. At a later date they were commonly used as pages in most of the courts of Europe. They appear frequently on the canvases of Domenichino, Raphael, Velasquez, and other painters, in the suites of nobles or Kings.

In Wierix's illustrated Bible, published in 1594, there is a curious engraving of the feast of Dives, showing Lazarus at the door, and a dwarf, playing with a monkey for the amusement of the guests, within. It is not to be inferred from this that dwarfs were amongst the amusements of rich Jews in Palestine. Curiously enough, dwarfs are only mentioned once in the whole Bible, and even that is a somewhat ambiguous reference, in the Book of Leviticus. Wierix, like many another artist before and since, played fast and loose with his chronology; and all we are justified in inferring is that he put into his print of the dining-room of Dives, what he had, doubtless, often seen in the dining-rooms of rich men of his own day.

In several European countries, dwarfs superseded the court fools, and were admitted by Kings and Princes to a considerable degree of intimacy. Two Princesses—Catherine de Medicis, and the wife of one of the Electors of Brandenburg—collected as many of both sexes as they could get together, with the object of breeding a race of them; but both attempts proved unsuccessful.

In 1710 Peter the Great celebrated, with great pomp, the marriage of two of his dwarfs at St. Petersburg. He invited courtiers and ambassadors to be present at the ceremony, and also commanded the attendance of all dwarfs, male and female, living within two hundred miles of the capital. For the conveyance of these he provided carriages, capable of holding a dozen dwarfs at a time. And all necessaries for the wedding-breakfast—tables, chairs, plate, etc.—were of a size sufficiently small to suit his little guests. About seventy dwarfs attended the ceremony. What was their average height we are not informed; but the bridegroom's stature was three feet two inches. Russia seems to have been always well supplied with dwarfs. Porter, who travelled there in the early

years of the present century, describes the dwarfs frequently to be met with at the tables of the great. They were, he says, well shaped and even graceful; very different from the deformities exhibited at English fairs.

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was in Germany, she was astonished to find that the noble ladies there kept dwarfs as playthings, much as the English ladies kept monkeys. Lady Mary had her own "heightened and telling way of putting things," and she describes the Vienna Court dwarfs as "ugly as devils, and bedaubed with diamonds."

It has been said that dwarfs came over to England with the Conqueror; but we could boast of at least one specimen before the Conquest, if the history of King Edgar's pigmy—whose career is said to have provided incidents to swell the legendary story of Tom Thumb—can be accounted authentic. But those of any note, or of whom there is any reliable history, are of later date. We may pass over, as somewhat mythical, the accounts of William Emerson, who died in 1575, and is reported to have been no more than one foot three inches in height; of John Decker, a comparatively tall man, of two feet six inches, who was exhibited on the Continent in 1610; of John Jervis, a gentleman of three feet eight inches, who was page to Queen Mary; and of several others.

The first English dwarf, of whom an authentic history exists, was Jeffrey Hudson. This little man was presented to Henrietta Maria, soon after her marriage to Charles the First, served up to table, at an entertainment at Burleigh, in a cold pie. He is said to have measured no more than eighteen inches in height from the age of eight to the age of thirty; but, after thirty, he grew until he reached three feet nine inches. He is described as having nothing ugly in his countenance or distorted in his limbs; but as possessing a face which, on a taller man, would have been called handsome, though he managed to give himself a very bizarre look with his enormous moustaches, which twisted back and almost mingled with his grizzled hair. This singular little being was employed in various Royal missions, and had a somewhat adventurous life. He was once taken prisoner by Dunkirk privateers when returning from the Continent, and at a later date was unlucky enough to fall into the hands of a Turkish pirate, who conveyed him into Barbary.

After the Civil War broke out, he became a Captain of horse in the Royal army; and while in France, in attendance on the Queen, he fought a duel with an Englishman named Crofts. He was mounted on horseback, to put him on a level with his antagonist, whom he shot dead. Ultimately he was pensioned off and lived in his native place, until, on suspicion of being concerned in some Popish plot, he was imprisoned in the Gate-house at Westminster, where he is reported to have died in 1682, in the sixty-third year of his age.

Another interesting diminutive appendage of royalty was Richard Gibson. He was born about 1615; eventually attained to the height of three feet six inches; showed considerable artistic ability; and was a very favourable specimen of dwarf humanity. He became page of the back-stairs to Charles the First, and drawing-master to the Princesses Mary and Anne. He painted miniature portraits, more or less successfully, in the manner of Sir Peter Lely; and some of his productions were highly valued by Charles. The Queen happening to possess a female dwarf, named Anne Shepherd, who was exactly the same height as Gibson, it pleased her Royal mind to make a match between the two little people. They were accordingly married in great state. The King gave away the bride; the Queen presented a diamond-ring as wedding gift; courtly Edmund Waller composed some pretty verses in honour of the occasion; and Sir Peter Lely painted the diminutive couple standing hand-in-hand. It is satisfactory to be able to add that they lived happily ever after, and were blessed with a family of nine children, five of whom lived and grew up to the ordinary size of English people. They both lived beyond the Psalmist's limit of three score years and ten—Richard dying, in 1690, at the age of seventy-five, while his widow survived till her eighty-ninth year, and died in 1709.

One of the pleasantest and most intelligent of dwarfs was a Pole of good family, commonly called "Count" Boruwlaski. He was not only remarkable himself, but he belonged to a very extraordinary family. His father and mother, who were of medium height, had a family of six children, every alternate one of whom was a dwarf. When Joseph was born he measured only eight inches in length, and when he stopped growing at the age of thirty, his height was thirty-nine inches. Several love affairs in which he became in-

volved with fair, and probably faithless, ladies of ordinary stature, caused the poor little fellow some trouble, but eventually he married, and came to England, where, after being presented to George the Third and the Prince of Wales, he exhibited himself to an admiring public. He made a successful tour of the United Kingdom, and finally settled down to live on the proceeds thereof at Durham, where he died in 1837 at the good old age of ninety-eight. He is described as amiable, well educated, and intelligent.

A rather good story is told of his wit. When being exhibited at Leeds, he was asked by a very stout and, of course, very vulgar lady what religion he professed. He replied that he was a Roman Catholic, upon which she curtly remarked that there was no chance then of his ever getting to Heaven. Boruwlaaki replied that, according to Scripture, the Gate of Heaven was a narrow one; and that, therefore—looking the over-buxom lady up and down—he thought he probably had a better chance than she had.

In several ways a strong contrast to Boruwlaaki was Nicholas Ferry, better known as Bébé. This dwarf, to whom Stanislas, King of Poland, for some unaccountable reason became much attached, was only eight inches long, and weighed but twelve ounces at the time of his birth. He was presented on a plate to be baptized, and for a long time used to sleep in one of his father's wooden shoes. But as he grew up it became evident that he was extremely weak both in body and mind. He was incapable of reasoning, and had not the least idea of religion, but showed great jealousy, and was very easily angered. At the age of sixteen he was only twenty-one inches in height; at twenty he was four inches taller; and, finally, he reached three feet. At the age of twenty-two he became decrepit, and may be said to have died of old age in his twenty-third year.

It is highly probable that a very small modicum of mental ability strikes the observer as remarkable in a dwarf, for the reason that, as Dr. Johnson said so un-gallantly of women, he is surprised to find any at all. But several of them have had at least sufficient ability to speak three or four languages, and more than one have shown some considerable degree of artistic power. There are also instances in which great bodily strength has been possessed by dwarfs. Owen Farrel, an Irish dwarf, who, in 1716, was footman to a Colonel in

Dublin, is an instance of this. He was three feet nine inches in height, but very heavily, though clumsily, made, and his strength was amazing. He could carry four men at one time, two of them sitting astride on each of his extended arms. After exhibiting himself as a show in Ireland, he came to London, where, being too lazy to work, he got a living by begging in the streets. He sold the reversion of his body, in consideration of a small weekly allowance of money, to a London surgeon, who, after the dwarf's death, made a skeleton of his bones, which, we believe, is still preserved in the collection of William Hunter at Glasgow.

The original of Sir Walter Scott's "Black Dwarf" must have been a somewhat similar character. Robert Chambers says: "His skull, which was of an oblong, and rather unusual shape, was said to be of such strength that he could strike it with ease through the panel of a door or the end of a barrel. His laugh is said to have been quite horrible; and his screech-owl voice, shrill, uncouth, and dissonant, corresponded with his other peculiarities—a jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper was his prominent characteristic." He was not quite three feet six inches in height.

Dwarfs have long since ceased to have any official connection with the Court of St. James's. The last Court dwarf in England was Copperrin, described by Dr. Doran as a lively little imp in the service of the Princess Augusta of Wales, the mother of George the Third. The last dwarf retainer in a private gentleman's family was kept by the eccentric Mr. Beckford (author of "Vathek") among the numerous other curiosities he had collected at Fonthill.

Whenever the supply of dwarfs for show or other purposes has fallen short of the demand, various recipes have been propounded for manufacturing them; it is to be hoped, with little success. Many of the popular jockeys in this country may be described as dwarfs, and the growth of boys intended for that profession is checked by a weakening process known as "sweating;" a kind of "sweating," however, calculated to put large sums of money into the victim's pocket.

Perhaps the most curious point in the history of dwarfs is that so many of them have married and had children of full average stature. Both the children themselves and the community at large are to be congratulated that this is so.

We imagine that any Tom Thumb would gladly give the ten or twenty thousand pounds a year gained by exhibiting his diminutiveness in exchange for the five feet six and a half inches of the most average, ordinary, uninteresting Englishman.

THE KEY ISLANDS.

SOME time ago we gave an account of those interesting islands in the Eastern Seas, which used to be the haunt of pirates, and are now the abode of domestic out-throats.* We have also, more than once, devoted papers to our latest Oceanic possession, New Guinea,† an island which may be said to block the eastern extremity of that wonderful region of islands and physical romance known as the Eastern Archipelago. At the eastern end of the sea, and quite close to New Guinea itself, is a remarkable group, almost unknown to European travellers; and hardly known, even by name, to comfortable stay-at-homes. We purpose, therefore, to give a brief account of the Key Islands, which, since Doctor Alfred Russel Wallace visited them in 1857, seem to have received no attention from scientists and geographers until Captain Langen paid them a visit in 1855.

The origin of the name is involved in some obscurity. It is variously spelled Ké, Key, and Kay, and is pronounced according to the last spelling. Captain Langen's explanation has at least the merit of probability. He says, that when long ago some traders from Macassar first landed in these islands, they inquired in the Malay tongue the name of the land. But the natives, not understanding Malay, only replied: "Kay!" which signifies "What do you say?" and thus the visitors named the group the Kay Islands.

This story, by the way, is curiously like one told by Mr. Boddy, in his book about Kirwan. He says, that when the French sent their officials through that country to construct a map and ascertain the names of all the rivers, mountains, etc., a strange thing happened. Almost all the places were set down as called, "Ma'arifsh." This name recurred with such astonishing frequency, that an inquiry was necessary.

* "Gems of the Eastern Seas," No. 1027, New Series, August 4th, 1858.

† "The Future of New Guinea," No. 938, New Series, November 5th, 1857.

The result was that it was found that when the explorers asked an Arab in the appointed phrase: "What is the name of this place?" the reply was usually "Ma'arifsh," which is Arabic for "Don't know." And thus upon the French map appeared an interesting assortment of Don't Know Rivers, Don't Know Mountains, Don't Know Ruins. Remembering this story we are inclined to accept Captain Langen's theory of the origin of the name of the Key Islands.

The group consists of two large islands, called respectively Nuhu Roa, or Little Key, and Nuhu Ju-ud, or Great Key, and a number of smaller islands. Great Key is believed to be geologically much older than the others, and it has elevations running up to three thousand feet, whilst the other islands are very low. Great Key, again, is mostly rocky and volcanic in formation, while Little Key and the rest are of coral, interveined with quartz. On the highest inland elevation of Little Key, sea-shells of various kinds have been found. There is a tradition, indeed, amongst natives, that Little Key was raised out of the sea by an earthquake many years ago; but there is no record of any earthquake since, until the year 1884, when there were some very severe shocks.

There is considerable difficulty in approaching the islands; which may account for their being passed by almost all travellers in the Eastern Archipelago. Dr. Wallace's vessel incurred considerable danger before a safe anchorage could be found; and Captain Langen is most minute in describing the proper course to be steered to avoid the reefs and shoals. Both authorities concur in speaking of the picturesque beauty of the scene as the islands are reached. Light coloured limestone rocks rise abruptly from the water to the height of several hundred feet, everywhere broken into peaks and pinnacles, and everywhere clothed with a varied and luxuriant vegetation. From the sea Dr. Wallace was able to distinguish screw-pines and arborescent Auliaceæ of the strangest forms, with a dense background of forest trees. The water is transparent as crystal, tinged with colour varying from emerald to lapis-lazuli, and the little bays and inlets have beaches of dazzling whiteness. Such is the first aspect of those shores upon which few European feet have trodden.

Every island of the group is covered

with vegetation down to the water's edge. There is said to be not the smallest patch bare of trees, which grow to great size, and are of very valuable timber. Gigantic creepers climb up their trunks and spring from tree to tree until the whole forest is enclosed in a close network. The forests are brilliant with orchids, and splendid butterflies, and birds of lovely plumage. The chief work of the natives is felling timber for export, and their chief domestic industry is boat-building. In the swampy inlets sago trees abound, and from these the natives derive their main subsistence, as they grow no rice, and the only cultivated products are cocoa-nuts, plantains, and yams. From the cocoa-nuts, oil is made and sold to the traders from the neighbouring Aru Islands, who come here both for this product and for boats. Wooden bowls are also largely made, hewn out of solid blocks of wood with knife and adze; and these bowls are carried to all parts of the Moluccas.

The great art and industry of the Key Islanders, however, is boat-building. Their unlimited supply of splendid timber gives them a natural advantage over the other islands of the Archipelago. But how a people so remote learned the difficult art it is impossible to say. This is what Dr. Wallace says of their vessels:

"Their small canoes are beautifully formed: broad and low in the centre, but rising at each end, where they terminate in high-pointed beams, more or less carved, and ornamented with a plume of feathers. They are not hollowed out of a tree, but are regularly built of planks running from end to end, and so accurately fitted that it is often difficult to find a place where a knife-blade can be inserted between the joints. The larger ones are from twenty to thirty tons burden; and are quite finished for sea without a nail or particle of iron being used, and with no other tools than axe, adze, and auger. These vessels are handsome to look at, good sailers, and admirable sea boats, and will make long voyages with perfect safety, traversing the whole Archipelago, from New Guinea to Singapore, in seas which, as every one who has sailed much in them can testify, are not so smooth and tempest-free as word-painting travellers love to represent them."

Captain Langen says that the symmetrical construction of these vessels would astonish a European shipbuilder. Of late years the natives seem to have gone in for building larger craft, although with

the same primitive tools as Wallace mentions; and they have even constructed two-masted schooners of one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty tons, which ply in the pearl-shell fisheries, or are sent to Banda for sale. All the tools are made in the islands, and in every village there is a smithy, in which, from morning till night, the smith is engaged in melting rusty nails in a charcoal fire, and hammering them into rough axes, etc., which are preferred to the finished tools imported from Europe.

The principal occupation of the inhabitants, otherwise, is in felling and selling timber to the German traders. They naturally begin with the trees which are nearest to the shore, for transport over the uneven ground of the interior is difficult; and for felling, the native uses only a wedge-shaped axe, with which he can lay low the loftiest denizen of the forest. Having lopped off the branches and bark, he squares the trunk skilfully, though wastefully, and then his timber is ready for market. To make a pair of planks for one of the larger boats, an entire tree is consumed.

The timber is remarkably tall, straight, and durable. There are various kinds; but the best is the New Guinea teak, the Malay word for which is "iron-wood." It is said to be superior to the best Indian teak for strength, flexibility, and durability; and it is exempt from the attacks of the white ants.

Doctor Wallace also noted abundance of Arboreal Aviliaceæ and Pandanaceæ, as well as immense trees of the fig family, with aerial roots stretching out and interlacing and matted together for fifty or a hundred feet above the ground. There is an absence of thorny shrubs and prickly rattans; the undergrowth being of broad-leaved herbaceous plants. Insects and birds abound, but it is said there are only two quadrupeds on the island—a wild pig and a species of opossum. Captain Langen, however, mentions goats.

There are very few streams, but the porous character of the soil and a copious rainfall account for the luxuriant growth. One of the difficulties of life in these islands is to obtain a sufficient supply of fresh water. The wells are mostly situated close to the sea, and at a low elevation. These wells afford excellent water if over three hundred yards from the sea, but when nearer to the sea the water is slightly brackish. It is, therefore, supposed that

the wells are supplied by the sea filtering gradually through the pores of the coral, and becoming purified as it does so. This theory is supported by the fact that all efforts to strike water on the hills have been in vain.

The population of the Key Islands was, in 1870, estimated at twenty-one thousand—fifteen thousand on Great Key, and six thousand distributed over Little Key and the smaller islands. Since then, however, there has been an epidemic of small-pox, and in 1881, the population was estimated at only about nineteen thousand four hundred.

About one-third of the population are, according to Captain Langen, Mahomedans, and the number of these is increasing every year by the influence of the Hadjis—the pilgrims who have been to Mecca. The Arab immigrants and Hadjis recently succeeded in “converting” some of the principal native chiefs. The Mahomedans are for the most part descendants of fugitives from Banda, Ceram, and Amboina.

Of this mixed race, who wear cotton clothing, Dr. Wallace observes they were probably at first a brown race, allied with the Malays. Their mixed descendants exhibit great variations of colour, hair, and features, graduating between the Malay and Papuan types.

The original inhabitants of the Key Islands, however—who are pagans, and who wear only a waist-cloth of cotton or bark—are undoubtedly Papuan. In vivacity and activity, they are the very antithesis of the passive Malay; and their sooty blackness, their mops of frizzly hair, and their marked forms of countenance, clearly show their origin to be the same as the natives of New Guinea. The Malay type of face is Mongolian in character—broad, and flat, with wide mouth, and small nose. The Papuan face is projecting and obtrusive—mouth, large; nose, very large; brows, protuberant and overhanging. Thus it may be said that in the Key Islands is found the connecting-link between the two great races of the Under-World—the Malayan and the Papuan.

The language of the Key natives consists of about equal proportions of words of one, two, and three syllables. It has many aspirated, and a few guttural sounds, but has no affinity whatever with the Malay languages. The villagers have slight differences in dialect, but they are mutually intelligible.

Traces, nevertheless, of the early Portuguese traders are observable in many words which have been assimilated; and Captain Langen says that many English names also exist among the natives. Old brass man-of-war guns, of various sizes, are sometimes used as money among the different districts, in the same way as the natives of the Carolines use a certain kind of round-shaped stones instead of coin. These guns are more than a hundred years old, and, from the inscriptions and engravings upon them, must have belonged to Spanish and Portuguese vessels. The French seem also to have been there at one time; but there is no trace of any German navigators. Yet, curiously enough, the only attempt at a trading colony in Key has been recently made by Germans.

Some two hundred years ago the Netherlands India Company obtained a cession of the islands from the native chiefs, and the company, by a resident official, still professes to exercise a sort of sovereignty over the group. The tribal laws of the natives, however, are upheld. The islands are divided into districts, each comprising a certain number of villages with their surrounding land, and each of these districts has a principal chief, or Rajah, who is formally recognised and approved by the Dutch resident at Amboina. There are nine Rajahs on Great Key, and the same number distributed among the other islands of the group.

Each Rajah has an under-chief for each village under his jurisdiction. Of lesser rank is the “Major,” who acts as magistrate; the “Captain,” who is supposed to lead in case of war; the “Orang-Tua,” or golden adviser of the village; and the “Maringo,” who acts as policeman. These offices are all hereditary, and pass to the eldest son.

A chief receives no payment; but on assuming office receives a silver-headed walking-stick, bearing the Dutch coat of arms, from the Dutch Resident. At the end of twenty-five years, if he has managed his territory well, the silver mounting is exchanged for gold; and the chief who has been particularly exemplary is sometimes presented with an enormous umbrella, which is borne before him by a servant as he takes his walks abroad.

A certain amount of uncultivated land belongs to each village, upon which the villagers may fell timber, cut down the sago-palm for food, or make a garden. The boundaries are fixed by the chiefs, who

retain the guardianship of the cocoa-nut trees, which are general property. Not a single nut can be taken without orders from the chief, until harvest time, when the whole village turns out to gather them, each person receiving a certain number of nuts according to his rank and station.

The Key natives are tall and powerfully-built, but far from cleanly in their habits. As a consequence of their uncleanness, and the deficiency of salt taken into their systems—salt being almost unknown in the islands—they are much afflicted with contagious skin-diseases. For the same reason smallpox, which is always more or less prevalent in the Moluccas, finds them ready victims.

The artistic and constructive talent of the race is exhibited in childhood; and the children amuse themselves by drawing on a smooth surface of fine sand, houses, animals, boats and fishes. Captain Langen says he has been always struck with the wonderful symmetry of their work, although they have neither training nor drawing materials. On the face of a perpendicular cliff on one of the islands are some native drawings of various shapes, which seem to have been once filled in with red pigment. But nobody knows the origin and meaning of these curious figures, nor can the natives give any account of them. They say that the spirits of the dead suspend themselves over the cliffs at midnight to engrave them. The natives shun the spot, and can be induced by no bribes to climb the cliff in order to copy the drawings.

Other places are also shunned by them, as supposed to be haunted by bad spirits. Certain trees, on the other hand, are held to be sacred as the abode of an invisible good spirit, to whom sacrifices are offered whenever a family mishap occurs, or some member goes off for a long sea-voyage. The sacrifice consists of some cooked sago, or rice, wrapped up in a palm-leaf, over which is scraped a little gold-dust from a ring or bracelet. In some places these sacred trees are decorated from top to bottom with those curious palm-leaf parcels, the votive offerings of the people.

Marriage takes place about the fifteenth year, and the bridegroom has to pay a dowry to the parents of the bride. The whole village, as well as relations from a distance, are invited to the wedding-feast, to which the guests all bring contributions in the form of sago, rice, sweet potato, etc. After the feast, dancing continues through-

out the night. A husband who tires of his wife can divorce her, and obtain from her parents a return of one-third of the dowry he paid.

The houses are huts, built on poles of strong and hard timber, or bamboo—Papuan fashion. Being elevated above ground, they escape the swarms of vermin and also secure a free current of air through the flooring of split bamboo. The houses are thus kept cool during the north-east monsoon. The interior is divided into various rooms, the furniture of which is ornamented and coloured. A strong wood chest is always provided for the family treasures. The floors are covered with grass-matting, and, in the reception-room ornamented bolsters are also provided for visitors to recline upon.

A certain number of these huts form a "negary," or village, and each village is surrounded by a wall of hard blocks of coral. This wall is about six feet in height, and two-and-a-half in thickness, and is intended for fortification in time of war. With a few exceptions in Great Key, all the villages are on or near the sea-shore, doubtless because of the water difficulty already mentioned.

Besides timber and boats, the Key Islanders sell mother-of-pearl and other valuable shells, and a small quantity of coprah, or dried cocoa-nut. It will thus be seen that, although the group is not rich in variety of products—like so many of the islands in the same sea—it has yet some remarkable and interesting characteristics.

AMONG THE TUDORS.

WHO is for the Tudors by rail or omnibus, or in one's own state coach?—out of bustling Regent Street, where the newest of the new is freshly displayed, the latest fancy in apparel, the last new thing in toy or trinket, and so through the turnstile of the New Gallery, where a new Victorian shilling is the passport to another age.

Last year at this time we were in presence of the Stuarts and their times. And that forlorn family excited a sentimental interest which, perhaps, is wanting in the case of the Tudors. Among these there is no beautiful central figure, such as Mary Queen of Scots, with her foreign grace and refinement, to enlist the sympathies. The stiff ruff and stomacher of good Queen Bess are far removed from

artistic grace, and the broad, bloated face of bluff King Hal is as repellent as can be. But if our Royal hosts are not in themselves attractive, the age they represent is, above all others, splendid and brilliant. And here, from the walls of these galleries, look down upon us the faces, mostly limned from the life, of the fair women and brave men, gallant and sumptuous, in their habits as they lived, the great dames, the lovely maids, the proud nobles, the crafty statesmen, the stout soldiers, and brave adventurers, who played their parts in those stirring times; and, more sparingly, appear the great writers of the splendid literary group of the later Tudor period.

But some romantic interest attaches to the Tudors themselves—their humble origin, and the marvellous destiny that brought the descendants of the younger son of an obscure Welsh knight to wear the Royal crown, and lord it despotically over the proud nobility and stubborn commons of England as none had ever lorded it before. But who knows much of that handsome Owen, the waiting gentleman who literally tumbled into the affections of the pretty, silly, widowed Queen Katherine, the daughter of the illustrious house of Valois? Nor can much be said of the three sons of this unequal match, except that the eldest married the illustrious Margaret Beaufort, who, in the gloomy castle of Pembroke, gave birth to the coming founder of the dynasty.

Yet it was Margaret herself who was really the making of the Tudors, and she is worthily and justly installed as No. 1 in the catalogue of the Exhibition. But she is seen to better advantage in a really fine portrait lent by St. John's College, Cambridge—a meagre ascetic, but with the keenest intelligence shining forth from the wizened face. And we have her second husband, too, the first Earl of Derby—for she made the Stanleys as well as the Tudors—a bluff, blunt soldier, whom Margaret married no doubt for the purpose of advancing her son's interests. And this is the Stanley, whose defection on Bosworth field ruined the chance of Richard, and gave the victory to shallow Richmond.

Not so shallow, either, was Richmond, as we see him in his portraits, the best of which is from Trinity, Oxford; but keen and wary, with an ability which was of sharp, attorney-like character.

And here, too, is the buxom "Rose of York," whose marriage—little to her com-

fort, with Henry the Seventh—was said to have united the rival factions of the Roses. The very wedding, too, is depicted, according to Walpole, on a doubtful panel, which probably represents something else quite different.

Another picture, ascribed to Mabruce, represents three chubby and charming children, reputed to be Arthur, Harry, and baby Margaret. Indeed, there are several representations of Henry, his Queen, and their children.

Of the great men of Henry the Seventh's period, there is naturally but a meagre list. There is a family, or furniture picture, of that bold "Jockey of Norfolk," the only one of the great feudatories who remained faithful to Richard, and who fell on Bosworth field. We have also Sir Henry Wyatt and his cat—the two always inseparable—with a pretty legend attached of how the cat fed his master when imprisoned in the Tower, by catching pigeons and dragging them through the bars of his dungeon.

Thus far, the portraits and painting of the period are distinguished rather by their rarity and historic value than by any great artistic merit. But in the gallery which contains the portraits of Henry the Eighth's time, we have a harvest of good pictures, which show the flourishing state of the arts under a Prince, who, objectionable as he may appear as tyrant and Bluebeard, was undoubtedly possessed of considerable taste and judgement, and was no niggard patron of artists. Chief of all comes Holbein—a long array of his works, many of rare merit, others of doubtful authenticity, and some few less than doubtful. But if there is no evidence of the beginning of a really national school of portrait painters, yet, doubtless there were Englishmen rising up who had studied in the school of the Flemish masters, and whose works are often attributed to more famous foreign painters.

Undoubtedly the great feature of the Tudor Exhibition is the splendid collection of Holbein drawings which are exhibited upon screens in the galleries. They are done in coloured chalk and Indian ink, and are mostly sketches and studies from the life, of the heads of persons great and mediocre about the Court of Henry the Eighth. They are full of life and spirit, and drawn with the grace and precision of a great master; and to those who only know the painter from the laboured and formal excellence of his works in oil, these

drawings will come as a revelation of the power and genius of the artist. The faces of his sitters live and move and all but speak, and we seem to be at once brought into the actual presence of the men and women of this long-vanished past. We see the hapless Queens of the Royal seraglio, the Royal children — Elizabeth unfortunately is not among them — the burly father of unhappy Anne Boleyn, Sir Thomas More, and Cardinal Fisher, and many others of more or less distinction, but all instinct with life and character. These drawings are lent by the Queen from the Royal Library at Windsor, and probably have never been seen before by the public in their entirety as a collection, although a portion of them have appeared at Burlington House among the "Old Masters."

But by one hand or another we have portraits of most of the principal characters who shone or were extinguished in the reign of the butcher King. Wolsey appears more than once; but perhaps the most complete idea of him is to be obtained from a fine medallion in wax exhibited in the balcony, where his finely-moulded face and almost Moorish complexion is shown with life-like effect. Another fine face, and of a Royal cast, is Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, the one whose disgrace and execution forms so fine an episode in Shakespeare's *Henry the Eighth*. And we have the Duke of Norfolk, who, as Earl of Surrey, commanded at Flodden, and his son who, as Duke of Norfolk, flouts the disgraced Cardinal in *King Henry the Eighth*, and who afterwards barely escaped with his head on his shoulders, owing to the opportune death of the old tyrant Henry.

And we have the son, too, of this last, that Lord Surrey who sings such melodious love verses to his Geraldine, and whose death warrant was signed in the dying throes of the ruthless king, and who suffered the fate that his father escaped. And we have the fleshly, handsome, foolish face of that Charles Brandon, who, as cloth of freize, was matched with cloth of gold, and his Royal sweetheart, Mary, who, ere the funeral baked meats of her deceased husband, King Louis, had grown cold, leaped into the arms of her old lover. And we have Margaret, too, the Scottish Queen, a woman of the same amorous type, whose brawling loves and intrigues scandalised her less demonstrative subjects. And Anne Boleyn, too, is there, whose portraits faintly suggest the

roguish grace that captivated the King and all his Court. And here we may turn to the relics of poor Anne, the little ermine tippet which she wore upon the scaffold, encircling the slender, delicate neck, and with marks of blood upon it that touch one with a thrill of horror, as if the ghastly scene were dimly outlined here. Another relic of the scaffold is Anne's dainty toothpick case, accompanied by an interesting family tradition, to the effect that it was given by the Queen on the morning she suffered to Captain Gwyn, the officer on guard, telling him that it was the first token the King had given her, and bidding him observe "that a serpent formed part of the device, and a serpent the giver had proved to her."

We may make acquaintance, too, with another fair woman, Mary, the sister of Anne Boleyn, and even prettier than she, and as a set-off we have Holbein's truthful portrait of Anne of Cleves, which suggests indulgent judgement on King Harry for his ungallant reception of the lady. Nor can we wonder that the great Bashaw should string up the Grand Vizier for presenting him with such a wife. And here we have the Grand Vizier in question, Cromwell, Earl of Essex, with a commonplace but shrewd face, of quite a nineteenth century cast. To add to our mental gallery of female charms, we have that incomparable picture of Holbein's, the portrait of Christina of Milan, the face most exquisitely painted, and the expression full of charm and vitality. Small wonder that Bluebeard should desire to place the charming original among his collection, or that the fair enchantress should decline the honour, remarking "that she had but one head; if she had two, one should be at His Majesty's service."

Then we have that fine, but curious, picture called the Dancing Picture, where Henry the Eighth, Anne Boleyn, and others, are seen dancing in a meadow, like so many nymphs and satyrs. The other nymphs are said to be the King's sisters—Margaret and Mary—and fine, well-grown buxom damsels they are; but far too young and lissom for the figures they are assumed to represent. More authentic portraits of Henry's sisters are to be found on the walls of the gallery. And, coming to a younger generation, we have Mary, afterwards Queen, in whom we see reproduced the rigid, ascetic nature of Margaret Beaufort, the No. 1 of the Exhibition

and also of the family Tudor in general. And we find Edward and Mary with a saloon to themselves—the least interesting in the series—although we are glad to meet with the Protector, Somerset, who gave us the original Somerset House; his brother the Admiral; the unhappy Lady Jane Grey, and other victims of the axe and block in that troubled period. As for poor little Edward, whom we find half smothered in Royal robes, bestowing Bridewell upon the citizens of London for the benefit of their rogues and vagabonds, he is like the good boy in a story book, full of excellent intentions, but with no heart of life in him.

But in Elizabeth's gallery we come upon times of far greater brilliancy and interest, although the artistic quality of the portraits is far inferior to those of Henry's time. Holbein is gone, and no one takes up his mantle. The favourite Court painter is Zucchero, an excellent painter of tissues, but without a spark of genius. Henry's cold, stock-fish eyes had an excellent critical quality about them; but Queen Elizabeth's keen and piercing little orbs seem to have been unendowed with the slightest artistic faculty. Yet must there have been good native artists in those days, for some of the portraits by unknown artists are of excellent quality. Coming to the portraits of Shakespeare, every one must be delighted with the richness of a collection that embraces almost all the known pieces with any claim to authenticity. We have here no less than five important portraits of Shakespeare; but the finest of them all, and the one that alone imposes conviction of its being studied from the life, is the remarkable panel which comes from Charlote, still occupied, as in Shakespeare's time, by the family of Lucy. The head resembles that of the famous bust in Stratford Church, but is shown with greater power and expression, and is drawn with a vigour and strength of brush that reveals the hand of a master; yet, like everything attached to Shakespeare's memory, the origin of the portrait is wrapped in mystery.

We have there good portraits, too, of Fletcher the dramatist, and a good, sturdy gentleman of his inches. Of minor lights, though greater in their day, there is Philip Sidney, chivalrous and refined, and Dorset, who set the example of combining the study of law with the pursuit of literature. We miss the greater name of Marlowe, and Edmund Spenser's, next to

Shakespeare's, the most illustrious of its age. But we have Lord Bacon just rising into fame, and his father, Sir Nicholas, fat and scant of breath.

And the relics of the time are numerous and good. Here we have Elizabeth's ring, the very ring, perhaps, that she gave to the Earl of Essex as a pledge of her grace should he at any time of need demand it, and which, so the story runs, my lord, when under sentence of death, actually sent to the Queen by the Countess of Nottingham, who, in the interest of the Cecils, withheld it. And we may remember how the Countess, confessing the matter on her death-bed, Elizabeth shook her roughly and swore "that God might forgive her, but she never would." As for other relics of Elizabeth, she seems to have left behind her a host of souvenirs as she journeyed about from one great house to another. Here it is a stocking, there a glove, or a hat, or, perhaps, it is a hair-brush or fine-tooth comb. And we have her viol, and perhaps her spinet; and with these relics innumerable of Drake, of Raleigh, of Frobisher, and other bold adventurers of the time, with trophies taken from the Armada, or cast up by the sea.

The miniatures, too, of the period are represented most worthily by many fine examples, and the coins and medals are often of great rarity, and the whole collection of them full of interest for those who have time to study them. And manuscripts are represented by a neat assortment from the Loseley MSS., and printed books by sundry rare copies, a good show of Bibles, Shakespeare's folios, and early edition of sonnets, the first complete edition of the *Arcadia*, and other rarities. In these departments, too, we are promised a further public exhibition of the treasures of the period by the authorities of the British Museum.

But in armour and weapons connoisseurs will find a selection of remarkable beauty and value. It is a period of decadence for armour in its warlike uses; those arquebuses, with their beautifully inlaid stocks; those pistols, with curious, ingenious wheel locks, and other devices—the "vile guns" of the period—have literally "knocked holes" in the ironclad warrior. But for jousts and tournaments, and the parade of war, the armourer's forges are still busy, and beautiful and elaborately ornamented suits of armour adorn the hall of the Tudors in russet and gold and blue and gold, and fluted cap-à-

pie, with great tating helmets, and horse armour, with head pieces of every kind and shape.

Indeed, it would be difficult to supply with more success the atmosphere of the age of the Tudors. Here are treasures gathered from every part of England, from old historic mansions, from Royal palaces, from the halls of colleges and old city guilds, heirlooms which form the pride of ancient manors, relics which have been handed down from generation to generation. And a key to the whole is to be found in the excellent catalogue which presents in a brief form the biographies of the foremost people of the time.

NATURE AND CIVILISATION.

THE best of Nature is that she is so fearless. Candour also may be said to be constitutional with her. She is, moreover, completely inexorable. "If you do not like me as I appear to you," she says to her subjects, "so much the worse for you. I certainly do not propose to change for your benefit. The fault lies with you, not with me."

This brings us to what may perhaps be called Nature's worst characteristic. She is devoid of feeling — utterly. She has her prescribed methods of life, and that they are not ruinously interfered with is all that she cares much about. She tolerates the interference, or, if you please, the aid of Art up to a certain point. But once let Art assume too much, and she straightway comes down upon the pretentious youngster with that heavy hand of hers which has the weight of unnumbered millenniums in it, like the gravestones of the Pharaohs in the British Museum. In such a case, there is no standing up against her. The one-year-old babe might as hopefully presume to dispute with its mother.

Civilisation is Art writ large. There is the same tacit tolerance on the part of Nature of those acquired ways of the world which we call civilised practices, as in the kindred walks of Art. Let civilisation become monstrous, and Nature steps forth to put an end to the civilisation. The mounds which men name Babylon, the fields which a naked guide indicates to the doubting stranger as Nineveh, the still waters over the cities of the Dead Sea, the old walls and columns of old Rome—these are all dumbly eloquent of Nature's power, and her determination to use it.

And individuals are in the same case as these extinct cities of effete civilisations. Be the era or the country ever so mild and conformable to Nature's simple injunctions, that man or woman who, in the midst of this universal obedience, dares to rise up and defy Nature à outrance, pays the penalty as emphatically as Babylon.

It is amusing as well as highly educative to contrast the deportment of Nature with that of Art. Nature is never self-conscious. "I am what I am," she seems to say. Art, on the other hand, when not impudent or conceited, is prone to cringe. In the last case she murmurs appealingly through her achievements to beholders: "I hope I may be taken for what I strive to be."

In the bad old days, when might was always right, there was much of Nature's strength about the tyrants who ruled mankind with the clenched fist of despotism. It was then obedience or death. Now it is different. Civilisation has become complex. In governing bodies, whether they are Kings or States, Art and Nature coquet with each other. Anciently, it was one thing or the other. In these days, it is something of both. The State asserts Nature's principle: I am the strongest, therefore I prevail; and, therefore, also, I will be supreme and obeyed without question. But she cannot so easily enforce her claims. And so it comes to pass that Socialists, Nihilists, Fenians, and other conspirators against the State, are in no peril of their lives, and plot against the would-be autocrat without let or hindrance. It is all very fine for statesmen to enunciate hard and fast principles of government. Unfortunately, they set the cart before the horse. Given the ruler, the principles of his rule will not fail to ensue. Art is, in some sense, a small, humble shadow which inevitably creeps after the strong, great form of Nature.

Nature is first; Art emanates from her as mountains from the round surface of the globe, or, better, as a child is born of its mother. In the beginning of its existence the child is fractious, and hardly less helpless than a kitten ere its eyes are opened. It has then no notion of emulating its parent. Occasionally it kicks and storms at her in weak, unseemly rage; declares that it hates her; and, with ridiculous petulance, tries to break the leading-strings wherewith it is bound to her. But, in the cooler moments of reaction, it is very penitent. And, by-and-by, when the revulsion is as extreme as its

earlier passion, it cries aloud that its mother is all the world; that there is none to compare with her, so good is she, so great, and so satisfying. It then strives its hardest to tread in its mother's footsteps, and gives up all the wicked thoughts of independence and rebellion, which formerly possessed it.

This is, in fact, the best course it can follow, upon one condition. The condition is that, in the meantime, it has never been seduced out of Nature's own ways. Once, however, let this have occurred, and there is no possibility of an entire, instantaneous conformity with its maternal ideal. It will be a matter of time and immense patience.

We see this well exemplified in many branches of our economy of civilisation. Art in painting and sculpture are, of course, the most obvious illustrations of it. Literature gives us another fine illustration. It is marvellous to consider what Herculean efforts the novelist of the nineteenth century must make ere he can hope to give a natural representation of life. He has been so ruthlessly trained in the school of civilisation, and he is the heir to so many traditions that conflict with Nature, that to be natural is like tearing his skin from his flesh.

Glance further at some other of the professions of civilised life: those of law, medicine, and architecture, for example.

It may be said that of all things law depends least upon Nature. But is it not a fact that all the codes and precedents in all the myriad volumes of the world's systems of jurisprudence tend, in short, towards one single purpose—the determination of right? Of course, there is justice in law and justice in equity. Nature's operations are much on a par with the world's justice. She gives each living individual its due; but to the strong she gives, like many of the world's courts of law, much more than their due.

Look next at medicine. How Nature must laugh at the various endeavours of pharmacopœia to defeat her conclusions, to checkmate her! All the dried frogs' legs, adders' tongues, mummy dust, and pills in creation are fragments of Nature; so that, in effect, her children are dosed homœopathically, whether they will or no. And much good do such drugs do in the long run. They may quicken the pulse, or lower it, for a moment or two; but the after-time comes, and shrugs its shoulders. Not that doctors are to be contemned as

so many charlatans seeking only their own profit. Very far indeed from this! Among their rank are included the noblest of men. But they are fast learning over again that Nature herself is omnipotent—the chief physician; and that the best they can do is to follow humbly in her train.

But now of architecture. What is the essential aim of all architecture, save to provide roofs for the heads of mankind? Surely a very necessary thing to do, it may be said. Why, yes; and, consequently, Nature did not omit to provide it: though she was not ever ready to confess that it was an indispensable need. Caves in the rocks, and forests with their impenetrable shade, preceded domed and pillared habitations, and the long, monotonous red streets of our modern cities. But the wood-cutter has worked hard in parallel movement with the advance of civilisation, and our own aspirations have carried us beyond the stage of troglodytes.

Nevertheless, we have taken our hints from Nature, and followed her own devices as nearly as our intelligence and skill will allow. We have modelled our famous pillars of stone upon the trunks of her palms, and built our houses after the pattern of her caves. Whatever the Gothic style of architecture may be held to be symbolical of, as an ideal, it is but a fantastical reproduction in stone of the oaks and elms in Nature's woods. And it is a mark of our culture, of our far divergence from Nature herself, in our thoughts and lives, that we prefer to stand and gaze at unwieldy piles of wood and granite, or marble, the work of mankind, rather than pace, in solemn admiration, the cool aisles and fretted vaults of the forests, with their mosaic of golden twilight on the greenward pavement, and the chant of their bird-choristers echoing through the sunlight and arches towards the high blue dome over all.

Nature is absolutely truthful, and without shame. Civilisation has begotten divers bad things, but few more curious than the trick of duplicity, consecrated by habitual usage. Such books as "The Art of Conversation," James "On Polite Speech," and "Prudential Curbs for the Tongue," by Wise Simon, would astound Nature, if she took much interest in the minor details of life.

"What!" she might say, "you have a tongue, and you do not know how to use it! How foolish! Is it necessary for

you to be taught the use of the other organs with which you are endowed? Why do you not write books on the method of bringing the teeth together upon a beefsteak, the way to smell a rose, or how to see things? I must have been more stupid than I flatter myself I generally am, if seeing, smelling, eating, and talking do not come to you all, as easily as rain falls from a cloud."

"Ah, dear dame," we might reply to her, "you are very justly ironical. Of course, no one wants to be taught how to eat, or how to look at an agreeable object. That is all as simple now as it was, no doubt, at first. But speech is another matter. It is really open to question whether you had any idea of the responsible nature of this gift when you gave it to us. You must know, for instance, that in these days, if you tell the truth, you may be taken before a high personage called a judge, charged with libel, and fined a thousand pounds. Or you may, without in the least intending it, insult your dearest friend, so that his love for you is changed instantly to hatred. Worse still, dear dame, hardly one man and wife could live amicably together for a week, much less a year, if they were mutually to be so horribly candid with each other.

"You see, therefore, that it is to your own interest that we should be cautious and have these manuals for discreet talking which you ridicule so strongly. Inasmuch, too, as we are your own children, it seems a little injudicious of you to blame us for doing what the constitution we derive immediately from you, crossed obliquely by the influence of our own civilisation, has urged us to do, alike for our benefit, and, therein, for yours."

"Well, well," one can imagine Nature saying, in interruption of this category of charges against her for the inadequateness of her works, "let the subject drop. So long as your methods of civilisation do not depopulate the world, you are welcome to them. I must have life in one form or another. It has often irritated me to see how you men are killing the lions, and tigers, and elephants off my globe, so that, in time, I shall not have a single specimen left, except stuffed ones in your museums, which, of course, do not count. But, on the other hand, I reflect that either you or they must increase; and, as I confess I have a preference for human beings, who have shown a marvellous capacity for development—to use one of your own

expressive words—I wink at all this bloodshed. And, besides, I know well enough that, if you please, you could, in opposition, charge me with destroying, in like manner, those various species of large quadrupeds to which you give appalling names, when you dig up their bones. I do not propose to fatigue you with an explanation of my motives in this particular, because, for one reason, I should thereby cut off one of those channels of investigation which you explore with such vivacity and interest. But you may be sure I have acted with great wisdom here, as elsewhere. In short, as I have said, you and your civilisation have 'carte blanche' from me, up to a certain point. So you increase and multiply, in a proper way, and do not completely transform the surface of your world, you may indulge all the bizarre fancies of slaughter, discovery, and locomotion which you evolve from those very singular abstractions which you call your wits."

Our various social systems and unwritten codes of social conduct are, needless to say, nothing in the eyes of Nature. She is generally tolerant of them; but she makes no further concession in their favour. Yet she does not at all times respect them. Now and then she interferes disagreeably with the constitution of civilisation. A rough retailer of gin slings, cocktails, and whisky and water discovers a silver mine. His discovery makes him so rich that he is the envy of men and women, who, while yet he sold cocktails, would merely have curled the lip at him. They now bend the knee to him; implore him to marry one of their daughters; intrigue for admissions to his balls and dinner parties; and in all possible ways show their veneration for the god of mammon. They do not like to do it; but they feel that it is required of them. Again, it chances that a Crown Prince turns the cold shoulder to the canons of etiquette, and marries a governess or an opera singer. The Crown Prince's father, the King, groans; and the Queen sheds tears of grief and anger. But this is all futile. Or a duke, rich as a king, and as closely bound by ties of convention, gives his hand to a farmer's daughter who knows nothing of heraldry, and whose only recommendations are blazoned in her bright, sweet face.

It is all alike lamentable, but very natural.

"My dear children," one can suppose

Nature saying, with a smile, in response to the expostulations of the world, "what would your novelists do for plots and romances if I did not thus now and again put the tip of my little finger through the crust of your social pie? It is all nonsense for them to talk of their imaginations. Without me, they would imagine nothing. You could not get salt from the ocean unless salt impregnated the waters of the ocean. But do not be frightened. I am not going to purloin a single one of your institutions; and before you have done sighing, the pie will be whole again."

Once or twice in a century, however, something very serious happens. Nature plays the part of the giant awakened from sleep, and full to the throat of energy that must find a vent, though he knows not in what direction. It was Nature who guided the arm of Napoleon while he mowed people from the face of the earth by tens of thousands. A battle here, a battle there; it was but a stroke of the blade of the sickle of Nature. At another time, it is a dire pestilence, or a famine, or an earthquake, or a volcanic eruption, or a tidal wave.

Civilisation goes into brief convulsions of distress when such events happen. "My own existence is menaced!" she sobs forth in alarm, when she sees her children swept away. "I must do something in aid of myself." And so she concocts small but generous schemes to counteract the particular calamity which afflicts the world, and threatens to overwhelm her. The societies for the succour of the wounded in battle, the collections for the distribution of rice among the starving millions of China or Hindostan, and for the rebuilding of cities which Nature, by a mere yawn, has erased from the earth's surface; these and the like are the efforts of Civilisation to keep the balance of power between herself and Nature. But, as we have said, it is like the wrestle of a child with its mother. Either the mother smiles unmoved, or puts the iniquitous infant in a corner, or locks it in a room by itself, where it soon realises its own insufficiency, and becomes reconciled to the irresistible decrees of its parent.

One more of Nature's strong characteristics may be mentioned—her simplicity. It is evident in all her ways, but in none more than in the plain injunction which alone suffices for life: Eat and move, and you shall live.

"Ah, I dare say," remarks Civilisation, in pert comment upon this. "The fruits of the field, and that sort of thing, no doubt! But such fare does not satisfy my needs. I really do not know for certain whether you meant the lambs, cows, partridges, trout, and other living delicacies, exclusively for human consumption. But we have acquired the taste for them, and we could not possibly resign them now. It is odd, however, that some men, over whom I have as yet had no control, and who are so brutal as to be almost in a state of nature—no offence to you, dame—eat each other. This somewhat militates against the accepted belief that you designed us to live wholly upon apples and pears, grapes, bananas, blackberries, and other such things, which nowadays form but a single branch of edible productions under the cold name of 'dessert.' But these men, or rather 'brutes,' may be only the exceptions, which, you know, prove a rule; and so they may be disregarded. Besides, they have never tasted truffles or pâté de foie gras. If they had, I warrant they would abruptly forsake the paths of nature—again pardon the implication—for those of civilisation.

"As for the other matter—that of movement, by which I suppose you mean exercise—surely we have enough of that. Why, we have multiplied the one original mode of locomotion by I do not know how many times. You, dear, dull, old mother, endowed us with legs—nothing more—for our purpose. What, then, do you say, when you see us flashing across country in trains; sailing in ships from one continent of the globe to another; floating among the clouds in balloons; riding bicycles and tricycles; not to capitulate the long list of uncivilised quadrupeds that we bestride, with more or less comfort and a due sense of our dignity and their degradation? I assure you that there never was a time in all my history when legs were less indispensable than now. I have so contrived it that cripples, in these days, can go through life with much enjoyment; and I know several esteemed men who are without natural legs, though no one but their friends and their valets would suspect it. Is not that a triumph?"

But here also, as in every other instance, Civilisation does but succeed through Nature herself.

"Your triumph, my dear child, is upon my own material. I, therefore, take your

exultation as a personal compliment. Without me you could not be; though I, of course, am completely independent of you and your aid. And, as a last word, let me whisper to you, or, rather, remind you how you may make men even more successful creatures than they are. Never forget that they are of Nature as well as of Civilisation. The doctrine of atavism ought, indeed, to inform you that, 'au fond,' they are more likely to show their resemblance to me than to you, even though you may be their parent, as I am yours. Acknowledge, therefore, as openly as you can, that they are natural first of all, and, but secondarily, civilised beings. It is the only way to secure yourself from my interference, as you call it, a little rudely, perhaps; and the only way, also, to ensure for yourself the respect of men themselves."

THE INNUIT.

FAR beyond the pale of civilisation, in the dreary, frost-bound regions where ice and snow reign supreme, dwells a race condemned to a life of toil and hardship which can scarcely be conceived by the inhabitants of more favoured lands. To reach them, the traveller must leave behind him every object of ordinary life, every familiar habit and custom which use has rendered a second nature. He must bid farewell to branching trees, to green fields, to crops of every kind, to domestic animals, to every implement of common use, and to food and clothing of such a kind as even the poorest people of a less terrible climate possess.

It is impossible to conceive how human beings can ever have forced their way into these northern fastnesses, or how, having reached them, they ever persuaded themselves to stay. Yet, strange to say, the love of the Esquimaux—or, as he calls himself, the Innuit, a word meaning the people—for his ice-bound home, and his pride in its features, are inexhaustible. Some of them have been brought to Denmark, England, and America; but they have always begged to be taken home again, and, after getting back among their own people, have ridiculed the whites in every possible manner. They have a legend to the effect that the Creator made white men first; but was dissatisfied with them, and, consequently, made the Innuit, with whom he was quite

pleased. Kane relates that when he encountered some of these people, they were astounded to find that they were not the only race upon the earth, and disbelieved his accounts of lands which exhibited features different to those of their own.

The Innuit have no king, no government, no property, no law, and no religion. Their one idea is to do as their forefathers did, and so long as they follow the customs which have been handed down to them, they think that they do enough. Their food consists of nothing but flesh; bread they are absolutely without. They have no medicine nor treatment in time of sickness, and their household furniture consists of nothing but a stone lamp and a snow couch covered with the moss upon which the reindeer feeds, a few skins sometimes serving to further remove its discomfort. Unlike the Laplanders and the Kamschatdales, the Innuit have never tamed the reindeer, but look upon it as merely food. The white bear, the seal, and the walrus are the other animals on which they exist, and in capturing these and conveying their flesh to the hungry mouths at home, they are assisted by the Esquimaux dogs.

In the short summer they live in the "tupic," a rude tent made by suspending a huge sheet of skins across a horizontal pole; but their stationary dwelling-places are huts half-underground, and built of earth, bones, and turf. Entrance is gained by a long, low tunnel, which has to be traversed on all fours, and there is a rude window, fitted with whale's intestines, through which a feeble glimmer of light makes its way. When moving about in winter they build "igloo," or snow-huts, formed of blocks of snow, fitted most ingeniously together, and cleverly arched. The lamp, which is both fire and light, is cut out of soft steatite, or soap-stone, and hangs from the roof. Its oil is made from whale's blubber, on which floats the dried moss that forms the wick.

In powers of enduring hunger and capacity for food when it is obtainable, the Innuit are equalled by no other people. Most of their food is eaten raw, frequently in a frozen condition, and eight or ten pounds is looked upon as an ordinary quantity for a single person's meal. In times of plenty a man may be seen lying on his back utterly incapable of feeding himself any longer, but being further gorged with dainty bits of fat and blubber by his wife or children.

The seasons of plenty are, however, the exception rather than the rule with the Innuït. In the long winter darkness, days and nights are passed by the men, crouched motionless by the hole at which a seal may be expected to "blow." The dreariness of those long watches must be beyond anything that we can picture. The bitter cold, the whirling snow, and the fog, which often settles down for days at a time, must harmonise too well with the biting hunger of the patient watcher, and his dismal thoughts of semi-starvation which is the lot of those he has left in the "igloo." The chance of ending this state of things depends solely upon the quickness and skill of a single blow, for if it is badly dealt, the expected prey is off at once, and the cold, dismal hours or, may be, days of watching count for nothing. Even should the harpoon be well aimed, and find a home in the body of the animal, things may not turn out satisfactorily; for a line attaches the weapon to the waist of the hunter, and unless he instantly plants his feet in the notches provided for that purpose, and throws himself into such a position that the strain exerted by his wounded quarry is thrown in the direction of his spine and the axis of his lower limbs, he may be pulled under the ice, to a death from which there is no escape, or fall across the hole in such a manner that the struggles of the seal break his back.

In summer large numbers of reindeer fall before the bows of the Innuït, who watch for them at mountain passes, choosing, if possible, one which lies between two pieces of water, in which they may be able to drive the startled animals, and there kill them without trouble. In these raids, enough meat is often obtained to satisfy even the exorbitant appetites of these people for many months, and were they to avail themselves of the natural ice-houses—which are to be found in every direction—the winter might be shorn of half its horrors. But such a course does not ever seem to suggest itself to the improvident Innuït. While food is plentiful he eats to repletion, giving no thought to the months of hardship and scarcity which are so near, and learning no lesson of thrift from the awful straits in which he too often finds himself, when the sun has set, to reappear no more for months.

The Innuït are not so small a people as they are usually thought to be. Their average height is certainly below that of the people of more genial climes, as is only

natural, for the hardships of their life must have a tendency to dwarf them; but many of them reach a height of five feet six and upwards. The clumsy garments which they find necessary to protect them from the rigorous climate of the northern lands in which they dwell, have a marked tendency to give them the appearance of a very small race. Their faces are fat and egg-shaped, with small, twinkling eyes. The natural colour of their complexions is, comparatively, fair; but this can very seldom be ascertained from personal observation, as their skins are invariably very discoloured with dirt and smoke. The antipathy which they have to washing is probably due to the coldness of the climate, and it reaches to such a pitch that if a mother wishes to cleanse her infant she effects her purpose by an application of the tongue.

Though apparently very muscular, they are not by any means strong, and the feats of ordinary Europeans strike them as miracles of power. The dress of both sexes is alike, except that the women wear a large hood, in which they carry their babies, and have tails, like those of a dress-coat, to their jackets. A short jacket of sealskin, with loose trousers of seal, bear, or reindeer, and skin boots which go under them, complete their attire in summer. An under-jacket, worn with the fur inside, and a pair of large, fingerless skin gloves are added, to keep out the cold of winter.

The hard life of the Innuït is ended by a death, of which it is impossible to think without a shudder; for the dying are walled up in their homes and left to face the approach of the destroyer in solitude.

In Greenland there are ten thousand Esquimaux, or more, under the care of the Danish Government, who lead fairly civilised lives; it is not of them that we have been speaking, but of the fast diminishing members of the race whose homes lie nearer the North Pole than the steps of their more cultured brethren often lead them.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "*Count Paolo's Ring*," "*All Hallow's Eve*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV.

"WE will never forget each other, Doris—you and I! We will always belong to each other! We will think of each

other always, and we will write every week and tell each other all the news, eh, dear? Come, promise!"

It was Laurence's last evening. On the morrow he was to leave Chesham, and begin the new life to which he looked forward so confidently, which was to bring him fame and riches and happiness. On the morrow he was to leave; and now, for the last time, the boy and girl were seated hand in hand in their favourite spot under the apple-tree talking of the future.

Laurence's handsome face looked even handsomer than usual that evening, for it was flushed with excitement and happiness. It formed a strong contrast to Doris's pale face. Now that the moment of parting was drawing so near, she began to realise what a blank Laurence's departure would leave in her life. Vague forebodings, too, of the future haunted her. She was sending Laurence away from her; sending him into that busy, bustling world of which she knew so little, but the wickedness and selfishness of which the Vicar sometimes denounced in his sermons; sending Laurie, who was as ignorant and innocent as herself, to face its dangers alone; to fight alone in the fierce warfare in which so many were worsted, so few triumphant! Had she done well? The remembrance of Paul Beaumont's words haunted her.

"Whether success or failure is his lot; whether he comes out of the struggle a better and nobler man, or maimed and bruised and conquered, the struggle will have left its mark upon him; and it is not your Laurence, the boy you love now, who will come back to you! Remembering this, will you still send him?" Paul had said in his grave voice; and she had answered confidently enough that she would send him, that she was not afraid!

She did not feel quite so confident this evening; the shadow of the coming parting lay heavily on her heart, she felt nervous and dispirited, though, for Laurence's sake, and because she would not damp his happiness, she struggled resolutely to hide her grief, and to speak brightly and hopefully.

The parting had come rather earlier than either she or Laurence had anticipated; but Paul Beaumont had been summoned to London on business, and had proposed that Laurence should accompany him. He would then be able to personally introduce the boy to the artist in whose studio he was to work, and in whose family he was to reside.

Laurence eagerly accepted the proposal. He was glad to get away from home, and from the cold, disapproving looks of his uncle and aunt. They had not raised any strong objection when Laurence informed them of Paul Beaumont's offer, and of his great wish to accept it. But though they were silent, they were none the less disapproving; and Laurence was sincerely glad to escape from the cold looks and gloomy silence which chilled his happiness, and made him feel half remorseful and half angry.

But if he was glad to leave the Vicarage, he was unfeignedly sorry to say good-bye to pretty Doris — Doris, who had been friend and sister to him, who believed so implicitly in his genius; but, he told himself that the parting would be but a temporary one. By-and-by, when he was earning both fame and money, he would come back for her, and—for he could never love any one half so well as Doris—they would be married and live happy ever afterwards. A boy's dream, as vague and unreal as most dreams, but not the less sweet on that account.

"Promise to write to me every week," he repeated, and he lifted a long lock of her hair, which had fallen over her shoulders and was shining like red gold in the sunlight, and kissed it.

Doris smiled.

"Of course I will. But you must not mind if the letters are dull and stupid, Laurie. You know nothing ever happens here; one day is exactly like another, and I never go anywhere or see any one, so I shall not have much news to tell you."

"You must tell me everything about yourself, just as you do now, Doris. You must tell me when Aunt Joan is more disagreeable or amiable than usual, and what music you are practising for the choir, and how the garden is getting on, and whether the poultry thrive or not. Every little detail will be interesting to me; and oh, above all, you must tell me what guests they have at the Hall—there are generally a good many in September, you know—and all about my lady's resplendent toilettes," Laurie laughed.

Doris smiled also.

"I will tell you all that, Laurence. Do you know if Mr. Beaumont is to remain for the partridge shooting?"

"I fancy so. He returns from town on Friday."

"I am glad you are to go up with him.

It was a kind thought," Doris said, musingly. "But he is always kind."

"Kind! I should just think so. He is a splendid fellow: the most generous and noblest of men," Laurence said, quickly. "I can never be grateful enough to him; but I will show him that his kindness has not been thrown away. I will work so hard that some day he will be proud of me!" the boy cried, and his eyes brightened and his cheeks glowed as he spoke.

Both fire and glow were reflected back into Doris's face and eyes as she answered:

"I know you will, Laurie! And he is, as you say, the noblest and most generous of men. I don't believe a word of what they say in the village; do you, Laurie? About him and Lady Cecil, you know."

Doris dropped her voice to a whisper, and looked up timidly at Laurence. He laughed and hesitated.

"That he was once her lover, you mean, and is secretly her lover still? I don't know, Doris. They say, you know, that in the great world all the married women have lovers. Thomas, the butler at the Hall, told me that Lady Cecil never asks husbands and wives together. It is so dull for every one, she says."

"But how dreadful!"

Doris looked half ashamed, half disgusted.

"I have often thought that Lady Cecil does not care much for Sir John," she went on; "and, indeed, they are an ill-assorted pair!"

"Of course every one knows that she only married him for his money," Laurence answered, carelessly. "She was in love with Mr. Beaumont; but he was poor then, so she threw him over and married Sir John. But they say at the Hall—servants have terribly sharp eyes, you know, Doris—that she is in love with him still; that she hates to see him speak to another woman; and that, if he were but to hold up his little finger and say 'Come,' she would give up everything for him."

"Even her husband and child?" Doris said, looking up with shocked, solemn eyes. "Oh, she could not be so wicked; and I am quite sure that Mr. Beaumont is far too honourable to think of her in that way. He is Sir John's friend, and he loves little Floss. Oh, it cannot be true, Laurie!"

"I don't believe it; but one hears things now and then, you know. They say, for one thing, that my lady does not like him coming here; that she is jealous of you, Doris."

Laurence laughed, but Doris did not echo the laugh. The flush deepened in her cheeks, and her grey eyes looked stormy and dark as she drew up her little proud head.

"Of me. That is absurd," she said with a cold smile.

"Of course it is. I know what brings him here well enough. He only comes to consult with you about me," Laurence went on calmly; "but a jealous woman can fashion a rival out of a mere shadow! And you must not get too fond of him, Doris." He laughed and put his arm round her, in his boyish, affectionate way. "You belong to me, you know! I can't have any one else—not even Mr. Beaumont—put before me in your thoughts."

"You need not be afraid of that, Laurie; you will always be first with me," Doris answered in her earnest voice. "You are my second self, you know. I am quite as much interested in all you do as you are yourself. Your success will be my success, or your failure my failure. But we will not talk of failure, dear," she added, "that is impossible."

"Quite; as long as I have your wishes and prayers to help me," Laurie said in a low voice. "I believe the Vicar is right—that I am weak and unstable, and too easily elated and too easily depressed to do any great work in the world! He told me, only the other day, that I had no real grit in me; that you were by far the better man of the two! And I believe it, Doris. If it had not been for you I should have given up all hope of ever indulging my cherished hopes; flung palette and brush aside, and resigned myself to becoming a mere writing, calculating machine! But you were always hopeful, and you made me work and hope also! Did I tell you what Paul Beaumont said about you the other day, Doris?"

"No."

Doris shook her head.

"We were talking about you, and he spoke of you—oh, I cannot tell you all he said, it would make you vain. But he bade me always remember—and his voice was quite serious and grave, not laughing and scoffing, as it often is—that your love was my best safeguard, and my highest incentive to success; that since you believed in me, if I failed to justify that belief, or wasted my talent, and so brought trouble and disappointment to you, I had better never have been born. Oh, he thinks no end of you, Doris—a deal more than he does of me."

Doris smiled; her grey eyes grew soft and tender.

"You won't disappoint me, Laurence," she said, confidently. "I believe in you if he doesn't. You have only to work hard, and be hopeful, and you will be a great artist some day. And then when all the papers are praising you, and every one is flocking to see your pictures, think how proud I shall be—oh, prouder than any one else in the world, because I love you better than any one else, my dear!"

The girl cried, and her face grew so beautiful that Laurence stared at her in surprised delight.

"How pretty you look, Doris! I never thought you could look so lovely," he said, in an odd, quiet voice—"oh, ten times more lovely in that old blue frock than Lady Cecil ever looks in her grand dresses! The frock seems to suit you, my dear, though I dare say it would look shabby enough on any one else. And these blush roses"—he gathered one or two late roses as he spoke, and held them against her cheek—"are like you, too; they are so pure, and delicate, and frail, and yet there is a certain strength about them; they can stand rain and cold winds better than their more splendid sisters. And you are like them, Doris. Here, take this, dear, and pin it in your brooch."

Doris smiled, and took the rose and pinned it in the little brooch, which was the only ornament she possessed.

"I will keep it for your sake—in memory of to-night," she said, softly; and then a silence, which neither cared to break, fell on them.

In the old garden, the shadows of the approaching twilight were already gathering under the trees, though the windows of the Red House were still glittering in the red flame of the sunset. The time for the singing of birds was over, but the robins were twittering, and a thrush high up in the apple-tree every now and then gave a few low, sweet notes. The night moths were fluttering among the flowers; the bees buzzed drowsily as, their day's work over, they flew back to their hives. The tall hollyhocks bent their heads as the wind rustled softly by. No sound or sign told of the existence of an outer world; the boy and girl were as much alone as Adam and Eve in their Paradise.

The strange charm which the old garden always had for Paul Beaumont seemed,

almost for the first time, apparent to Laurence that evening. He looked round it with longing, half-smiling, half-saddened eyes. How many happy hours he had spent there, he thought. How peaceful and tranquil it looked, and how sweet Doris's face as she raised it to look at the sunset. What a fool he had been never to find out until now how pretty she was, the boy thought, and then thought with a quick pang of jealousy, that perhaps in his absence others might find it out also, and be less slow to tell her of it than he had been.

Moved by a sudden impulse, he caught her hand and kissed it passionately.

"Doris, remember, we belong to each other—you and I, always," he cried, with a new passionate inflection in his voice that startled Doris, who was still tranquilly watching the sunset.

Slowly she lowered her great eyes, and looked at him; and as she met his gaze, a lovely light flashed into them, a lovely colour played in her cheeks, and her heart fluttered with a new delight as the love, which so long unknown to her had slumbered there, awakened into life. For one long moment they looked at each other in silence, then, moved by a mutual impulse, they bent forward, and hand was clasped in hand, and lips met lips in a long kiss.

"Oh, always, Laurie," Doris said in her solemn voice. "We belong to each other, you and I, for ever and ever and ever!"

The light faded; the shadows grew darker; the scent of the stocks and mignonette stronger as the dew fell; the thrush had sung his last lullaby, and was fast asleep in the hedge, with his head tucked under his wing; the bees were asleep, too, in their hives; and night's calm and silence had fallen over the garden.

Laurence said his last good-bye reluctantly, and went back to the Vicarage; but still Doris sat under the apple-tree. She was alone; but she was not unhappy, for, at seventeen, hope is strong in the heart, and, though her life must for some time be necessarily lonely and dull, there was the prospect of happier times to cheer her.

"We belong to each other always," Laurence had said. Doris repeated the words to herself with a tender delight and triumph. "Oh, always. Nothing—no one—shall ever come between us," she vowed.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Fair Damsel," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XXVI. ELVA'S PROTECTOR.

WHEN people have experienced disagreeable sensations which they cannot exactly catalogue, they prefer to put them away from them without analysing them. Hoel Fenner woke up the next morning with a strange feeling which he could neither explain nor understand. He remembered waiting for Mr. Kestell's return to the drawing-room, when the sisters had gone, and wondering, as he waited, what had been the cause of their father's sudden indisposition. Why had he rejected all offers of help? Then Hoel, too, remembered he had, even more than before, felt that Amice Kestell was a strange and peculiar being. There was something about her he could not fathom, and this feeling, to a man of Hoel's intensely practical nature, was somewhat irritating. He liked everything to be of the plainest and most straightforward character, and it seemed almost an insult to have laid before him something which he could not unravel.

For this reason Hoel, when he woke up, decided that, after his marriage, he would discourage much intercourse with his sister-in-law. Anything peculiar was abhorrent to him. He positively shrank from personal deformity just as much as he shrank from any want of mental balance. In this way alone did he show that he, too, was vulnerable, and influenced by the unexplained, for, by rejecting it so vehemently, he tacitly ac-

knowledged that it had some effect upon him.

For, it had happened that Mr. Kestell had not reappeared in the drawing-room; and Hoel, after waiting some time, with the last number of "The Current Reader" in his hand, walked into the hall, and looked round. No one was there; the hall door was locked and bolted; but the hall lamp still burned brightly. There were two candlesticks on the marble table, evidently meant for himself and Mr. Kestell. Hoel paused by the table and listened. Strange that he had not heard Mr. Kestell come in. His eyes turned towards the study door; there was a light there. Hoel moved softly towards it.

Elva would be anxious about her father. Should he go in or not? A man's study is his sanctum—a place not to be lightly invaded; but, on the other hand, the old man had certainly seemed unwell. That sudden dizziness might return.

These ideas still revolving through his brain, Hoel stopped just by the study door. All at once he heard a sound within. Mr. Kestell was walking up and down his room. This was rather comforting. A man who feels very dizzy does not march about his study. The steps were slow, but regular, like those of a man who is deep in thought. That was well. Hoel decided he had better leave the master of Rushbrook House and go to bed; but, hearing the steps approach nearer, he waited a moment, thinking that he would move softly away when the steps receded. Of course a man does not like to imagine he is being watched, even when he is ill.

Suddenly the study-door opened, and Mr. Kestell found himself face to face with Hoel. The meeting was perfectly unexpected on both sides. Hoel had waited

for the steps to die away on the other side of the door, and Mr. Kestell had not heard Hoel outside. He was for the moment entirely off his guard. His usually kind eyes suddenly flashed out an angry, defiant look, his hand trembled visibly, and his voice shook as he said in a tone of indignation which he did not try to conceal:

"Fenner, what are you doing here? I—I should have thought that you would have respected——"

This word, uttered by himself, brought him to his senses. Like the sudden dying down of a flame, fed by only a few drops of spirits, his eyes fell, and he was speechless.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Kestell," said the astonished Hoel, too much surprised as yet to feel injured by the implied accusation. "I was wanting to know if you had quite recovered from your—indisposition. Elva was anxious that I should wait till you came in, and I did not hear you return from the garden."

"So you have been listening? Thank you; I am quite well now. I was doing a little business, that was all. Pray do not sit up for me. I fancy Jones will be waiting to help you with your bandage."

Hoel Fenner merely replied:

"Yes, of course. Good-night, Mr. Kestell."

"I hope you have all you want," was the courteous reply, and Mr. Kestell was himself again.

This morning, being early awake, Hoel went over all the above scene, and he was utterly puzzled by it. The look of startled anger on that benevolent face seemed to be photographed on Hoel's brain. It was as if a much-trusted dog had turned suddenly round and bitten his master. Mr. Kestell would never have so looked without some reason; and that reason—what was it? Hoel turned the question all ways. He imagined himself in Mr. Kestell's place. He might have been startled, but angry—never. In his place he would have acknowledged that he had been startled, and would have laughed over it. Mr. Kestell was getting on in age, but still he, Hoel, could never have expected such sudden anger in a man whom he had considered the essence of perfect courtesy.

Hoel was led on from this consideration to another, namely, that he must go back to his lodgings. He had, under the circumstances, made the most of his holiday. He had learnt to know Elva better, and, if

possible, to appreciate her more; but he sorely missed his London pavement and his work. His arm gave him no pain, and he would soon have it out of its prison. It was easy to get an amantensis in town, and he must see about a house and a hundred other things before his marriage. The lovers had been putting the date of the wedding more and more forward, till now at last they talked of "soon after Christmas."

Elva said she must spend one more Christmas at home with her father. After that—well, she must learn to live in London, she supposed; but of course this sort of discussion ended in a lover's talk and a little rhapsody. Not that the two were foolishly and demonstratively affectionate. Elva's love was too real for silliness; and Hoel was, perhaps, a little too perfectly free of doubt in his or Elva's affection, to have any touch of tender anxiety.

But some cloud-shadow had come over the sunny landscape, and Hoel Fenner went down to breakfast with just the slightest feeling of restraint in his manner, which he hoped did not appear to the outside world. Everything was the same, however. There was the same bright, loving greeting from Elva, and the same gracious kindness from her father, till Hoel began to ask himself if he had not been dreaming last night before he went to bed. Amice was never demonstrative, and her quietness was not greater than usual.

"Are you better to-day, dear old dad?" said Elva, bending over her father, after the family prayers had been solemnly gone through. "You did not sit up late, I hope. Let me look at you. Hoel, be doctor as well as patient—how do you think papa looks?"

"Don't talk nonsense, child," said Mr. Kestell, laughing softly. "I am quite well. I shall go into Greystone to-day. Your mother seems very bright, and declares she is coming down presently. Any messages at Greystone for you girls? Hoel, what do you think of doing?"

It was no good thinking of last night's episode, and Hoel made an effort to be quite as natural as his host.

"Elva talked of walking up upon the forest road some day. I think to-day would be very pleasant for that expedition. What do you say, mistress mine?"

Hoel was examining his letters, and found one which made him resolve to take

advantage of it, and to leave Rushbrook House. It is not often that chance and one's personal wishes can meet each other so happily at the right moment.

"Hullo! by the way, it must be to-day," he added. "Here's my master says I must come up to town unless positively disabled."

"Oh, Hoel, and we have so many more things to do, and so many people who would like to see you. The Squire said you were to go to Court Garden as soon as ever you could."

"And what about Dr. Pink's leave? You will have to obtain that," put in Mr. Kestell, opening "The Times."

"I can easily run down again, for now I am certainly accident-proof; I never heard of a man being in two railway accidents in his life; and the law of chance is dead against it. Perhaps I ought to go to-day, but I think I'll wire that I cannot come till to-morrow. And my landlady will require notice; she will be very much grieved, Elva, at my coming back an engaged man, for I shall immediately look about for a house."

"I must bring the girls up to town some day, I suppose, when you wish for the future Mrs. Fenner's sanction to your choice. Eh, Elva? I shall put off the evil day as long as I can. But we old people must learn resignation."

"We can't spare her yet," said Amice, looking up with a troubled look in her eyes; only at this moment did she seem again to realise a little what the loss would be to her.

Hoel seemed to breathe more freely now that he had decided to go back to town; why, he could not even explain to himself. The rest of the breakfast was occupied by discussion of plans, and of various London localities. Even Amice joined in. No stranger would have noticed the least restraint in manner or word among any of the party.

The pony carriage was ordered to come round early. It was a long drive, but the day was fine, and the lovers looked forward to perfect peace, for the groom was to drive them to the foot of the hills, and then leave them to walk home alone, so there was nothing to mar the prospect.

Elva hurried hither and thither, making preparations, such as filling a sandwich-tray, in case they forgot luncheon-time, and as she fitted about here, there, and everywhere, she seemed like the sunshine of the old house.

Hoel retired to the library, wrote some letters with his left hand, and admired himself for learning this new art so quickly, and then indulged in a cigar and a novel, and made a few notes for an article on the merits of the novelist. He was finishing this mental essay when the door opened behind him. It was Elva come to summon him, he supposed, and he said, happily:

"All right, I'm ready. I say, Elva, what——"

"Ah, it's you, Hoel. I hear the brougham coming round for me."

Mr. Kestell came forward, and Hoel started up and stood with his back to the fire-place, which attitude seems to help a masculine brain to overcome unexpected difficulties.

"I am going to Greystone; I shall not be back till four o'clock. Don't overdo yourself. That arm is not quite the thing yet, you know." Mr. Kestell, receiving no answer, cleared his throat a little, then continued: "By the way, how you startled me last night. I was coming out to look for Jones, and, my dear fellow, I am afraid I spoke just a little hastily."

Hoel felt as if he were the culprit, as we often do when our elders apologise.

"Of course, sir, it was a slight mistake. I know Elva was a good deal alarmed by the indisposition you complained of."

"Yes, yes, it was most kind of you to be anxious. So you really think you must leave us to-morrow?"

"Yes, I must do so."

"But you will come as often as you can before the wedding. Indeed, Fenner, I cannot let you leave us without telling you again how entirely I can trust my child into your hands—entirely. If I were to consult my own wishes I should wish to keep her as long as possible with me; but I can truly say, her happiness comes first. Long engagements are trying to all persons concerned; so I repeat, as soon as your arrangements can be made I will give up my child."

Hoel's feelings of resentment suddenly disappeared. Such kindness was most unusual.

"Elva thought the first week in January would——"

"Well, yes; let us settle it so. Now I won't keep you from her. I must not keep the brougham waiting. Good-bye."

Mr. Kestell smiled and retired, and Hoel said, with a little sigh of relief: "One could hardly believe the two expressions

to belong to the same man. However, 'All's well that ends well.'

When they had sent away the carriage the lovers were quite happy.

It was a perfect day for a walk on these lovely moors, and Hoel seemed carried out of his usual ultra-intellectual sphere, and, for once, to catch some of Elva's spirit of Nature worship.

"Darling," he whispered, "these surroundings appear to belong to you exclusively. I seem always to fancy you with this exquisite background. I shall blame myself for taking you away from it to my dingy London."

Elva gazed and gazed at the late autumn landscape, as if she were trying to say good-bye to it.

"There is something better than Nature, Hoel, and though I do love it from the bottom of my heart, I know the love of one human soul is far greater."

Soon succeeded the silence of happiness, as the two, leaving the sandy road with varied shades of red and yellow, plunged into gorse and heather, dotted with an occasional oasis of short, sweet grass. What richness of colour there was here! Now a brown furrow, then a bit of silver-sanded path, next a little patch of boggy ground lying near a great hole where sand had been dug out.

Then they turned into a lane which wound itself between woods, plantations, and fields; and every now and then a vista of brown hills and blue distance came in sight.

Further on they reached a cluster of tall pines, which towered high above the many little Christmas-trees, as Hoel called the smaller Scotch firs. The red stems rose many feet, and, together with some of lesser height, inclined all in one direction, as if winter storms had long ago beaten them down when they were young and tender, until they could now no more straighten themselves.

They rested a little in this sheltered spot, and their talk turned on mundane matters of houses, and how the spring should be spent; and whether, when the summer came, Hoel should take his wife to Switzerland.

"You have so much to see, Elva; and when you have travelled a little, your mind will view everything in a broader way."

"Shall I see things in a broader way? But will anything be really more beautiful than our forest? Don't you think that

that landscape is most beautiful round which one's most numerous thoughts are entwined? I remember now the exact spot, by the brink of the third Pool, where I suddenly realized the meaning of 'Speech is but broken light upon the depth of the unspoken.' The sun broke out all at once on a bit of the glassy water, and then I knew exactly what that meant."

"But travelling," said Hoel, making a trite remark without knowing it (though often universally received sayings hide much deeper truths), "widens the mind, and educates everybody."

"I suppose it does; and yet Mrs. Eagle Bennison has been nearly everywhere, but I have never heard her make one remark which has not come out of a guide-book."

They now began to ascend towards the high tableland whither they were bound. In the distance was a small cottage, the last limit of cultivation in any sense of the word. Above that was only to be seen the lonely, heather-clad forest-land.

"Who lives there?" asked Hoel, as, with a plodding patience, they waded knee-deep in heather.

Elva looked up, and noticed a figure nearing the cottage. Her heart beat a little faster, but she would not betray that she recognised Walter Akister. She had never met him since her engagement had been made public property, and she remembered too well his look on the day of the accident.

"Kelly Sandhay, the man's name is; he works for a farmer on the other side of the ridge. We need not pass it, if you don't mind further wading through this sea of heather."

"But the path beyond it looks better walking," said Hoel; and Elva assented.

She took care to say nothing about that solitary figure, and, happily, it was soon hidden by the cottage itself. But, partly because of her anxiety, she caught her foot on one of the many brown furrows, and fell, tearing her skirt.

"How stupid of me!" she said, as Hoel helped her up with tender solicitations about her foot. "And I believe I have no pins. If Amice were here she would have a dozen in her pocket. Neither have you, Hoel," she continued, as she examined, with a happy laugh, the back of his coat-collar. "That is a bad omen for our future thriftiness. I saw a pin this morning, and I meant to pick it up. Do you

remember that French story, 'L'Histoire d'une Épingle'? I know riches and honour fell to the lot of the picker-up of that pin!"

"I'll run on to the cottage and beg you a few. I suppose there is a Mrs. Sandhay? You can't walk far in this tall heather if you have to hold up these elegant garments."

Elva would have infinitely preferred to keep away from the cottage; but Hoel insisted, so she sat down on a ridge and said she would wait for him. As he started forward Elva heard the furious barking of a dog, but thought nothing of it, seeing that it dragged a chain behind it; poachers were plentiful in this wild district, and watch-dogs were necessary to the farmers. If only Walter had gone on, thought Elva. But she could not see him on the higher path, where he ought to have been by this time. She was seized by a most unusual nervous trembling, and stood intently watching Hoel's figure as he approached the house. The dog barked furiously, and pulled at his chain, and Elva wondered what would happen if such a fierce specimen of the canine race were to get loose. This thought made her resolve to go on, so she walked quickly towards the cottage. She would meet Hoel as he came out. How stupid of her not to have gone with him. At this moment, when she was within a hundred yards of the cottage, the dog's chain suddenly gave way, and as if Elva had specially offended him by her cautious approach, he bounded towards her, barking furiously.

Elva uttered a little cry, not audible, however, on account of the loud barking, but, notwithstanding, she stood her ground. It was impossible to run in the thick heather. And where could she run to?

"Hoel!" she called, but whether or not her cry reached him, she did not know, for she was too much alarmed now to think further.

Suddenly another figure seemed to spring up as if from the ground, and, just as the dog bounded upon her and seized her dress, a powerful hand collared him, and tried to hold him back—succeeded for a moment, but then the enraged brute turned upon Elva's deliverer and bit the hand that held him.

"Walter," she cried, "let go!"

For Walter Akister, with courage rarely surpassed, again seized the dog, and this time grasped it firmly with his left hand,

then, with a weighted stick, he struck the animal with such force and such a well-directed blow, that it fell senseless to the ground. Walter paused a moment to take breath, as Elva, seizing her handkerchief, tried to bind up his bleeding hand. He mechanically folded the slight white cambric round the wound.

"Oh, does it hurt very much? How good, how brave of you," murmured Elva. "I—I— There is Mr. Fenner coming. He—how shall I thank you?"

"Pshaw!" said Walter, with lowering brows; "the pain is nothing. I shall go and put it under the pump. The brute won't do it again. It was fortunate I was here. Your—lover was not very near at hand, when his presence would have been useful."

Elva coloured; anger and gratitude strove together. The struggle was visible in her face.

"How can you say such a thing?" she said, defiantly. "I am grateful for your help; but—if Hoel had been here it would not have been needed."

"Indeed! Well, good-bye. Here he comes."

"Don't go; please, don't go. Your hand must be seen to. Come into the cottage."

Hoel, breathless and troubled, now came running up.

"Good heavens! What's this? Here is the owner. Elva, are you hurt? Mr. Akister, I fear—"

"It's nothing to make such a fuss over," said Walter, striding towards the cottage, and, meeting the farmer, he had a few words with him.

"Hoel, he saved my life," said Elva, putting her hand into Hoel's arm and feeling now, for the first time, that her limbs were trembling; "at least, I mean—"

"Nonsense; nothing of the kind. The brute must be shot, of course; but Mr. Akister only did what any one else would have done."

Hoel was secretly much annoyed at having, as it seemed, been out of the way at the moment of danger; annoyed still more at his place having been usurped by that unmannerly bear, Walter Akister. Neither was he mollified by seeing that he ought, in duty bound, to go and see after the welfare of the bitten hand.

The farmer now came running up from a neighbouring field accompanied by a labourer; and Hoel expressed his indig-

nation at such a savage dog being kept on the premises. In the meanwhile, Elva hastily followed Walter into the cottage, and found him bathing his hand with cold water.

"Oh, Walter, let me help you," she said.

"No," he answered, fiercely. "Look here, Elva Kestell. I only want one thing of you, and that you have given to some one else. You reject what has been yours for years; is yours; and always will be. But, pshaw! what does it matter to you now? You have what you want, I suppose. As to this wound, it is nothing. It is not the first time a dog has bitten me."

A woman cannot altogether be indifferent to a man who has done her a great service; and Elva, in a softened tone, said:

"Walter, please don't take things amiss. You know I never imagined or guessed that you—I mean what you said—till you told me; and, then—how is it my fault?"

"Some day you may be glad to know I am always the same," he said, in a low voice, for now Hoel's step was heard. "All you can say or do will not alter me. Some day you may understand that. Now pray do not trouble your head further about this."

"No, no, please, Walter, do not speak in this way. Find some one you can love, and who loves you. Forget, please, forget me. I——"

"You—oh yes, you are satisfied, you mean to say. What idiots women are, sometimes; they do not understand what is for their happiness."

"Elva!" Hoel was entering the cottage, whilst the tone of his voice betrayed some annoyance.

"Yes. Oh, Hoel, come, see if you can do anything for Mr. Akister."

Walter turned round and scowled at Elva.

"Do you think I would accept anything from him—him? In that case, Elva, you do not understand. I need not have expected you to do so, however. All women are alike in that."

Hoel heard the words, but was too much surprised to say anything at first; and, before he could get over his astonishment, Walter Akister was striding down the hill, and was soon lost to sight behind a hillock.

"We may as well go on to our destination," said Hoel, "that is, if you are not tired, Elva!"

"Oh, I am not a bit tired," she answered; and, after a few words to the

woman, who came in to offer sympathy and counsel, the two walked out in silence. When they were nearing the top where the fir-trees round the clump were known as "Hawk's Nest," Hoel paused. He was certainly annoyed, and Elva saw that he was not altogether pleased by Walter's speech.

"Tell me," he said, suddenly, "what does all this mean about Walter Akister? Have you——"

Hoel paused. The very idea that Elva had trifled or flirted with some one else was unbearable. He had believed he was her first and only love. Elva wished now she had mentioned the subject before; but her own pride was touched. The colour came to her cheeks; and, if Hoel had looked, he would have seen how beautiful she appeared when excited.

"Walter Akister has known me for years, and it was just when you first came here that he told me he loved me. How could I help that?"

"He would not have dared to tell you, Elva, if you had not—given him some——"

Elva drew herself up to her full height. This action was quite unconscious. It was simply the result of a feeling of pride at Hoel's even doubting her. She loved him too much, however, to allow her pride to shelter itself behind silence.

"Please, dear Hoel, do not say any more. You know that I have given my love but once only—that has been to you."

"Yes; but you said then you were not always of the same opinion; that you were not sure of your moods. If I could doubt——"

"Hoel, please don't be silly." This time Elva laughed. Clever, sensible, superior in every way as was her lover, he could yet say a foolish thing. "I told you before that I cannot help Walter Akister's loving me and behaving in this bearish manner; but—well, I suppose I am sorry for him, nothing more. Now let us talk of something else."

They did so; but this last walk had lost its perfect beauty. On both sides one little note had jarred.

THE REAL DE LA TUDE.

How our heroes fade out one after another! When I was a wee bairn, one of my books was De La Tude's escape

from the Bastille. With a French aunt coming on a visit every now and then, French was always easy to me. I never hated "Télémaque." I did not read much of it, but I knew what all the pictures meant; and Idomeneus and Mentor and Hegeasippus were familiar friends. So of Florian's "Numa Pompilius." How I used to delight in the woodcuts, and in the description of the "Hirpius armés de massues."

De La Tude I read less of; but the frontispiece was fascinating—took me captive at once. The hero flourishing in one hand his famous ladder, made out of unravelled shirts and cambric handkerchiefs, and such like, and with the other pointing to the ruins of the Bastille, which workmen were busy clearing away. How linen threads could be made strong enough to bear a man, seemed to my young mind as great a marvel as for a ship to be towed with a rope of women's hair. Then De La Tude had suffered so much. He had for years been the victim of aristocratic revenge. No wonder the French, when they destroyed the Bastille, petted him as a sort of sample prisoner. I forget every word that was in the wordy-windy history of himself, dedicated, I have since been told, to Lafayette; but I was as ready as the veriest Paris cockney to believe that he was kept night and day in irons, thumb-screwed every now and then, starved and made to sleep on bare boards. And now Monsieur Bertin has gone to the original documents, preserved in the Arsenal Carnavalet and Saint Petersburg libraries, and proves that my hero was a very poor creature, who would never have made a name but for the fact that the Government was ill-advised enough to keep him in prison; while his treatment in the matter of food may be judged from the record, in his own very private journal, that one Friday he suddenly found out at eight at night that he could not eat eggs, and sent the prison warders off to market to try to get a bit of fish for him. Another time he swore because the fowl was not "piqué." "I would have you to know," he said, "that I am a man of quality, and must be fed accordingly." At this same time, in the petitions which he was always sending out to some great person, he described himself as in a dungeon below the river-bed, where whenever there was a flood he was up to his middle in water. In the matter of dress he was as exacting as in regard to food. The

Bastille archives, detailing everything with microscopic minuteness, tell how he complained of rheumatism, and demanded a warm coat lined with rabbit-skins, and a silk plush waistcoat, gloves, cap, and leather breeches. All this he got. The patience of the authorities gave way when he insisted on a bright blue "calemande" with red stripes—a sort of "blazer."

"I have sent round to ever so many shops, and they do not make stuff that colour," wrote the prison tailor. "I really think, Monsieur le Major, the prisoner is pushing his whims too far."

When he was getting fresh handkerchiefs and shirts on all kinds of pretexts, so as to have stuff enough for his famous ladder, he had the impudence to write to the Governor: "The handkerchiefs you last sent me are only fit for galley-alaves."

Instead of being tortured, he was allowed to torture others with his flute. At last, moved by a round-robin from the other prisoners, the Governor said:

"You must not practise at night."

"Better take it away altogether," replied De La Tude. "Your forbidding anything is enough to make me long to do it."

He was allowed to keep birds, too. He tells how a pair of doves came and picked the corn out of his straw bed. He kept them; they bred; and he sent a couple of young ones to Madame de Pompadour with a letter in his half-cringing, half-bullying style. "I have now been suffering a hundred thousand hours," it begins; and winds up with the threat: "If the King dies, you will be put in this same place, and no one to pity you."

All this is very unheroic; and the real man was equally different from "the young Viscount whose brilliant career as a cavalry officer was stopped by the cruelty of the King's mistress, and who never forgot what was his due, though at the Revolution, of course, he put rank and title in the background."

The real De La Tude was no De La Tude at all, but the nameless son of Jeannette Aubrespy, who, though she had a house of her own, and was of decent family, let herself be made a fool of at the age of thirty. He was born in 1725, at Montagnac, in Languedoc, and christened Jean Henri, and nothing more. Several of her relations were officers; but of course they all cut her. But, being what the French call "une brave fille," she managed, by sewing, to provide for Jean Henri, and, somehow, had interest to get him made a surgeon's boy

in a Languedoc regiment. Surgeons' boys did not rank in those days; they had to shave, and draw teeth, and bleed. But this boy was ambitious, and, lest his lack of surname should stand in his way, altered Jean Henri to Jean Daury. In 1747, he was at the famous storming of Bergen op Zoom, and next year came to Paris with a certificate of service and a letter to the Duke of Noailles' physician. Here he fell in with an apothecary's apprentice, who initiated him into Paris life; and the pair lived the life that so many generations of the Quartier Latin and other Bohemians have lived: sleeping together in a wretched garret, and treating the young ladies as long as their money lasted. It soon came to an end; starvation stared them in the face.

If Daury had made some Fautine or Nannette really fond of him, he and she might have sent themselves into the next world in a cloud of charcoal smoke, or tied wrists in a love-knot of pink ribbon, and so leapt into the Seine. Daury's plan was quite different. Maurepas, ex-Prime Minister, and Madame de Pompadour were at daggers drawn. She had ousted him; and he revenged himself by lampooning her in verses almost as scurrilous as those of Frederick the Great. She showed her rage by pretending to be afraid he would poison her; would eat nothing that her major domo had not tasted; would not take a glass of lemonade at the play unless it had been brewed by her own apothecary.

Daury had been foiled in a claim for compensation, because, while he was tending the wounded at Bergen op Zoom, he had been robbed of every penny he possessed. There were plenty to prove that he had actually bought a lot of bargains during the sack of the place, and made money by selling them. So he determined to play on the favourite's fears, and, putting in a box half-a-dozen of those glass toys called "Dutch tears," along with hair-powder, and powdered alum, and blue vitriol, he posted it to the Pompadour—just as so many sham dynamite parcels were posted during the "scare"—and, setting off for Versailles, tried to gain an audience. Of course, he was stopped, and had to confide his tale to a valet.

"I heard two men at a street corner," said he, "violently abusing Madame de Pompadour. I watched, and saw one of them drop a box"—describing it—"into the post, with hopes that that would do for her."

The favourite was frightened; and the King sent his doctor, Quesnay, to analyse the parcel. An "exempt du guet" (detective) went to Daury's lodgings, and found the address on the box was in his handwriting; whereupon—May, 1749—he and his apothecary friend were lodged in the Bastille.

"If you will tell the whole truth," they were told, "you will be free in an hour."

The friend had nothing to tell, and was soon let out; but Daury refused to say a word, and, by his obstinate silence, the authorities believed that an attempted swindle was a dangerous plot. In the good old days he would have been put on the rack, or otherwise forced to tell his accomplices; but France had become humanitarian. Voltaire and Rousseau had made people ashamed of the old methods; and Daury was allowed tobacco, and books, and his flute, and two chums, because he complained of solitude. Soon he was transferred to Vincennes, "the prison for nobles," whence he plied the Pompadour with piteous letters, and, getting no answer, ran away. Among other privileges, he was allowed to walk in the garden without a warder. Seeing a spaniel basking at a door, he tried it. It was not locked; so he just walked out and went to St. Dennis. Here he ingratiated himself with a girl, who gave him all the money she could, posted his letters, and went to hide with him in an out-of-the-way barn. One of his letters, to Dr. Quesnay, sent the police on his track. He and the girl were caught and put in the Bastille, where Daury alternated between wild rages—for which he was put in cachet—and fits of good temper, when he would "repay the governor's kindness with a prescription for gout."

"I don't like being alone," he repeated; and this time they gave him as chamber-fellow one Allègre, a bankrupt Marseilles boarding-house keeper, who also had "got up" a plot against the Pompadour. Allègre had sent a letter to her valet, offering him one hundred thousand crowns "foy de gentilhomme" if he would undertake to poison his mistress. He was a far cleverer man than Daury—while in prison wrote treatises on engineering, hydraulics, etc. "Daury is the second volume of Allègre," remarks the prison-governor, in the marvellously-minute record that he, like all French prison-officials, kept of all that was going on. He was subject, however, to fits of anger, once stabbing, and

nearly killing, his nurse. Being in the Bastille saved him from the consequences ; a poor outsider would have been broken on the wheel in the Place de Grève for such an attempt.

Allègre was the guiding spirit with the famous ladder ; and then, when the glory was to be reaped, he conveniently went mad, and was sent to Charenton. Daury had imitated Allègre's rages, writing with blood on a shirt, or stamping his words on layers of bread placed between two plates. He begged Barryer, the lieutenant of police, to knock him on the head ; and told Dr. Quesnay, "You may have my body to make a skeleton of ; and herewith I send you a patch of my coat. You know martyrs' coats are sovereign in all sicknesses ; and I am a martyr, if ever there was one."

Suddenly the pair got quiet and well-behaved, and developed an amazing appetite for new linen. Their shirts were always getting torn one way or another. They bartered their tobacco with the other prisoners for needles and thread. Had the laundress not been as perfunctory as every other prison-servant, she must have noticed that every napkin which came from their room—fancy, napkins even for first-class misdemeanants!—had its hem cut off all round. They were making the ladder. They had already climbed the chimney, and amused themselves by shouting down other chimneys, so that at least one prisoner went mad, thinking he heard God's voice, and was named by Him as His prophet. "The voices came down the chimney," said he. But the officers never searched. "It is only a madman's nonsense," thought they. On the roof they found tools which the masons had left, among them an auger. These, with the ladder, they hid under their room floor ; and one night they escaped, battering with a window-bar a hole between the Bastille ditch and that of the Arsenal.

Allègre got to Brussels, when he wrote a most insulting letter to the Pompadour, which led to his being re-arrested. Daury fled to Holland ; but, when Louis the Fourteenth sent after him, the Dutch gave him up. Now, an escaped prisoner is always harshly treated ; Frederick, we know, killed Baron Trenck for that sort of thing. Daury was put for awhile in solitary confinement ; but he soon got into his old quarters, and began sending out petitions bemoaning his ruined prospects, and claiming compensation. Like Allègre, he had

his projects. "If your Majesty put a musket into the hands of every officer and sergeant, instead of the halbert or the spontoon, you would have at once twenty-five to thirty thousand more men." The finances he would set right by increasing the postage. Against famines he proposed "greniers d'abondance." No sane brain could have shown such abnormal activity. It was letters, letters, petitions, petitions, entrusted to kind sentries, wrapped in snowballs and flung across the Bastille ditch.

In 1763, Gabriel de Sartines, the new Lieutenant of Police, took much interest in him ; and Daury asked to be allowed to emigrate. Colonists were wanted for La Désirade. But at the last he would not go. He made friends with two pretty young laundresses called Lebrun, sisters, whose room he could look into from the wall on which he was allowed to walk. "Young, loving, unfortunate," he became their hero, and they lavished on him time, pains, and all their money. They made fair copies of his petitions, and left them at the addressees. He knew the Pompadour was ill, for Sartines had been urging him to write her just four words to secure his freedom. By-and-by one of the girls held up a sheet of paper with "Pompadour is dead !" in big letters. Then he repeated his demand for a hundred thousand livres compensation. "They would not have been so anxious," he argued, "for me to get her forgiveness, had not my threats struck home." To enforce attention, he began bullying, and became so unbearable that the "Jail Journal" remarks "He would wear out the patience of the gentlest capuchin." He was removed to Vincennes ; and one of his friendly sentries having told him of the death of a Montagnac nobleman, Henri Vissec De La Tude, he made up his mind that he was his son, and henceforth styled himself Masers De La Tude—Masers after an estate belonging to the family. He made all kinds of mistakes, said Vissec had died without other children, whereas he had left six sons. But if you stick to a thing tight enough, the world will generally believe you ; and when Louis the Sixteenth in 1784 gave him a pension of four hundred livres, it was made out in the name of Viscount Masers De La Tude.

Having blossomed into nobility, he increased his claim and demanded the Cross of Saint Louis into the bargain. Meanwhile, he was still allowed to walk in the

prison ditch, though now under the eye of the sentry. So one day, when there was a dense fog, he asked :

"How do you like this weather?"

"Not at all."

"Well, I do. It is just right for running away;" and, turning on his heel, he made off, and in five paces was out of sight.

He tells all this in his "Rêveries" (private journal, preserved in the Saint Petersburg Library). In his book he turns this slipping away into a magnificent affair :

"I ran the gauntlet of a score of soldiers; and when one of them levelled his piece to fire, I rushed on him and disarmed him."

In slippers, hatless, and penniless, he knocked at the Lebrun girls' door, and was received with open arms. Even amid their endearments he could not rest. To Marshal Noailles he communicated his four great discoveries—the true cause of tides; of the saltness of the sea; of the rotation of the earth; of mountains whose projections keep the earth from becoming a vitrified mass. These might have passed unnoticed, had he not begun to worry Choiseul for a reward for his plan for arming officers and sergeants.

"I understand it has been adopted," he said. "You will find an instalment of twelve hundred livres at such an address," was the reply.

Daury must have been getting bored by the Lebrun girls, for he went, and, of course, was seized.

Probably he now got harsher treatment; anyhow, he grew wild with Sartines.

"You ought to be skinned alive and tanned, to make shoes of. . . . You swallow crimes as if they were skim-milk. Let me read your papers; and you shall at once get back to comfortable quarters," said the Governor.

"I won't let you have them for a moment."

"You know I have only to break open your trunk, and there they are."

"No; there are laws even here, and you dare not do it."

Daury now feigned madness. Out of the prison library he had picked an old work on magic, and professed to think the air was full of devils, set at him by the Pompadour and her brother, the Marquis of Marigny. He had asked for a lawyer to help him in drawing up a grand final petition. When the man came :

"I shall want you three weeks," said Daury. "It will take you that time to

understand my case. I have one hundred and eighty separate acts of witchcraft to tell you of."

"But I do not a bit believe in witchcraft."

"Well, I cannot bring up the devil for you, but I can prove that Madame de Pompadour had dealings with him."

After more talk, the lawyer asked :

"How do you propose to get your living if you are set free?"

"Sir, don't be angry, but I clearly perceive that the devil has already got hold of you," Daury gravely replied.

Malesherbes, prisons' inspector—"le respectable Malesherbes," whose guillotining was one of the worst acts of the Terror—thought him mad, and sent him to Charenton, where he entered himself under the new name of Danger. Here things were much more after his mind; he had billiards, tric-trac, cards, and madmen are the best of company so long as they do not get dangerous. Daury posed as "a brilliant young engineer officer whose career was ruined at the outset by the Pompadour's anger." The good Fathers who managed Charenton wanted to set him free.

"What has he got to live on if he gets out?" asked Sartines.

At last the Chevallier de Moyria, who had been with him in the asylum, guaranteed him a livelihood; and he was let out, but only to be soon recaptured on the charge of extorting money. This time he was put into Bicêtre, the thieves' prison; and how he contrived to get himself called Jédor, "that his noble name might not be degraded by association with felons," is a puzzle. Here his brain was as active as ever. He made the Marquis of Conflans a present of a scheme for a hydraulic press, entitling it "The homage of a nobleman who has grown old in irons." Louis the Sixteenth was to make a grand jail-delivery in honour of the dauphin's birth; so Daury plied him and every one at Court with petitions, most of which, doubtless, were thrown into the waste-paper basket.

One, however, dropped by a drunken turnkey at a street corner, was picked up by Madame Legros, a haberdasher's wife. She read and showed it to her husband; and the childless pair gave up their lives to getting "justice for the oppressed Viscount." Madame Legros forced her way into gentlemen's houses; pleaded with the eloquence of conviction; got Lamoignon,

De Rohan, and others to take up the cause; and even managed that a copy of Daury's petition should get into the Queen's hands. Daury became the fashion. The Marquis of Villette said:

"I'll settle on you a pension of six hundred livres if you will let me have the sole glory of delivering you."

"For two years," replied Daury—and the reply shows he had a heart, or else was preternaturally shrewd—"a poor woman has been working for me. What should I deserve were I now to turn my back on her?"

If it was calculation he reckoned with his host. France had such a fit of "sensibilité"—Miss Austen's "sensibility"—as makes the reaction by-and-by all the more horrible. The Academy took up "the unfortunate nobleman." Members visited him in prison. "He shall never come out," said the King; but Madame Legros knew, by instinct, what this was worth, and gave the Queen and Madame Neckar no rest till, in 1784, poor Jeannette's son was set free, and received, as Viscount De La Tude, a pension of four hundred livres.

"He must not live in Paris," said the police; but this was soon got over, and, settled in the Legros's top rooms as their adopted son, he at once became a lion. It literally rained pension. Miss Chudleigh, alias Duchess of Kingston, gave him six hundred livres. A public subscription was opened for him. Grand ladies panted up four pairs of stairs to see him and his ladder, and always left a mark of their "sensibilité." He dined with Jefferson, the United States Ambassador; and the Academy voted Madame Legros the Montyon prize for public virtue.

What of the two young laundresses, daughters of the hairdresser Lebrun? Did he give them a share in his success? His mother, who had so often stinted herself to send him money, and who, in her last recorded letter, sent just before he climbed down the thread ladder, said—"the Lord is giving us yet further trials, that He may make us feel all the better the price of His favours," was dead. Had she been alive we may be quite sure that Daury would neither have sent for her nor have gone down to Montagnac, for, in the "Memoirs" which he dedicated to Lafayette, he ignored her help and represented himself as educated by an imaginary Marquis De La Tude.

Before long the Duchess of Kingston died, and, at her sale, Daury was accused

of paying for some trifles with a false louis, and ignominiously hustled out, despite his outcry at the indignity to a man of his rank. He had begun a suit against Sartines for cruelty during his imprisonment, laying the damages at one million eight hundred thousand livres, when the Revolution broke out. Daury cleverly threw off his title of Viscount, and railed against the cruelty of the great by which his career had been blighted. He wrote the French people an address, "on the destruction of that Bastille in which, with small intervals, he had been barbarously immured for five-and-thirty years," warning them that, "if they meant to keep their newly-won liberty they must be worthy of it."

He managed to make himself the pet of the "reds," just as he had been of the aristocratic Rousseauites. His memoirs ran through twenty editions. He sent a copy to each of the eighty Departments; and, on the strength of this generosity, asked for an increase of pension. The "Constituante" cruelly suppressed it altogether; but Marshal de Broglie was weak enough to move that his case be reconsidered. This gave him the very chance he wanted.

"Thrice I escaped the pangs of aristocratic tyranny," said he. "Once from the Bastille down my thread ladder, twice from that den of slaves, Vincennes. Look at my ladder; my only tool was the steel of a tinder-box."

The Constituent Assembly actually voted two thousand livres, five times what Louis the Sixteenth had allowed him. Madame Legros, who had stood by his side during his speech, was waited on by a Committee of the Assembly bearing a civic crown.

"To place this on your head, citoyenne," said the chairman, "is the proudest deed of my life."

The Paris actors gave him and her free entry to the theatres: "Poor victim; it may help to console him for the long and weary captivity." He actually got sixty thousand livres from the Pempadour's heirs, ten thousand in cash, the rest in metairies (farms) in Beauce. He was grateful in his way, and offered the nation a project for valuing the public lands, and one for re-establishing public credit.

When assignats went hopelessly down below par, he re-established his own credit by sending a lecturer round to England and Germany with his ladder and trans-

lations of his book. What he did during the Terror he does not say; probably he "lay low." The nation had confiscated his Beauce farms, but the Directory gave them back; and when he petitioned Napoleon, Junot was ordered to give him a pension, and to present Madame Legros at Court. He began the old life of dining out, and sitting in saloons in the centre of a bevy of admiring dames.

But times were changed. The Duchess d'Abrantes says he was soon found unbearable: he talked so much, and all on the one subject. His last plan for raising the wind was, in 1804, to appeal to all the European sovereigns to give him a bonus for his plan of arming officers and sergeants with muskets. In 1805 he died, aged eighty: a notable instance of the strange ways of the "old régime."

On the whole, he was very kindly treated, much being overlooked and forgiven for which, in any other country, he would have been severely punished. But he was kept in prison, though fed on larded chicken and fish, and clad in silk plush waistcoats and provided with unlimited shirts. They never could get rid of the fear that behind that silly trick there might be some plot, and so, to make sure, they held him fast, at an expense to the State which, if repeated in many other cases, must have swelled the deficit. They did not rack or thumbscrew him, nor did they hang anybody on his account. On the whole, the "old régime" compares favourably with the wild panic of the Popish Plots, as Daury does with those vile, cruel miscreants, Oates and Bedloe.

THE HALLS OF SELMA.

WITHIN ten miles of Oban—the Charing Cross of the Highlands—where the iron horse and the iron ship now meet in friendly rivalry, and where the white wings of the yachts flit in place of the ancient galleys of Lorn, the traveller may step upon enchanted ground. To cross Loch Etive at Connel Ferry—below the roaring Falls of Lora—is to pass into the Land of the Sons of Uisneach, into a region peopled with the ghosts of Ossianic heroes. Do we not see their dim shades stalking over the lonely level of Ledaig Moor, or brooding on the heights of Danvalanree? Their voices are in the waters as we cross:

"The murmur of thy streams, O Lora, brings back the memory of the past. The

sound of thy words, Garmallar, is lovely in mine ear. Dost thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head of heath? Three aged pines bend from its face; green is the narrow plain at its feet; there the flower of the mountain grows, and shakes its white head in the breeze. The thistle is there alone, shedding its aged beard. Two stones, half sunk in the ground, show their heads of moss. The deer of the mountain avoids the place, for he beholds a dim ghost standing there. The mighty lie, O Malvina, in the narrow plain of the rock."

So sang Ossian, in his poem of Carthon, and, although the three ancient pines are no longer to be identified, one may still find the two moss-grown stones if one seeks diligently. If the Ossianic heroes, however, do lie buried within the sound of Lora's wave, their resting-places are unmarked; and one would need the aid of the deer—who, according to the old superstition, can perceive ghosts—to lead us to where the bodies of the departed warriors repose. It is somewhere in this country, we may be sure, for every rood of the ground is reminiscent of the Fingalian crew, and the gallant sons of Celtic Uisneach.

It was here that the bards sang when they came to Selma's Halls—when "a thousand lights from the strangers' land rose in the midst of the people;" where "the feast is spread around, the night passed away in joy." We need not enquire too particularly what were the "lights from the strangers' land," although, probably enough, they were wax candles carried off from the Roman encampments somewhere. But here, at any rate, we may pace the ruins of Selma's Halls, and picture for ourselves bards seated within the rude battlements, singing to living warriors of the deeds and prowess of their departed fathers; but not forgetting to celebrate the doings of contemporary heroes.

Great Fingal foresaw their ruin by atmospheric influence, if by none other:

"I behold thy tempests, O Morven, which will overturn my Halls; when my children are dead in battle, and none remains to dwell in Selma."

The ghosts of thousands are around us now as we climb the ascent of moss and heath which marks the gateway to-day of Selma's Hall. There are those who call this incline the Street of Queens; but clearly it was the only line of approach for both friends and foes.

We have crossed the Loch, and after

traversing the two miles of straight road that leads from North Connel Ferry to the idyllic post-office of Ledaig, where John Campbell, the Gaelic bard, divides his time between letters and flowers, and his thoughts between poetry and the good of his fellow-creatures, we have struck on the shore of Ardmucknish Bay, and in the immediate foreground, stretching from the main road to the beach, we see the grassy hill on which there stood, in days of old, the Halls of Selma.

It is disputed, of course; but what incident in history, or record in archæology, is not disputed? There are some, also, who call this beautiful bay, which is now smiling in the summer sun, but which in winter thunders with the roar of Atlantic breakers, Loch Nell. But this is not Loch Nell, although the castle which we see on the further side is Loch Nell Castle. Loch Nell is merely the territorial title of Campbell of that ilk, and is taken from a small fresh-water loch away behind the hills on the Oban shore. By a reversal of the usual process, the title of the chieftain was transferred to the place, when he built himself a house on this portion of his wide-spreading domains. And, truth to say, the adopted name is more poetic than the real one, for Loch Nell means the Lake of the Swans, and Ardmucknish Bay means the Bay of the Pig's Snout. It is true there are no swans here; but neither is there anything very suggestive of the porcine feature. But the Celt is highly imaginative, and in his place-names often suggests resemblances which a prosaic Sassenach cannot always grasp.

What even a prosaic Sassenach cannot fail to perceive, however, is the incomparable beauty of the scene of which this rocky hill—be it Selma or not—is the centre. The hill itself rises almost like an island from the plain, its highest base being towards, and washed by, the sea. In height, it is probably not over forty or fifty feet at most, yet its position is most commanding, the sides being almost perpendicular, save at one point, where a gentle declivity—narrow and easily defended—leads to the little clachan, which even now is known by the name of Selma. In a military sense, the position of this hall, or fort, was unquestionably strong, for neither by land nor sea could an enemy approach without being discerned in the far distance; and to scale these heights, in the face of stern defenders, might well appal the stoutest hearts.

We have seen the Falls of Lora. On the plain which we traversed is a cairn, below which Ossian is believed to be buried. In front of us is "Streamy Morven." Who can doubt that, on this knoll, we are resting on the site of the Halls of Fingal, "King of Selma of Storms"?

Many do doubt it, however, and some have called these ruins Beregonium, which name is now given on the maps, and repeated by the natives. Nevertheless, competent authorities assert that the true Beregonium is not in Argyllshire, but in Ayrshire. Others, again, say that Beregonium was the Reregonium of Galloway, now called Ryan. Now, Beregonium, wherever it was, was the ancient capital of Western Scotland, when it was in the hands of the Picts. But we are not dealing with Picts. The heroes, whose names are impressed on the rocks, and bays, and hills around us, and whose ghosts are hovering over us, were Scots, although they came from Ireland.

The Fingal of Scotland was the Fionn, or Finn, of Erin—the Ossian, her Oisín. If the "plantation" of Ulster by King James is still cherished as another Irish grievance, it is but just to remember that many centuries before, the shores of Loch Etive, if not, indeed, the whole west coast from Crinan to the Ouchullin (or Coolin) Hills, were "planted" by the Dalriads from Ulster. The whirligig of time has wrought so many changes that we are apt to forget this important instance of national retribution.

According to some accounts, Fingal and the Sons of Uisneach were contemporaries; according to others, Fingal was three hundred years later than these heroes. We prefer to think of them together; and there is reason for doing so. In one of his poems, Ossian sings the praises of the lovely Darthula, who was a sort of Celtic Helen, and the cause of much fighting. Now Darthula was the same person as Deirdre, the wife of Naisi, one of the Sons of Uisneach; and Naisi is the same person as Ossian's Nathos. He speaks of the "Sons of Usredh" in "Eta" (Loch Etive); and he distinctly refers to Darthula being at Selma of Fingal, as well as coming from a Seláma of her father's (Coilla). The word Selma, it should be noted, means "Fine View;" or, as Macpherson, the translator of Ossian, says, either "Beautiful to behold," or, "With a pleasant prospect." Darthula, "the first of Erin's maids," has a name which signifies "A

woman with fine eyes;" and her beauty lives to this day both in the Highlands and in Ireland, in such expressions as "lovely as Darthula," "beautiful as Deirdre." The three Sons of Uisneach were, according to Ossian, Nathos (which means "youthful"), Althos (which means "exquisite beauty"), and Ardan (which means "pride"). The names by which they are known in other Celtic traditions are, Naiai, Ainli, and Ardan.

To this day there is a rock up Glen Etive called Deirdre's drawing-room; and also a field called after her. At Taynuilt, on Loch Etive, some miles above Connel, we find Coille Naish—the Wood of Naisi; and within a short distance of where we stand on Selma, away over towards Loch Liunha, there is Campus Naish—the Bay of Naisi.

The Sons of Uisneach and the lovely Deirdre all perished through the treachery of King Conor of Ulster, who beguiled them across from Loch Etive with false promises, in order that he might possess himself of the famous beauty of the period. But Deirdre was faithful to her noble Naisi, and died on his breast. In vain did Ossian sing to his harp:

"Awake, Darthula, awake, thou first of women! The wind of spring is abroad. The flowers shake their heads on the green hills. The woods wave their growing leaves. Retire, O sun! The daughter of Colla is asleep. She will not come forth in her beauty. She will not move in the steps of her loveliness."

But what lover of the Ossianic stories can doubt that the beauteous Darthula, or Deirdre, often stood where we now stand to-day, and while "the feast of shells" was being prepared, gazed with her husband on the hills of Streamy Morven and the mountains of echoing Etha? And here it was that Fingal sat while the three valiant brothers were fighting their last brave fight in Ulster, and the presage of evil was borne in upon him.

"We sat that night in Selma, round the strength of the shell,* The wind was abroad in the oaks; the spirit of the mountain shrieked. The blast came rustling through the hall, and gently touched my harp. The sound was mournful and low, like the song of the tomb. Fingal heard it first, and the crowded sighs of his bosom rose. 'Some

of my heroes are low,' said the grey-haired King of Morven. I hear the sound of death on the harp of my son. Ossian, touch the sounding string; bid the sorrow rise, that their spirits may fly with joy to Morven's woody hills."

It was here, also, that Oscar, returning victorious from the war of Inis-Thona, found his father, Ossian, King of Harps, and his grandfather, Fingal, King of Heroes, King of Morven, King of Shells, King of Selma.

"I behold thy towers, O Selma! the oaks of thy shaded wall. Thy streams sound in my ear. Thy heroes gather around. Fingal sits in the midst. He leans on the shield of Trenmor; his spear stands against the wall; he listens to the song of his bards. The deeds of his arm are heard; the actions of the King in his youth."

Well, the fairy tales of science and the long results of time have played many pranks since then, and it is possible enough that even the name of Ossian is only an unmeaning assemblage of letters to many of our readers. Nevertheless, it is impressed on the mound away towards Loch Creran, near the old Castle of Barcaldine, which, to this day, is known as Tom Ossian. It was the grassy seat on which the bard reposed to admire the scene, and gather poetic inspiration, while his father reigned in Selma.

There is not much appearance of a Hall now, it is true. The hill on which we are standing is long and narrow—say about three hundred yards in length, and at the widest part fifty in breadth. The sides, as we have said, are everywhere steep, and in places precipitous, with the exception of the inclined plane at what we must regard as the entrance into the Hall—the Street of the Queen. It is on the broadest part of the hill that we shall find most signs of former habitation, although we may trace the remains of walls all over the top.

According to Dr. Angus Smith, who spent much time here in excavating and exploring, the dwelling-places were on the highest part of the hill, for here were found the bones of many animals, the relics of ancient feasts. The banqueting-hall seems to have been about forty-five yards long, by thirty, or so, broad—quite large enough for the entertainment of a considerable company at the "feast of shells."

There are indications of many apartments, and of passages between different

* The Ossianic heroes drank from shells. Hence the expression "feast of shells." The "strength of the shell" doubtless refers to "a big drink."

buildings. The King's quarters doubtless occupied the centre, and round all there was an outer enclosure of partly natural and partly "vitrified" walls. There was also an inner wall, forming a second line of defence in case of the top of the hill being taken by the enemy. It must have been a strongly-built and well-arranged camp, or "city."

We shall not spend time, however, over archaeological detail. The charm of the place is in its situation and its associations. Locally, it is called, indifferently, Beregonium or Dun Mac Sniochan or Dun Mac Uisneachan, meaning the Hill of the Fort of the Sons of Uisneach. But it has another story besides that of Deirdre and the Ossianic heroes.

Here, at Selma, there lived, in the time of Saint Columba—who was long after Ossian and Uisneach—a great and beautiful Christian Queen, called Hynde. Once upon a time there came down the Sound of Mull, King Eric, from Norway, with a great fleet, intending to take possession of both Queen Hynde and her kingdom. But she sent to Columba, and he said that the only man who could save her lived in Ireland, and he would go for him.

This person was the reputed grandson of King Colmar, who lived at Temora; but King Colmar was a heathen, and would do nothing to assist or oblige the Christian Saint. In short, he bluntly refused to allow the youth to go over to Scotland. Whereupon, the good Saint took to his boat, to return, with a sad heart. A storm sprang up—as it often does in these parts, and always most conveniently in stories—and the Saint was driven ashore. Then a wild-looking creature suddenly appeared, and undertook to steer the boat across to Kintyre, in spite of the storm. He did so, cutting such capers all the time, that Columba's men took him for a fiend, especially when he told them that he worshipped the sun, and that if the rowers did not work harder he would beat them with his club. He drove the boat round the Mull and into Loch Fyne, and then they all got out and walked, viâ Loch Awe, to Connel Ferry, where they crossed, and went on to Selma.

By this time the armies of Queen Hynde and King Eric had met; but, instead of fighting, were contesting with each other in various games of skill and strength. Columba's new friend, who announced his name as Mac Uiston (? Mac Uisneach),

joined the games with such success that he distanced and overthrew everybody, including the King. This made Eric very angry, and a general scrimmage was only prevented by the Saint's diplomacy. Columba got Eric to agree that there should be a combat between three men of each side, and that the result should decide who should marry Queen Hynde and have her kingdom. They had a convenient way of arranging such matters in the olden time, without reference to the personal predilections of the lady.

However, it all came right. Eric was slain by a handsome warrior in gilded armour, who turned out to be both the wild boatman, the grandson of King Colmar, and the true heir to the Scottish throne. Prince Eiden was, therefore, chosen to be King. The Norwegians rather objected at first, and took possession of Selma, while Queen Hynde and her party had to squat on the next hill, Dunvalanree—the Hill of the King's Town. But King Colmar came over from Ireland and used some of the persuasive force of the period towards the Norsemen. Still, these last would not be driven away, and they prepared a great feast at Selma, at which to invoke the further assistance of their Pagan gods. One of the incidents of the festival was to be the burning of nine virgins on a sacrificial pile. But when this pile was lighted, the heavens opened, and the whole Norwegian army was burnt up by lightning, which also destroyed the "City" of Dun Mac Sniochan.

And this, they say, is why the ruined walls still bear the marks of vitrification.

It may be so. The traveller who seeks the Halls of Selma must be prepared with large receptivity, and with not too critical a mind. But, between the mystery of the ancient legends and the magic beauty of the present scene, he cannot fail to be enthralled.

AMONG THE SHANS.

THE idea of opening up Indo-China by railway—or, to put it otherwise, of uniting our Indian possessions with the western provinces of the Celestial Empire—is not a new one; but it has taken various forms. That which has been most prominently before the public, and has received the approval of most of the Chambers of Commerce in the country, is the scheme with

which the names of Messrs. Holt Hallett and A. R. Colquhoun are associated. These gentlemen have been for years labouring at their project, and one result of their efforts is that the King of Siam has ordered a survey of the route by a Company of English engineers. This survey is now in progress, but Mr. Hallett has been over the ground in advance, and has recently published a volume, not only describing the line of railway he proposes, but also giving a vast amount of most interesting information about a little-known country and its inhabitants.

Briefly, what Mr. Hallett proposes is a line of railway from Bangkok, the capital of Siam, to Ssumao on the Chinese frontier—this line to be constructed by the King of Siam, with some guarantee from the British Government. To join Burmah with this system, Mr. Hallett proposes that the Indian Government should construct a line, only some eighty miles in length, from Maulmein in Lower Burmah to Raheng on the Burmo-Siamese frontier. There it would connect with the Siamese line and thus give us direct railway communication right up to the rich Chinese province of Yunnan. Moreover, it would pass through a fertile and well-peopled land, the industries of which would be vastly developed; for the Shans are essentially a trading people. The whole line of the proposed route has been traversed by Mr. Hallett, who surveyed as he went, from the back of an elephant, and who, with the eye of an engineer, saw what were the difficulties to be encountered and how they could be overcome.

In his search for the best route, Mr. Hallett traversed regions inhabited by various tribes, some of whom are aborigines, and others of whom migrated ages ago from Thibet and Central China. Among others are the Karens, who were recently described in this journal.

Among the Shan tribes, superstition is very general, witchcraft is believed in everywhere, and witch-hunting is pursued with eagerness.

In Siam and the Shan States the belief in divination, charms, omens, exorcism, sorcery, mediums, witches and ghosts, and in demons ever on the alert to plague and torment them individually, is, we are told, universal, except among the highest educated classes. A resemblance of the superstitions to those of the Chaldeans has been noted; but one may find something not unlike them in European

traditions of the Middle Ages. Mr. Hallett was struck by the resemblance between some of the Finnish legends and superstitions described by Sir Mackenzie Wallace, and those of the Shans of to-day.

The country between Burmah and China has been described by previous travellers as of lacustrine origin—as if the lakes had been drained by rents caused by earthquake. This is the explanation of why water issues so often from underground passages through the hills. Mr. Hallett's explorations confirm previous reports, that the old lake-bottoms are now extensive fertile plains. By starting from Maulmein, and proceeding some distance up the Salween River by boat, Mr. Hallett was able to begin his elephant-ride at Hlineboay, and to proceed by a route which led him over the lowest portions of the hilly country between the Salween and the Meh Kong rivers. These hills spring from the great mountain-land of Thibet, and diminish in height as they stretch south, so that from an engineering point of view it is better to carry the railway over them at their lower rather than at their upper end. From Raheng to Kiang-Hung, a distance of some four hundred and seventy-six miles, Mr. Hallett found that the proposed railway could pass for the most part through plains separated only by undulating ground of low altitude.

The hills adjoining these plains are inhabited by wild elephants, rhinoceroses, deer, wild cattle, tigers, and other large game. Insect-life is also abundant—almost too abundant for pleasure, sometimes. As for scenery, there is great variety of mountain, flood, and vegetation.

On the road to Zimmé, the City of Muang Haut is reached in the midst of a leafless forest; but after passing this the scenery becomes magnificent again. "Large bamboos in bunch-like clumps, not the impenetrable thickets we had previously met; the lights and shades on the golden greens of their delicately-coloured plumes, and the deep recesses between the clumps, in whose stately presence the scrub-jungle disappears; the cooing of doves, the gaily-decked kingfisher watching for its opportunity to plunge on its prey; the lepan (silk-cotton trees) a hundred and twenty feet high, with pegs driven into the trunks to serve as ladders for the cotton-pickers,* their white trunks and bare horizontal branches looking like shipping with yards

* The cotton is not suitable for spinning, but is used for stuffing cushions, pillows, and beds.

up, as we rounded the bends; the flower of the pouk flaming out at intervals; low islands covered with scrub willows, whose leaves glistened in the sun; the mist driving along the face of the water, ascending in little twirls and vanishing; the ball-music of passing caravans; the plaintive cry of the gibbons; the o-kee-or calling its own name; and little grey and buff-coloured squirrels springing about the trees—all added a charm to the scene."

The Shan States are small kingdoms, each containing a number of principalities. Each State is ruled in a patriarchal sort of way by a Court consisting of the first and second Kings, and three other Royal Princes. The successor to the throne is determined by several things. The person chosen must be a "Chow," or Prince; he must have influence and wealth, business capacity, integrity, and popularity with his serfs, and he must obtain the interest and support of the King of Siam, to whom the Shans are feudatory. The first and second Kings select the other three chiefs; but their choice must be confirmed by the King of Siam.

The principal Shan State is the kingdom of Zimmé, which, in ancient days, extended from the Salween to the Cambodia River, with jurisdiction over a number of smaller States. It was once feudatory to the Kings of Burmah; but in the eighteenth century threw off the yoke, and sought the protection of Siam. Zimmé has now only a nominal supremacy over three of the neighbouring States, while the others are quite independent of it. The population of the kingdom is estimated at about seven hundred thousand.

The City of Zimmé is the capital of the ancient kingdom of that name, which once comprised fifty-seven cities. The city is divided into two parts, shaped like the letter L. The inner city faces the cardinal points, and is walled and moated all round. The outer city is over half a mile broad, and is partly walled and partly palisaded. Both cities are entered by fortified gates.

In the inner city are the palace of the King, the residences of the nobility and wealthy men, and several religious buildings. In the outer city, the inhabitants are chiefly the descendants of captives. The houses are packed more closely together, the gardens are smaller, and the religious houses fewer. The roads in both cities are laid out at right angles, and no rubbish is allowed to be placed outside the

garden palisades. The suburbs extend to a great distance along both banks of the river. The entire area of the city and suburbs is about eighteen square miles, and the population of the whole is estimated, by a medical missionary, at about one hundred thousand.

On arriving at Zimmé, Mr. Hallett lost no time in interviewing all the people of importance to gather information referring to his railway project, and to interest them in the scheme. He was taken by one of the missionaries to the King.

"A few minutes after we were seated, the King, dressed in a green silk 'loon-gyee,' or shirt, and a white cotton jacket, with gold buttons, entered the hall, and after shaking hands, welcomed us in a quiet and dignified manner. Tea was then brought in, and we seated ourselves round the table. After a few preliminary remarks, Dr. M'Gilvary told him the object of our visit, and the great boon to his country that the construction of a railway to connect it with Burmah and China would be. He was rather thick-skulled, and had never been remarkable for intelligence. He could not understand how trains could move faster than ponies, or how they could move at all without being drawn by some animal. Anyhow, they could not ascend the hills, for they would slide down unless they were pulled up. I explained to him that I had made three railways in England, and, therefore, he might rely upon what I said. Railways were made in various parts of the world over much more difficult hills than those lying between Zimmé and Maulmain, that even along the route I had taken it would not be very expensive to carry a railway, and that it would be still easier to carry one from Maulmain to Raheng. As to the possibility of trains being moved without being drawn by animals, he could ask any of his people who had been to Rangoon; all of them would tell him that locomotives, although on wheels, dragged the trains along. He seemed quite stupefied by the revelation. It might be so—it must be so, as I had seen it—but he could not understand how it could be. He was very old, he could not live much longer; he hoped we would be quick in setting about and constructing the line, as otherwise he would not have the pleasure of seeing it. I then asked him to aid me in collecting information, and in choosing the best route through his territories by having me provided with the best guides, and by issuing instructions

to the governors of the provinces to assist me by every means in their power. This he promised to do, and after a little general conversation, we shook hands with him, thanked him for his kindness, and departed."

Even more interesting were the interviews with the Princess Oo-boon-la-wa-na, sister of the Queen, and a most enterprising lady, who was one of the largest traders in the country, and eager to further the project of a railway. This Princess had compiled a lot of valuable statistics about the trade of the country and its resources, and she was of great use to Mr. Hallett. Unfortunately, she has died since he left Zimmé, and thus an important ally is lost, for she had not only great influence with all the members of the Government, but was also herself the "spirit-medium" of the Royal Family. The spirit-medium is called in by the Shans when the physician has failed to master a disease.

It should be said that the American Mission at Zimmé—two of the members of which accompanied and assisted Mr. Hallett in part of his explorations—is a remarkably successful one. The missionaries are held in the highest respect by both Court and people. They are well acquainted with the country and its resources, and they warmly support the projected Burmo-Siamese Railway.

From Zimmé, Mr. Hallett surveyed as far as Kiang-Hai, and from thence to Kiang Hsen. The City of Kiang Hsen, on the borders of the British Burmese Shan States, bears marks of once having had a numerous population, wealthy and highly skilled in the arts. The ruins of the monasteries are very extensive, and the beauty of the ornamental decorations of the temples, and the workmanship of the images and buildings, testify to the former existence of wealth and culture. The city now is in the form of an irregular parallelogram, with its sides facing the cardinal points; and it is about three-quarters of a mile long, by about a quarter of a mile wide. It is fortified on all but the eastern side, and the entrances are defended both by walls and ditches. This was the most northerly point reached by Mr. Hallett, and of its capabilities he says:

"Kiang Hsen is admirably situated for purposes of trade at the intersection of routes leading from China, Burmah, Karenni, the Shan States, Siam, Tonquin, and Annam. It forms, in fact, a centre of intercourse between all the Indo-Chinese

racés, and the point of dispersion for caravans along the diverging trade routes. When the country is opened up by railways, and peace is assured to the Shan States to the north by our taking them fully under our protection, the great trade that will spring up between Burmah, Siam, the Shan States and China, will make the city of great importance. Its position as a commercial centre in the midst of the vast plains which extend on both sides of the river, its beautiful climate and productive soil, the wealth in teak and other timber, as well as in minerals, of the surrounding regions, and the fact, brought out by Mr. Bourne in his report, that Chinese from Ssuchuan (Szechuen), Kweichau, and Yunnan are settling in the Shan States to the north of it, will soon tempt immigrants to take up the now vacant land, and ensure the city and district a large and prosperous population."

The King of Siam is well aware of the importance of this region, and is not only trying to resettle it, but is also having it surveyed by English engineers for both the main railway and branches.

Returning to Zimmé, Mr. Hallett made further explorations in the neighbourhood, gathering statistics of trade, folk-lore, legends, and other information, as he proceeded. Then he determined to make his way to Bangkok by the Meh Ping river, and the missionaries lent him their house-boat. This was delightful travelling, amid magnificent scenery and through the spirit-guarded rapids between Muang Haut and Rahang. The cliffs are so remarkable that we can only extract Mr. Hallett's own description of them:

"The scenery in the neighbourhood is the boldest and most beautiful in its grandeur that I have ever seen. The cliffs are tinted with red, orange, and dark-grey. Great stalactites stand out and droop in clusters from their face, whilst their summit is crowned by large trees, which, dwarfed by the distance, appear smaller and smaller as the depth of the defile increases. Pale puff-ball-shaped yellow blossoms of a stunted tree like a willow, shed their fragrance from the banks, where small bays are formed by streams conveying the drainage of the country. Beautiful grottoes have been fretted out by the current near the foot of the cliffs, and are covered with moss and ferns which drip drops of the clearest water from every spray. The cliffs on the west bank are here 3000 feet high, and rise in great telescoped preci-

pices. At 141 miles the hill on the west retires, leaving a narrow plain for about a mile. On the opposite side of the river, the cliff towers up seemingly to more than a mile in height, the trees on its summit looking like small bushes from the boat. This great precipice is named Loi Keng Soi, and from a chink in its face a waterfall comes leaping and dashing down. Its last great leap is a sheer descent of 500 feet. A short distance beyond the waterfall, far up the cliff, the figure of a gigantic horse is seen standing in a natural niche. When it was sculptured, and by whom, tradition fails to tell. On the west bank of the river, near the end of the cliff where the hill retires and forms a small valley, is a pagoda, and two others are seen cresting the low part of the next hill, which gradually rises into a great cliff near the thirteenth and fourteenth rapids, down which we had to be roped. This cliff is surmounted by three ear-like pinnacles: 2000 feet of rock had lately fallen into the river from the face of the precipice on the opposite bank."

At Raheng, Mr. Hallett left his boat and made his way to Bangkok, the capital of Siam. A great deal of information is given about that kingdom and its Government and people, and certainly the picture is not so pleasing as that of the Shans. It seems a land of oppression, of tyranny, of excessive taxation, and of vice of all sorts.

Gambling is very prevalent in Siam, and in every village may be found gambling-houses. These are built of bamboo, with the front so constructed that those outside may see all that is going on in the interior, and be attracted thereby. Musicians play; actors are separated from the gamblers by a paper screen, on which, by the aid of lamplight, puppet-shows are displayed to amuse the spectators. When tired of playing, the gamblers refresh themselves by watching the play-actors and musicians.

Gambling goes on from afternoon until late at night, and the keepers of the gambling-houses are licensed by the State, and a revenue of ten thousand pounds a-year is derived from the monopoly. Some years ago the King issued a proclamation condemning gambling as "a prolific source of slavery," and recommending his Council to find some substitute for the deficit which would result from abolishing the licenses. But nothing has been done. The monopolists can still force the people to sell themselves, their

wives, and their children in payment of gambling debts, and can even force free men to sell their adult children, with their consent.

The fearful results of this system are seen in an appalling state of immorality in Bangkok. Yet if it were not for slavery, serfdom, excessive taxation, and the vices of the people, the Siamese might be a happy race. They live chiefly upon vegetables and fish, in a country where every article of food is cheap; where a labourer can earn four times more than the cost of his keep; where a few mats and bamboos supply him with material for a house suitable for protection alike from a tropical sun and annual rains; where little clothing is needed, and that of the simplest and cheapest; and where nine-tenths of the land is vacant, without either owners or inhabitants. And this land is so fertile, and the climate is so humid, that cereals and fruits of all kinds grow in perfection. Yet in this kingdom, among the common people, there is seldom to be met a man or a woman who is not the slave of some noble or man of wealth. Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of the Siamese, besides being slaves, and selling their children, are libertines, gamblers, opium-eaters, and given to intoxicating drinks.

But nowhere in the Shan States is misgovernment and oppression of the people so rampant as in Siam. Taxation is light among the Shans, and the people are not ground under government slave-drivers, but can change their masters at pleasure. Among them, gamblers, opium-smokers, and drunkards are despised, and libertinism is unknown. In fact, they are a superior people, and what has been reported of them makes one all the more desirous that the line of communication between India and China shall be by Mr. Hallett's route, and not by way of Upper Burmah, as is otherwise proposed.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

PAUL BEAUMONT was detained in London longer than he had expected; and more than a week passed before he was able to return to Chesham. Lady Cecil

did not receive him very graciously, and, it was plain to see, did not altogether believe in the business which had required his presence in town. Business was, in her opinion, merely a convenient cloak which men could assume at pleasure for the gratification of their own wishes; and she was not slow to express this opinion to Paul, and met him with chilling looks and pretty, petulant airs, which would once have delighted him beyond measure as a proof that she had missed him; but which, alas! only irritated him now.

Now that his idol was dethroned, and another set up in its place, he could see for himself how great his former blindness had been, and how base and ignoble a thing was the being he had worshipped so long! But he was much too courteous to allow his irritation to be apparent; and he smiled and bowed courteously over the white fingers which he detained in his own, as he made his excuses, and raised them to his lips as a token that peace was made ere the interview was concluded.

There was a dinner-party that evening which Sir John had insisted on giving to celebrate the victory lately gained by a Conservative friend in a neighbouring town, for many years a stronghold of Radicalism. Paul, who hated politics, was unfeignedly glad when the animated discussion, which followed the withdrawal of the ladies from the dining-room, gave him an opportunity of slipping out unnoticed into the cool evening air. The evening was still young, for the dinner had been served at an early hour, to suit the convenience of one of the principal guests, who was obliged to leave early; and the sun was still shining as Paul stood on the Hall steps. He hesitated a moment, then took a cigar from his case, struck a match and lighted it, and then sauntered off across the park towards the Red House.

He walked slowly at first, and took the most secluded way, for he had no desire that his movements should be noticed from the drawing-room window; but, as soon as he was beyond the reach of such espionage, he quickened his pace and walked quickly over the bridge and up the green lane, between the tall box hedges, till he stood before the gate behind which—he did not disguise the fact from himself now—his earthly Eden lay!

And all the way as he went he pictured the sweet welcome which Doris would give him; how pleased and surprised she would be; how her pale face would blush, and

glow, and her great eyes light up with pleasure; how she would come to meet him with outstretched hands and glad words of welcome!

He wondered, what she would say when he told her the errand which had brought him to her, and unfolded his tale of love which he had determined she should hear that night. Would she be surprised, or had she guessed it long before, and was only waiting for the confession to be made?

Paul smiled confidently to himself as he opened the door, and looked down the garden towards the seat under the apple-tree, where he was pretty sure of finding Doris at that hour. There was little doubt what her answer would be, he thought, confidently.

Doris was in her usual seat; her knitting, as usual, in her busy hands, and the big dog, which Laurence had given her as a parting present, and which, much to her surprise, her aunt allowed her to retain, curled up at her feet. She wore the shabby blue frock which Paul had once surprised her by declaring far superior to her best gown. The western light fell on it and brightened its dinginess into the loveliest tint, and turned the loose rings and twists of her dusky hair into a golden nimbus.

Paul stopped and gazed at her with quiet delight; but the big dog had heard his footsteps, and gave a low growl, at which his mistress looked up with a warning "Quiet, Bruce." She saw Paul's tall figure just inside the gate, and stared at him in incredulous surprise, and then allowed her knitting to drop unheeded on the grass as she sprang suddenly from her seat.

"Mr. Beaumont! Is it you!" she cried.

"Yes; I came back this afternoon."

Paul crossed the long grass with a few hasty strides, and stood by her side and took the little brown hands in his strong, eager clasp, and looked down at her with a great delight and satisfaction in his eyes.

"I have not been long in coming to you, have I?"

"No, indeed."

Doris coloured, and drew her hands gently away; something in Paul's eager face, in the tight clasp of his hands, startled and vaguely alarmed her. He—no one had ever looked at her quite like that before, the girl thought. And yet it was not an altogether unfamiliar look. She had seen it in men's eyes before; but

then those eyes had always been directed to Lady Cecil's face, and not her own.

"Won't you sit down? See, here is your old seat," she went on, and drew forward a chair and pointed to it. "And so you only came this afternoon. Won't my lady be angry with you for running away so quickly?"

Paul laughed. He took the cushion from the chair, and placed it on the grass, and took his seat there.

"My lady would be furious, but she knows nothing about it," he said, carelessly. "There is a dinner-party at the Hall this evening, and I am supposed to be still in the dining-room drinking in claret together with the words of wisdom which fall from the lips of Sir John and his friends. Wisdom's voices were getting somewhat husky and indistinct, and I was terribly bored; so I fled and came to—you."

"You ought to have gone into the drawing-room."

"I am perfectly aware of the fact, my child."

"Then why didn't you?"

"I have told you already. Because I wanted to see you, and because it is a hundred times pleasanter here in this quaint old garden than in Lady Cecil's drawing-room."

"Ah, you knew I should be anxious to hear about Laurence! It was very good of you to think of it," Doris said, looking at him with sweet, unconscious eyes. "Now tell me all about him. He is well?"

"Quite well."

"And happy, I am sure."

"Quite happy to all appearance. Mr. Redmont is delighted with him, and prophesies a great future if he will only work hard. You may feel quite satisfied about him, Doris. He will have a charming home, plenty of congenial society. There is a boy of his own age, and a pretty girl a year or two younger, and two little children; and they are all going to be brothers and sisters to him, so if he is not happy he ought to be."

Paul spoke with a little impatient accent in his voice. It was, of course, very natural that Doris should be anxious to hear the latest accounts of Laurence; but it was not solely Laurence and his affairs, but a more interesting and personal matter, that had brought him there so quickly; and he felt as if she ought somehow to have understood this. But she evidently did not. She had so many questions to ask, and required such minute particulars respecting

their journey to town, and Laurence's first impressions of London, that he even grew a little sulky at last. The precious moments were slipping rapidly away. Very soon his absence would be discovered, and commented upon secretly by Lady Cecil, openly, perhaps, by others; and he could picture the veiled lightning which would flash at him from Lady Cecil's eyes when he made his tardy appearance, and the "mauvais quart-d'heure" which would be in store for him by-and-by when the guests were gone! He looked up at Doris and tossed back his hair and smiled brightly.

"There, that's enough of Laurence," he said. "Now let us talk about yourself. What have you been doing to improve the shining hours of my absence? Tell me everything that has taken place."

Doris laughed.

"How very much interested you would be if I did. Well, then, the Alderney cow calved last week, so I had more butter to make up this morning than usual; and the butcher has bought the calf. Then the turkeys strayed away a few days ago, and I never found their nest till this morning in the hedge right at the bottom of the copse. I think that is all the news I have to tell you, except that the choir tea-party is to be held in September this year instead of October. Most interesting details, are they not?"

Doris went on laughing. And then, as Paul did not answer, she looked down at him, and was surprised to see with what compassionate eyes he was regarding her.

"Why do you look at me like that?" she faltered.

"My poor little girl!"

Paul took her little, brown hand and stroked it tenderly.

"What a hard life! What an empty, dreary life for you to lead, you who ought to be surrounded by happiness. Tell me, dear Doris," and he stroked her fingers again, "are you really always so contented as you appear to be? Don't you ever feel angry with the fate that has placed you here in this dreary, old house, where you have to work hard, and get scanty pay and scantier thanks? Do you never contrast your lot with that of happier girls? or ask yourself why they should have so much, and you so little, and gird against the injustice of fate?"

Doris gave him a startled look. She turned very pale, then she smiled. Ah! no doubt her life, viewed by his eyes, did

seem dreary and hard. But then he knew nothing of the golden hope which the future held for her; of the love and happiness which would be hers some day, and which would compensate for all that had gone before. She smiled gravely.

"Yes, sometimes I do feel that fate has dealt very hardly with me, as you say," she said, "and I get impatient, and cross, and life seems very dreary; but, after all, I dare say I am no worse off than other girls. They say, you know," Doris went on, philosophically, "that if we could only believe it, happiness is very equally distributed, that there are compensations in every lot."

"They say! Oh, what can you know about it?" Paul cried. "Why, my poor child, you have no idea what a beautiful thing life may be made to those who are young, and beautiful, and rich, and——" he hesitated a moment—"beloved! Let me teach it to you, dear," and he took her hand again, and looked up at her with an intense earnestness in his eyes. "Let me take you away from this miserable, lonely life, to one, oh, infinitely brighter and happier than you can imagine now, where every day would bring some new pleasure, and each day should be happier than the one that had gone before! Let me teach this to you, dearest!"

Doris started, then gave a sweet, incredulous laugh.

"How can you," she said, lightly; for, as yet, no suspicion of his real meaning had entered her mind. "Unfortunately, the time for fairy godmothers had gone by!"

"How?" Paul gave an amused, tender smile. "Because I love you, sweetheart," he answered, gravely, "and nothing is impossible to love. It is the magic key which will open the gates of the Paradise where happiness lives its eternal life; the 'open sesame' to all that makes this life worth living."

Again Doris started; she turned first pale, then crimson, as the meaning of the words dawned upon her mind. A sudden angry light sprang up into her eyes. What right had he to speak thus to her? He, who, unless rumour lied strangely, was still Lady Cecil's lover? Paul was surprised by her silence and the strange look with which she regarded him. He had expected a different answer from this!

"Well, love! Have you nothing to say to me?" he asked, gently.

"Say!"

The fire in Doris's eyes burned yet brighter as she looked at him steadily.

"I think, Mr. Beaumont, that you must have made some strange mistake! Is it possible, that you are saying this to me; that you are asking for my love? You, who are Lady Cecil's lover," the girl cried, with a passionate contempt and anger in her voice that stung Paul keenly. He flushed crimson, and sprang to his feet.

"Who says so? Who dares to say so?" he said.

"Every one."

Doris was half frightened at his violent tone; but she folded her hands composedly on her lap and looked up at him as he stood before her with calm, sad eyes.

"It is the common talk. What else can be said? You are constantly together, riding, driving, walking. You are always her companion; never her husband or child. And servants talk and whisper, and draw their own conclusions."

"Servants? Bah!"

"Yes, and others beside servants," Doris went on quietly. "I know they say that in the great world—your world—all the fine ladies have a lover, just as they have a carriage, and jewels, and a poodle dog, and that no one thinks any harm of it. We are behind the world here, and our standard of morality is different."

And a little severe look came round the sweet lips, and an added contempt into the clear, grey eyes.

Paul frowned impatiently.

"But, my dear child, I assure you you are quite mistaken," he said. "Lady Cecil is one of those women who exact, as a right, the homage of every man who comes across her path. I, as her guest, bow to her little whim—nothing more. As to love-making—even if my love was not given elsewhere—we know each other too well to think of that!" he added.

But even as he spoke, a remembrance of that moonlight night—the night on which he had lingered with Lady Cecil on the terrace—and of the look in her beautiful eyes, the strange passion in her voice, came over him, and he bit his moustache and frowned. Was it only play, only idle gallantry after all? Doris's grave eyes watched him keenly.

"How would you like it if you were Sir John?" she said. "You are his guest, as well as Lady Cecil's. Do you owe no duty to him? Do you think it would be pleasant for him to hear that all the idle tongues in the neighbourhood were talking

about his wife? And she is Floss's mother, and I know you are fond of Floss. Surely, for her sake—oh, forgive me, I have no right to speak like this to you—”

Doris broke off, colouring violently.

Paul hesitated, then sat down by her side, and put his hand gently on hers.

“But you have a right, the best right,” he said, very quietly. “Listen a moment before you condemn me, Doris. Long ago, when you were only a child, Lady Cecil and I were lovers, and she threw me over for Sir John. I felt it very keenly at the time, for I was young and foolish then, and I had believed implicitly in her. Well, I left England, and we did not meet for years; not till last May, in London. I won't deny that, during those years of absence, I used to think of her—well—as I had no business to think of another man's wife; but, as soon as we met again, I knew that the love I had once thought eternal, lived no longer. And also, looking at her with eyes no longer blinded by passion, I knew that the girl I had loved had never existed at all. Physiologists tell us, you know, that the whole tissue of the human frame changes entirely every seven years. Of the Paul Beaumont, who loved Cecil Stewart, nothing remains now; he and the love he bore to her have gone together. It is another, and I hope a better and wiser Paul Beaumont who comes to you to-day, and asks for your love, Doris. Say, shall he ask in vain, dear?”

“He must.”

Doris's voice was very low, but very steadfast. There was not a note of indecision in it; not a shadow of indecision or wavering in the grey eyes she raised to his. She clasped her hands tightly together as they lay on her lap. “He must,” she repeated.

“Not because of that old tale surely,” Paul urged.

“Partly because of that. I am stupid and narrow-minded, I suppose; but I cannot see things as you see them, or believe in a lover who comes straight from the side of his old love to his new,” Doris said with a fine scorn in her voice. “Oh, I know it! Only an hour or two ago you were with her in the rose-garden. You kissed her hand; you asked for the rose she was wearing. See, it is in your button-hole still,” she added, with a cold smile.

Paul snatched the rose out and flung it viciously away. It was all true; but how the deuce had Doris heard of that little

episode, he wondered savagely. She seemed to guess his thoughts, for she smiled again.

“You are wondering how I knew,” she said. “I saw you. I was on the hill, and from there one can see into the rose-garden, and I saw that. I did not mean to look—to play the spy,” Doris went on with her cheeks flushing a little, “and I turned away at once; but so much I saw. So you can imagine that I was somewhat surprised when you said that you loved me—surprised and a little insulted, too,” and Doris raised her head proudly. “I am only an ignorant country girl, I know, and I am not used to the ways of fine ladies and gentlemen; and love seems to me a thing too beautiful and serious to be played with—treated as a toy.”

“But, Doris, if I swear to you that nothing but idle nonsense has passed between Lady Cecil and myself, won't you believe me?” Paul cried.

He was terribly in earnest now. He had been so confident of success, he had looked for such a different answer from this, and with each word that Doris said, with every difficulty that rose in his way, his love grew more intense, and the desire to win her greater.

“Indeed, I love you! I would give my life to win your love, to accomplish your happiness! Darling, forget the scandalous stories you have heard; they are lies—all of them. Believe me when I say that I love you, and you only; that whether you return that love or not, I shall love you all my life; be your faithful servant, most devoted lover! Say, Doris! Don't you believe me?” he cried.

It was almost impossible to doubt him, Doris thought, as he bent over her, and looked in her face with his eager eyes. The glow and passion of youth had come back to his face, his eyes were full of passionate pleading and love. It was impossible not to see that he was in earnest—in terrible earnest—or that he really believed what he said. Doris's heart beat fast, her colour came and went, she felt ashamed of herself, and oh, so sorry for him. Her voice was very treacherous as she answered:

“I do believe you, and if I have wronged you, I ask your forgiveness, most humbly; but”—her voice gained in strength and sweetness as she went on—“I cannot give you the love you ask. There is another reason.”

“What is it?”

Doris was silent a moment. Her eyes grew dreamy. She folded her hands on her lap and looked at him.

"Laurence is the reason," she said, very quietly. "I belong to him."

"What, that boy! Do you mean that you are engaged to him?" Paul cried, in angry incredulity.

Doris gave an odd smile.

"I mean that we belong to each other, he and I," she said, quietly; "we promised, the night before he went away, always to love each other above every one else, that no one should come between us. If you call that being engaged, I suppose I am," she added.

Paul frowned and pulled his beard irritably; but his face softened as he looked down at the pale, sweet face by his side. He knew Laurence too well; he had gauged his character too thoroughly during the last few weeks, to place much confidence in any promises he might have made! Poor little Doris—patient, steadfast Doris—what a harvest of sorrows she was sowing for herself; on what a broken reed she was leaning! He almost forgot his own pain in pity for the greater pain which would surely be hers some day!

"But, my dear," he said, tenderly, "Laurence is only a boy, and a 'boy's will is the wind's will.' He will fall in and out of love half-a-dozen times before he meets his true *Dulcinea*! Boys always do, and Laurence," he hesitated, for he did not wish to say anything disparaging of his young rival, or to hurt her feelings, "is—is not very strong of purpose. He is good-hearted and generous, I know; but he is—oh, you know it as well as I do—weak and unstable."

"I know," Doris nodded; "that is one reason why I must always be true to him, why he needs me. Because I am strong and I can supply the want in his nature, and make it complete."

"And ruin your own life and your own happiness," Paul cried, bitterly.

"Not so. I shall find my happiness in his," Doris answered.

There was a long silence. The last bright tints had faded out of the sky, a dark, inky cloud had risen up in the west and swallowed up all that remained of the golden afterglow of the sunset. The bats were flying about the Red House, and the owls were hooting in the wood. The Red House looked dreary and gloomy, with its

long rows of dark, uncurtained windows and heavy porch. Doris's face looked very sad and wistful in the fading light; but her eyes were smiling softly under their long lashes.

Paul, watching her, felt all the anger and bitterness die out of his heart. He felt sad and disappointed; but no longer angry. Once more fate had been against him. He had thrown the dice and failed to win the stakes on which he had set his heart. Was he never to know the happiness which came so easily to other men, which they prized and held so lightly! Were the blessings of home, and wife, and children to be for ever denied to him! It certainly seemed so. He was silent so long, and his face grew so grey, and sad, and old, that Doris, waking up from her reverie, by-and-by, and looking at him, felt the tears rush into her eyes, and her heart throb painfully.

How ungrateful she had been, she told herself; what a poor return she had made for all his kindness to her and Laurence. He had given so much to her, and she in return had wounded and grieved him! With a sudden impulse she held out her hands to him.

"Oh, forgive me—forgive me," she cried; "don't let me lose my friend. I am so lonely—so very lonely now."

Paul took the outstretched hands and held them tightly.

"I will be your friend always, my dear," he said, "always; remember that. Whether you take Laurence or any other man for your husband, remember you have one friend, who asks nothing better than to serve you; whose love is ready for you, if ever you care to claim it; who will be true and loyal to you through life—till death! And now farewell."

He did not wait for her answer. He dropped her hands and turned away, and walked across the garden to the door. Doris, watching him through her tear-blinded eyes, saw him pause and wave his hand and raise his hat in a last good-bye, and waved her own in return. And when the door had opened and closed, and he was really gone, she threw herself down on the long grass, unheeding the dew, which was falling heavily now, and the chill wind which blew on her flushed, tearful face, and cried as if her heart would break!

And so she sent both her lovers from her, and was left quite alone!

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Yellaoat,"
"A Faivre Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN LONDON ON BUSINESS.

BEFORE Mr. Kestell drove off to Greystone, he went upstairs to his wife's boudoir. Symee was there, just preparing her luncheon. Mrs. Kestell was sitting by the fire, looking so young and handsome, that it needed no great effort of imagination on the part of her husband to remember the courting-time.

"Well, Symee," he said, noticing, as he frequently did, with kind words his wife's confidential maid, "have you heard lately from your brother?"

Symee raised a gentle, pale face up to her master.

"No, sir, not very lately. Since he left he seems so changed, and does not like writing letters; but he does his work as usual. Perhaps it is rather a busy time at his office."

"Yes, I am sure it is. You are a good friend to your brother, Symee; the best he has."

Symee had retired towards the door, and in answer smiled gratefully at her master. His words were balm to her heart; for she often grieved secretly about Jesse. Yes, he was changed; and she put down the change to her refusal to live with him.

Mrs. Kestell was altogether more genial and sympathetic now to her husband. This was caused by the excitement of Elva's wedding; for otherwise her life had flowed on without a want or a care, almost

without an untoward event. All trouble was kept from her, owing to her fancied ill-health.

"So you are off, Josiah. Are you sure it will not hurt you? I don't think Pink understands you at all; he didn't understand my case in the least."

"Yes, dear, I am much better. I saw the young people off just now on their expedition. I think we shall be told they make a very handsome bridal pair. Still, Elva does not come up to her mother."

He stooped down and kissed the hair which showed so few silvery threads.

"I was certainly the best looking of our family; but my sisters were so vain that they were always telling me I was nothing to look at."

"I undeceived you there, I think," Mr. Kestell smiled. That courting-time was so full of happy remembrances, that it seemed only like yesterday; and yet, here was his elder daughter going to be married.

"The first week in January," he said, suddenly. "There is really nothing to wait for, is there?"

"Oh, nothing; and lovers are a little tiresome after a time. Elva will miss the country; the girls have been so spoilt. Very different from the Fitzgerald girls, who were brought up so strictly that they have no ideas of their own now. I am sure our system was much the best; and the proof is that a very rising man, who has the pick of London society, selects Elva, and falls in love with her at first sight."

Mrs. Kestell's system had been the "laissez faire," not from choice, but because she had no authority over her girls. Mr. Kestell knew this well enough; but he would not have contradicted his wife for the world.

"Yes, dear, you are quite right; the proof of any system is in the result, and the result in Elva is perfect."

"And in Amice, too. You don't understand all her good points. She is quite the comfort of my life when I can't have Symee. By the way, Josiah, you will never allow Symee to go away, will you?" Mrs. Kestell looked up at her husband in a confiding manner, and with a troubled look in her eyes.

"Of course not, dear. Your comfort, you know, has always been my first thought."

A dim ray pierced the nearly ossified brain of Mrs. Kestell, and that ray showed her the long years of faithful devotion, the perfect kindness and goodness of the husband, whom her own people had made a favourite of accepting as one of the family. She held out her well-shaped, delicate hand with a very sweet smile on her lips.

"Yes, dear, your devotion has been the great blessing of my life. How could I have lived through so much illness and suffering without it?"

"Thank you, darling," he whispered, stooping down; and these thanks came from the bottom of his heart.

The pause that followed, during which he kissed the hand and the unwrinkled forehead of his wife, seemed to him like stepping into a new garden of Eden, as if he had suddenly come upon a beautiful oasis in an arid desert.

Still feeling this, he walked away to the door.

"Good-bye, darling. Take great care of yourself till I come back. I will call Symee."

One more look at his wife, and then he was gone, and very soon Amice, from her window, saw the brougham drive off to Greystone. To her the horses' hoofs upon the gravel seemed to say: "Who was John Pellow? Who was John Pellow?" till the sound ceased in the distance.

Mr. Kestell did not drive straight to his office, but made a détour to the inn, where Button still lay, neither much better nor much worse. In answer to Mr. Kestell's enquiries, mine host, who came to the door, answered that there seemed to be a turn for the worse this morning, and that the doctor who had called had looked a bit grave. Mr. Kestell quickly slipped a sovereign into an envelope, and asked the landlord to give it to the invalid. After which gracious act of charity he drove off, saying aloud to himself—why, he knew not, as

surely thinking it would have served the purpose:

"Poor fellow! I fear he will only drink it. But he expects it of me, I am sure he does; and one does not like to disappoint an invalid."

When he reached his office, he dismissed his carriage. This office was, in fact, the lower storey of a large, substantial, red-brick, Queen Anne house, in the upper part of which his partner lived; for the Kestells had for years been inhabitants of this house before the great rise in wealth which had made this present Kestell of Greystone a county man.

Mr. Kestell now appeared to be in a great hurry; he had an interview with his partner, quickly, well, and wisely settled a few difficult business details, and then said he should not stay longer to-day, and that he was not to be expected next day. He wrote a telegram, which he put into an envelope, and told a clerk to take it to the post-office in the afternoon; after which, Mr. Kestell walked away, and went to the railway-station.

He took his ticket for London, and choosing an empty first-class carriage, he bribed the porter to lock him in. "He wished to do a little business in quiet," he remarked.

This business must have been purely mental, for when the train moved on, Mr. Kestell folded his hands, and hardly moved all the way to town. Once he murmured: "I fear I cannot get home this evening; but Celia will get the telegram. I have done such a thing before—yes, when we were involved in that bank failure, I stayed away all night. She will not think anything of it. Poor darling! How like her old self she was this morning. Yes, everything is worth while for her—everything."

Mr. Kestell, once in London, recovered his energy. He did not even wait, as he often had done before, to help a distressed female to get her luggage. More than once the benevolence of his countenance had caused him to be appealed to by single ladies, who would have confided even their purses to such a man. And, in truth, never had his help been asked in vain. More than one old maid told stories about "That very kind gentleman who was so good to me."

There was no time to-day, however, for outside philanthropy. He took a cab, and drove at once to the business place of Card and Lilley, sent in his name, and was

soon admitted into the private room of Mr. Card. Lilley had somehow been swallowed up by Card, who, however, still kindly advertised his non-existent partner.

Mr. Kestell knew Jesse did not work in the room visitors went through, so he did not expect to see him; indeed, after the first preliminary civilities, and the usual sympathetic confidences about the past, present, and future weather, he at once said:

"Is Vicary still with you?"

"Yes, certainly; we should have advised you of it had he left."

Mr. Card always said "we" in loving memory of Lilley.

"Yes, of course, I know; but still in the press of business things are forgotten. I came here to consult you about him."

"After the handsome premium you paid for him, he is, I hope, giving you no trouble."

"Well, I don't quite say that. However, young men must be young men; and lately I have detected signs of restlessness in him. I have talked very seriously to him about it; but you know, if once the spirit of roving gets into a young fellow, he is not fit for much steady work afterwards."

"Yes, yes, certainly," said Mr. Card, rubbing his hands slowly; "but I wonder we have seen nothing of it. However, you know, Mr. Kestell, there is no lack of clerks at present. The applications are a perfect nuisance; so, if you wish in any way——"

"No, no, I don't wish," put in Mr. Kestell. "I am only thinking of your interests. I am going to see him to-day, and if I find him still bent on roving, why, I shall not refuse him my sanction any longer."

"It is very good of you, I am sure; the fellow ought to be ashamed of disappointing you. Still, I must say he does his work well and intelligently. Indeed, we half thought we should raise him; but, if you say he has other ideas, that will not be worth while."

"Thank you; I will do my best to make him see reason. Say nothing to him about my visit. It might only make him more obstinate."

"Of course not, Mr. Kestell."

Then the two men for a few minutes plunged into a business talk, after which Mr. Kestell very soon took his leave.

"Strange that Kestell of Greystone should bother himself about that Vicary,"

thought Mr. Card when his visitor had gone. "The young man must be a fool if he throws up this chance. Something behind it, I suppose," and not troubling himself to consider the question, Mr. Card resumed his work. If Vicary threw up his situation, he would of course lose, as it were, the benefit of the original premium. That, however, was nothing to Mr. Card; and clerks could be had in plenty.

Mr. Kestell next consulted his watch; he had yet some other business to do, and waiving the question of lunch, he took a cab, and called at several Colonial Emigration offices and land companies. Here he informed himself about matters concerning the taking up of land, and of buying farms; took away a goodly heap of printed matter of information on these various subjects; and then, hot and weary, he at last reached his club, and ordered an early dinner.

"I had better go and see Vicary to-night," he thought, "and have the thing over at once."

Quite unconscious of the coming visitor, Jesse reached his lodgings this evening with that clock-like regularity as to time which made 'Liza say:

"Mr. Vicary he is a regular gentleman, and never keeps the kettle boiling over for his tea, as some people does."

There was a great alteration, however, in Jesse now, since his return from the country; a change which showed itself in little things, which would have told any tender, careful watcher that he, Jesse, was passing through a time of intense mental suffering. But there was no one to note these little signs, and Jesse had to get through it as best he could in silence.

He was quite used to a rough life; that was nothing to him. Before this, on coming home, his bounding step, his cheerful greeting to 'Liza, all told of hope; but now these signs were gone something had taken its place, and that something was a mechanical and dogged perseverance in a work which was not congenial to him.

This particular evening Jesse had felt the power of this demon of hopelessness strong upon him. There were two natures fighting within him, and the fight was all the more powerful and terrible because, till that fatal evening, Jesse had had a strong belief in himself and his own power. It was not conceit, because it was founded on a firm trust and belief in God, a belief founded on the experience of his youth; but, nevertheless, though he still clung

tenaciously to his faith, the hour of temptation had come to him, as it comes to every man, and the battle of life had to be fought. On the loss of the battle, or on its victory, it is not too much to say depended all Jesse Vicary's future higher life. And the battle was not a question of hours, but of many days. Already now had he spent many an hour in his small room fighting with evil thoughts, as if they represented evil spirits, and were tangibly there before him.

Shame is the hardest trial for man to bear—shame, that is, that is felt; and shame had seized upon Jesse with a deadly power. He had been able to tread the path of poverty, and to see sin around him, and to know that he despised it; now as he went his habitual round, he seemed to be followed by a lurid light which mocked God's sunlight, and which showed him sin under a new form.

"Thou art no better than these," said a mocking fiend, "no better than these, except by chance. Thou, too, art an outcast in the great, cold, cruel world—a mere uncared-for unit, and not a member of the beautiful patriarchal family which has raised, through a series of spiritual evolutions, human beings from the level of the brute creation. With all thy pretensions, thy high thoughts, thy self-sufficiency, thou art no better than these outcasts."

Again and again had the poor fellow thrown himself on his knees, and wondered if his religion were on a par with his former pride, a mere sham? Had it been built up by reason of his respectability, and like a house of cards, easily blown down by the breath of public opinion? Or was it something deeper—more real than this?

He wanted the answer, and the answer came not; so that, suddenly rising, unable to lift his mind higher than himself, he would once more begin his round of reasoning. In fair weather how easy he had found it, how powerful had been his anger against scoffers, and now—ah, well, his punishment had come. Even doubts crowded in; doubts which had seemed so easy to refute before; doubts which he had again and again argued with others, and his arguments had proved powerful. But now what irony of fate was this, that all his past words rose up and laughed him to scorn, while his answers looked more like gossamer creations, which a breath could blow away?

When he went out to visit his friends in the street, or sat as before near Obed

Diggings's daughter, all his power of comforting seemed gone away. Even Obed's gaunt figure, and his infirmities, not caused by teetotalism, began to appear natural to Jesse. Why had he fancied before that he could reform any one? Was it not a case of "Physician, heal thyself"?

Now and then, at rare intervals, however, Jesse had a flash of different and less desponding thoughts.

With the loss of what he had deemed dearest and best, he had lost much motive power; but, after all, where lay his fault? The sin of the parent is to be visited upon the children; but does that visitation imply any disparagement of the child? Surely not. To his own Maker he standeth or falleth; and has not every man the right to ask and to claim justice from his Maker?

"I have no birthright," thought Jesse, during one of these happier moments; "but God gave me the right to live and the right to ask for justice. I believe, I believe in the right. God help me."

Jesse grasped this belief with a thanksgiving felt, not uttered; for true belief, that belief which is the only one worth having, is rare, it must be a heavenly gift, so wonderful and powerful is it, and, if denied, some great purpose must be meant to be answered by its absence.

Then, all at once, Jesse lost it again, a curtain was let down and hid it from him; but still his first germ of hope lay in the thought: "The other day I had it. The truth shone out, and for a short time I grasped it."

A very small comfort, however, when the battle had to be fought again; when the motive-power of life seemed worth nothing; when vague notions and strange temptations crowded in, and he asked himself, "Why not try to enjoy those pleasures in which others have found some compensation for ruined lives?"

This evening, on his way home, a passer-by had put into his hand a paper on "Individual Liberty." Jesse had lost some of that healthy curiosity of anything new, which makes men clear and correct in discriminative judgement. He glanced at it, and read some of the paragraphs on Taxes and Rates, and the Evils of Governments. He was not much interested with all this; but, on the last page, he found a few lines which caught his attention:

"Peace, happiness, progress can only

exist on one condition, that men are not struggling for this hateful power over each other, that they desire to be free themselves, and to allow all others to be free."

"What is freedom?" he said to himself. "Did I not once believe it to be a firm standing-ground in the world, from which one could climb above others? That standing-ground is gone, and I imagine the climbing to be impossible, and feel that I must stay at the bottom among the common herd. But was that freedom? Suppose there should be another kind of freedom, the freedom from all ambition centred in self? But, without ambition, how is good work to be done? Can there be selfless ambition? May not there be a spiritual level which has not one connecting link with the material? In that case, may I not look for it even in Golden Sparrow Street?"

Had not he, all his life, inseparably associated the spiritual with the material, made the one utterly dependent on the other; had his first basis been utterly wrong? On the other hand, might not the one be merely a result, nay, a necessary result of the other?

It was a new thought, and with a smile of pleasure Jesse rang the bell for 'Liza to take away his tea-things.

"Shall you be going out, Mister Vicary?" asked the little maid, who had also, long ago, given up country ideals of a clean face, and was content to be a resting-place for smuts.

"No, 'Liza, not to-night; I think I'll do some work at home."

The tea-things having disappeared, however, Jesse sat down by his small fire, and did not work; Symee's decision had taken the heart out of his after-hours study; he knew that, in time, he should relapse into the clerk pure and simple, a slavish machine with a contracting instead of expanding brain. With a little sigh of impatience he heard 'Liza's step again. Her affectionate regard was, at times, aggravating.

"If please, Mr. Vicary, there's a visitor for you; shall I show him up? He's a gentleman."

"It's Mr. Hoel Fenner," said Jesse to himself, with a sudden gleam of gratitude, for Hoel had not made a sign since Jesse had rejected his offer.

"Yea."

'Liza shuffled down, and soon threw open the door again, to usher in—Mr. Kestell!

All the fierce storm of days past burst forth again in Jesse's inner spirit, but outwardly he merely behaved as was befitting his position and that of his visitor.

PÆSTUM AND THE PARTHENON.

UNTIL a few years ago, it was almost as dangerous to visit Pæstum and its temples, as to venture upon a battle-field in the thick of the fray. The Apennines which rise so boldly to the east of the triangular plain which abuts on the Gulf of Salerno, and in the southern angle of which the classical little place is situated, were a famous resort of brigands. They could have had no better eyrie for their work. Even without a telescope they could see very distinctly the carriage or procession of carriages which gave animation to the long, straight, white road trending towards Pæstum. They had thus ample time to make their plans. By-and-by they descended from their perch, moved with caution from one piece of woodland to another, until at length they were shrewdly ensconced in this or that grain-field bordering the high road. The dust which attended upon the progress of the vehicles meanwhile drew nearer and nearer to them; and at length the moment arrived when the rogues, in admirable concert with each other, lifted their ill-favoured, swarthy faces from out the barley stalks, and levelled their guns at the luckless tourists, with the conventional threats if the coachmen presumed to disregard their summons to halt.

In fancy there is something exhilarating in such a picture as this. But it must have been detestably annoying to the victims. The bandits were wont to appraise their captives in a very arbitrary way; and they were very loth to reduce their valuations. Thus, the hapless and penniless tutor of my Lord Plantagenet was seized for my Lord Plantagenet himself; and was made significantly to understand that, unless about fifty thousand pounds was forthcoming from the Plantagenet estates by return of post, his intellectual ears would be cut from his head as a sign that the profession of bandit was a solemn reality, and as a token of worse things to follow if the money were not sent without fail upon the second demand.

However proud the tutor may have been to play scapegoat for his young pupil, he was sure ere long to groan cruelly about

the hardships of life among the brigands, and especially if the police were seized with a fit of energy just at the time. Forced marches by day and night over mountain-tops, incessant soakings from the merciless clouds, broken sleep in the open, and a diet of raw offal, intermitting with fasts of three or four days in duration, were likely soon to try his constitution to the uttermost. And he would, at the best, have the bitter assurance brought home to him that, even though he might eventually be able to return to his dear native land, he would infallibly take a mortal or chronic disease along with him as a lifelong memento of his dolorous adventures.

Thank Heaven such chances no longer brood over the visitor to Pæstum. In the old days it was hardly worth the attempt to see the temples. But now, when there is a railway-station close to the old Greek gate of the walls of the ruined city, and nothing more formidable to face than the possibility of a touch of fever, the man who finds himself within a hundred miles of Pæstum must reproach himself if he does not journey to it.

What a sweet, jocund country is that which intervenes between Naples and Pæstum! Vesuvius and Pompeii cannot lessen its brightness. What though the lava be descending the dark flanks of the volcano, and seeming to threaten the dead skeleton of Pompeii, even as, two thousand years ago, it overwhelmed the living body of the place? One does not anticipate evil in this part of the world. If it comes, it comes, and that suffices. But in the opinion of nine-tenths of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, though the menace be ever so stern, they have only to hasten to the famous church on the cinder heap between Pompeii and the mountain, and loudly entreat the local Madonna to intercede for them. If the Pompeian Madonna had been domiciled in Pompeii in A.D. 79, we should, they will assure you, have no such spectacle now to see as disinterred Pompeii affords us.

Faith like this, and the fertile, dark soil of the land, work wonders for the happy Neapolitans. Small marvel if they sing while they till their gardens, in which orange, and fig, and cherry-trees thrive in the midst of maize and potatoes, over which, in their turn, the vines festoon from tree-trunk to tree-trunk. No impoverished soil this, which can bear three crops at the same time, and bring each crop to perfection! And there is beauty here as well as exuberance. For

the mountains soar from the gardens with delightful abruptness, and through the midst of the forests which cover their sides rills of clear water descend from lofty springs. It is the very country for the practice of brigandage as a fine art. The mountains have such fantastic shapes that they fashion a number of dells and upland basins, hard, indeed, of access, but yet so near to the villages among the fruit-trees, that a stone thrown from them might fall on this or that red roof of a cottage. With Nature so ardent in temptation, even an honest man might here be seduced into a life, illicit enough, but with such a fascination of freedom, and such opportunities of profit. These hills and gardens by Salerno are, in fact, so lovely, that even hardened travellers cannot be phlegmatic about them. They contest with the Italians themselves, who perchance see the same prospect every day of their lives, for the best window-pane of the railway-car, whence to look forth upon them. The Italians utter enthusiastic interjections of praise of what they see; and in his heart, if not with his tongue, the veteran sight-seer does likewise.

There was a roll of thunder from the dark clouds low upon the Apennines when I set foot on the Pæstum railway platform. It had been a ride as tedious as it was pleasant in its prospects, with an average pace of but twelve miles an hour. But what of that? It is well to get one's energies under curb for once in a way. I had also had the more time to mark the graces of the pestilential flat across which, for the last hour of our journey, we had crawled methodically. In old days this part of Italy was famous for its buffaloes, and for a certain venomous fly—gad-fly or otherwise—which was told off to make the life of the buffaloes a severe trial. It is much the same still. The buffaloes were to be seen standing knee-deep in the heath of the plain, or among the poppies or stubble of a garnered field, or in the yellowish waters of the River Sele, which swirls its stream from the snow of the high peaks of the hinder Apennines. And now and then, if the furious agitation of their tufted tails meant what it seemed to mean, the insect pest was still strong to irritation.

There was a gaiety of colour, also, on this thinly-peopled tract. Here an olive-wood, silver-grey in the sunlight. Anon, an open meadow of bright grass, freshened by a water-brook, and scarlet with shading of anemones; in the midst of

the meadow an old gnarled tree, beneath which the white sheep lie panting; the tree itself graced with a light veil of vine-wishes, and a bower of convolvulus bright with bloom. Yonder, a conical hut of straw, grasses, and reeds, interwoven round a centre pole of fir. 'Tis a shepherd's residence, just such a one, out of question, as the shepherd's ancestor, to the fiftieth or sixtieth generation, also dwelt in, ere yet the land had got used to the colonising feet of the Greeks from Sybaris, who came hither to build the wonderful temples and a city. In some parts they are making hay, and the perfume of their labour is blown by the breeze through the railway-cars. But it is hot work for them under a cloudless June sun; and while we pass they recur to their wine-gourds, and tumble themselves down upon the grass beneath the forked sticks, which, aided by the coats they set upon them, afford them some slight shelter from the sun. Houses are few in number. The rare farm-building nestles in a grove of eucalyptus, as if to hide itself from the Angel of Pestilence, who stalks here through the months of summer and autumn, and takes toll of the people. The faces one sees at the little white railway-stations of the plain are sallow and emaciated as a rula. They are like the faces of the "crackers" of Florida: a mean race of whites, who eat clay for pastime, and whose skin takes the colour of clay.

There was no other passenger for Pæstum except myself. It was late in the year for the tourist throng. Doctors in Naples put their veto upon such an excursion when the summer heat has begun. In the spring the visitors here number about five hundred a month; in the winter two hundred; but in the summer and autumn no more than nine or ten. The garrulous custodian of the temples might as well leave them open to the world, free of payment, during the bad season, as stay dallying about the gates that he may offer his services to one stranger in three days.

The city is close at hand. The courteous official of the station—to whom every stranger is doubtless a "my lord" in disguise—would, if I wished it, have left his office and all his responsibilities to look after themselves, and have played the part of guide to me. But it was unnecessary. The road ran straight from the station door to an arch of white travertine, only a few paces distant. The arch stands linking rampart to rampart, and as a conduit

for the track beneath it. The ramparts are the old city walls, built by the colonists from Sybaris in the year 600 B.C., or thereabouts; and the arch itself is one of the city gates.

Living and moving mortal, save myself, when I have passed through the gate, there is none in sight. For the moment, the temples themselves are hidden. The track goes by the side of a wall, enclosing the gardens of a certain stately villa, the only thing of its kind in Pæstum; and on the other side of the track are fields of barley ripe for the sickle. The sculptured capital of a column, or a bit of a frieze, sticks up from amid the barley here and there; but this is all that speaks of Pæstum past or present. Not quite all, however. Away to the right are the red roofs of ten or twelve houses—all within the bounds of the city—and the turret of a church. Here the miserable remnants of the people of Pæstum struggle through life as best they may. They make an execrable wine, harsh and heady; and all save about a dozen of them exile themselves to the mountains when the fever is in its most deadly mood.

One of these desolate villagers meets me at a turn of the road, where the byeway strikes, at right angles, the old main thoroughfare of the Greek city. He salutes in the deferential manner that speaks eloquently of his condition. He is degraded by his sufferings; so that, he is apt to regard a healthy, upright man as the Greeks, his forefathers, were wont to regard one or other of their benign divinities. But there is also more than this in his salutation. He is the merchant of curios of Pæstum. Poor merchant! The little canvas bag which he unties with trembling fingers contains nothing but a number of absurd trifles which it were a waste of time to examine: morsels of marble; obliterated coins; and bits of bronze which may be, as he says they are, a yield of the Pæstum vineyard, but which may also have been sent to him from Naples for the deception of the enthusiastic stranger. And so with a suave "Bon viaggio!" which may be taken to mean "A safe departure from Pæstum," the poor fellow goes his way, and I am hard by the most northern of the three famous temples which have made this little old city a bye-word and a place of pilgrimage.

My reader will not thank me for an architect's description of these temples; and I am glad to think that such a de-

scription would be little apt to give an idea of them and their forlorn beauty. What does it matter whether they are fifty or sixty yards in length, twenty or thirty in breadth, and whether their columns be twenty-five or thirty-five feet in height? To my mind it is much more significant to know that the temples have stood thus, swept and bereaved of all their portable parts, for an indefinite number of centuries; that the people of many nations have for ages looked upon them with ridicule, contempt, wrath, or stupefaction; that a multitude of storms have burst upon them and harmed them not; and that still they stand strong and beautiful as the human ideal of the admirable race who were their authors.

Of the three temples, that dedicated to Neptune—the middle one—is at the same time the largest and the noblest. It is almost twin brother to the Parthenon of Athens. It is of the same sturdy Doric order; its columns have the same colour of ripened grain, which may be bronze or gold, according to the force of the sunlight; and it impresses in like manner. But, for the rest, nothing could be more dissimilar than the situation of the two temples. That of Athens is on the crest of a rock; this of Pæstum is set flat on the plain. The sea is five or six miles distant from the Parthenon, yet it is as if it were but a stone's throw away; so commanding is the Acropolis, that the interjacent plain of Piræus seems expunged when one is on the temple steps. Whereas, on the other hand, here at Pæstum, though the sea is not more than half a mile distant, it is as if it were miles away; for the level ground makes a deceptive horizon, and it is only by the sound of the surge that one has any presentiment of the ocean. But both the temples are again alike in their naked majesty. Lord Elgin and others have stripped the Parthenon; and the Pæstum temple is equally diahevelled, though who can say by whose hands?

At Athens, the Acropolis surface is bestrewn with fragments of temples. There is little space for vegetation and such flowers as Nature sets upon man's ruined handiwork. But at Pæstum it is different. The temples are hedged round about with tall grasses, thistles seven feet high, brambles, and a myriad of bright flowers, which hide among the thick stems of the more aspiring plants. If one leaves the narrow track which goes from the house of the custodian to the temple, one is absorbed by the meadowy thicket. The bees buzz

at one's ears, and it may chance that the sinuous form of a snake darts over one's feet with a frightened hiss, which for a moment puts an end to the romance of one's surroundings. There are many snakes at Pæstum. The custodian will tell tales of them for your entertainment; how they may be seen climbing the marble walls of the temple in quest of the unfledged birds which are hatched in the pediment and the crevices; and what satisfaction he feels when he is able to kill one. The snakes give a charm to Pæstum which the Acropolis lacks; but it is a charm better appreciated in memory than by ocular regard.

While I loiter in and about the temple the thunder continues to boom from the mountains towards us. But it is merely a local manifestation. We are under a cloudless sky. It is so hot that even the Pæstum wine is welcome. And it is so still that the waves of the Mediterranean creep upon the sands without even an audible murmur. The custodian ventures a suggestion about Pæstum's fascination by moonlight. There is no hotel in the place; but his own white house is at my disposal. If I am an artist, I am especially entreated not to miss the opportunity of such a feast of fancy. No doubt he is right. Pæstum's attractions are of the kind that the moon sanctifies and quadruples. Who that has seen the Parthenon, Melrose, or Tintern by moonlight, will thereafter in memory recall them as they appeared to him in the garish stare of the day? But for such enjoyment one must have company, and company of the dearest kind; unless, indeed, one is in the thrall of literary conception, poetic or otherwise. Else there is as much sadness as rapture in the show. It is the beauty of death to eyes that cannot in some definite manner turn its tender witchery to impersonal account. Indeed, here at Pæstum, on a summer's night, it might well be a prologue to death itself. For malaria is abroad when the sun is down; and all wise men are then under roof. Better to be insensible of the romantic than to catch a fever in search of it.

They are kind to artists and architects in Neapolitan territory. The man who is either artist or architect has but to proclaim the fact, and he is free of the temples of Pæstum. It is a sort of thank-offering for these glorious buildings. Even the meanest follower in the steps of these old Greeks has thus a share in their achievements; and it may be, that the

remission of the franc which ordinary people pay to enter the precincts has, ere now, stirred a spirit of proud emulation in the soul of this or that professional visitor—a spirit which, though the world, and perhaps even he himself, wots not of it, has got its spark in the vicinity of this work of the Sybarites ere a cloud fell upon their energies. This is a fair and reasonable fancy. It chimes in with the best aspirations of our nature. Reverence and respect are two states of being which by no means have a tendency to abase those who are disposed honourably to submit to them. On the contrary, the inability to venerate and esteem argues either a depraved or an anarchic mind; whereas, he who reveres or respects others for their achievements will not fail to strive that he also may, in the vigour of his prime, do works which shall win for him respect and esteem in his turn.

I returned to Naples in the evening, when the clouds had lifted from the Apennines, having spent their force upon the upper rocks. The sunset glow was upon the plain, its haycocks, and wigwams, and the crimson faces of the farm-buildings among the trees. There was song from the olives in the woods through which we rode; and song from the light-hearted peasants in the fields, and in the cars of the train. A worthy young Neapolitan, who was making his dinner by my side, offered me bread and onions, to eat with him. Rather than chill him with a refusal, I chose a small onion and a fragment of his bread, and made a pretence of feasting. He was a genial fellow, like the average Italian, whether of town or country. But, again like the typical Italian, he had no care for the suffering he caused to such living creatures as birds and beasts. He had a pocketful of unfledged hawks, luckless little misshapen things; and he was taking them home to his brothers and sisters, for their diversion. I dare say, ere it was night, the miserable little creatures were torn to pieces by the small barbarians. And perhaps nothing better could have happened to them, once they were in their captor's possession.

Here, truly, was an odd contrast to the sight of the temples of Paestum. The temples excite veneration for their architects. And the young hawks were suffering retribution for the sins of their parents, who, for their depredations' sake, are loathed by the Italian rustic.

SOME OPERATIC REMINISCENCES.

THE following passage in a letter from Lord Byron to John Murray, dated from Ravenna, February sixteenth, 1821, and quoted in Moore's life of his brother poet, recalls to my memory one of the first Italian singers I ever heard.

"In the month of March," writes Byron, "will arrive from Barcelona Signor Curioni, engaged for the opera. He is an acquaintance of mine, and a gentlemanly young fellow, high in his profession. I must request your personal kindness and patronage in his favour. Pray introduce him to such of the theatrical people, editors of papers, and others, as may be useful to him in his profession, publicly and privately."

Whether this recommendation materially influenced Curioni's favourable reception or not, I am unable to say; but it is certain that the new tenor was at once accepted as a valuable acquisition, and remained for some years a fixture at the theatre in the Haymarket. "In person and countenance," says Manager Ebers, "he was one of the handsomest men who have ever appeared at the Italian Opera. As he continued on the stage his talents, by practice and cultivation, were constantly progressive, and proportionately estimated." As a proof of his increasing attraction, it may be stated that whereas in 1821 his salary amounted to six hundred pounds, it was raised two years later to nine hundred, and in 1827 to fourteen hundred and fifty pounds. It was in this latter year that I heard him as Jason in Simon Mayr's "Medea in Corinto," Pasta playing the heroine. Both artists were then in their prime; and although the lady's share of the season's receipts exceeded two thousand three hundred pounds, the worthy Mr. Ebers, contrary to his experience of former years, naively congratulated himself on having only been a loser to the tune of two thousand nine hundred and seventy-four pounds.

I was then far too young to appreciate the merits of the great prima donna; but the terror with which, in the closing scene of the opera, her impassioned outburst of rage and despair impressed me, is still painfully fresh in my memory. Twenty-three years later, in 1850, I heard her at the same theatre for the second and last time; she had arrived in London for the purpose of witnessing the *début* of her pupil, Parodi, and was persuaded to re-

appear before an English audience as Anna Bolena. It was an ill-advised step, the experiment, as might have been expected, proving a melancholy failure; vocally speaking, she was indeed a mere wreck, for although she still retained her grand declamatory style, she had lost all command over correct intonation, and her once glorious voice was little more than the "shadow of a shade."

My recollections of Malibran are limited to a single performance at Drury Lane in May, 1836, of the "Maid of Artois," an opera composed for her by Balfe in—if I have been correctly informed—little more than five weeks. Her voice had lost somewhat of its freshness, but nothing could surpass the brilliancy of her vocalisation, or the marvellous energy with which, although suffering from over-exertion, she threw herself heart and soul into the part of Isolina, and achieved a triumph hardly before equalled in her artistic career. In the following September I happened to be at Manchester, where she was engaged for the musical festival, and shall not easily forget the extraordinary effect produced throughout the city by the news of her death, after only a few days' illness. In public places, and in private circles, nothing else was talked of, and it seemed as if the entire population, many of whom could barely have known the great singer by name, were personally affected by the loss of as consummate an artist, and as highly gifted and thoroughly amiable a woman as ever lived.

I can just remember Malibran's most dangerous rival, Henriette Sontag, when she first appeared before a London audience in 1828 as Rosina in the "Barbiera." And a very charming Rosina she was: a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired blonde, with a true soprano voice of the full compass, and wonderfully flexible. From that time I lost sight of her until I heard of her return to the stage as Countess Rossi in 1848, when her reappearance in "Linda di Chamouni" was hailed with enthusiasm, and proved a valuable card to the generally unlucky Mr. Lumley. On the following afternoon I happened to call on a popular French actress then staying in London, and found there Mademoiselle Nau, a pleasing singer of the Paris Opera, who was then, if I remember rightly, fulfilling an engagement at the Princess's Theatre. Both ladies had been present at the performance of the previous evening, and Madame — was loud in her praise of the fascinating Linda.

"Ah, bah!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Nau, with a contemptuous shrug of her shoulders, "succès de Comtesse, voilà tout!"

"Pardon, chère amie," retorted the more charitably-disposed actress, probably not sorry to inflict a well-merited "set down" on her pretentious visitor; "dites plutôt, succès qui compte!"

That bewitching siren, Giulia Grisi, and her scarcely less popular rival, Persiani, rarely sang in the same opera, except as Donna Anna and Zerlina in "Don Giovanni." Professionally speaking, they did not much interfere with each other; but, nevertheless, they seldom met without exchanging a few colloquial acerbities, in which species of guerilla warfare the lady "with a golden wire voice," as Fanny Kemble calls Persiani, who was by far the cleverer of the two, generally came off victorious. Lablache, greatly to his annoyance, was invariably appealed to by both belligerents to settle the dispute; and, on one occasion, when all his efforts to effect a reconciliation had proved unavailing, he threw up his hands in despair.

"Ah, mes enfants," pathetically remonstrated the good-natured "gros de Naples," "have you no compassion for an unfortunate basso, who has still the pretension of being a 'bel uomo'! If this state of things is to continue, and the remainder of my days are to be passed in patching up your squabbles, I shall soon be as thin as Fanny (Persiani), and unable to play Leporello without padding!"

It is a singular but incontrovertible fact that the great majority of tenors are bad actors. Why this should be is not easy to say; but examples are not wanting to demonstrate the correctness of the statement. Rubini, "facile princeps" as a singer, was certainly no exception to the rule; he did not even pretend to act, but contented himself with accompanying his dulcet notes by mechanically raising first his right arm and then his left, and letting them fall again. Gardoni was little better, and our own Templeton the worst of all. Even Mario, although he subsequently displayed considerable dramatic ability, especially as Raoul in the "Huguenots," was, in his early days, a deplorable "stick"; and the reason of this histrionic incapacity is not difficult to explain. If there is one thing which a Parisian audience insists upon in a singer as a "sine quâ non," it is accuracy of pronunciation; their critical susceptibility must not be

offended by the slightest deviation from established rules, even the faintest suspicion of exotic accentuation being regarded as a barbarism. No wonder, then, that Mario, singing for the first time in a language unfamiliar to him, should have felt nervous under the ordeal, and have remarked to a friend who had reproached him for his want of animation :

"How can I be expected to enter into the spirit of my part when all I can possibly do is to keep my tongue from tripping?"

Incomparably the best actor, serious or comic, I ever saw on the operatic stage, was Giorgio Ronconi, who, in certain tragic parts, and notably as Chevreuse in "Maria di Rohan," reminded me forcibly of Edmund Kean. Physically, he was an insignificant-looking little man, but artistically a giant, who to my mind was never appreciated in London as highly as he deserved to be.

This, perhaps, was in a great measure owing to his being terribly handicapped by the absurd pretensions of his intolerably-conceited wife, who posed for a beauty and a first-rate singer, and was neither. Not only did she insist on being engaged at the same theatre with her husband, but also did all in her power to prevent him from singing with any lady artist but herself; and this continued until the public, weary of her false notes and caprices, preemptorily demanded her dismissal.

Tamburini—facetiously christened Tom Rubini by "Punch"—was undeniably a great, although far from a perfect, singer. His intonation was uncertain, and he had a tendency to sing flat, a defect which, during the whole of his career, he never entirely succeeded in mastering. His Don Giovanni could not be named in the same breath with that of Faure, and as a representative of the lively and bustling Figaro he was depressingly heavy; but in the "Puritani," and more particularly in the "Sonnambula," he was excellent.

At the risk of being accused of heresy, I must confess that I never could quite understand the extraordinary popularity of Jenny Lind. That she was a most gifted artist, possessing a sweet, powerful, and well-trained voice, it is impossible to deny; her appearance, moreover, had been judiciously heralded by a succession of preliminary puffs, which had so stimulated public curiosity, that people were prepared to accept her beforehand at the manager's

valuation, and to proclaim her—"de confiance"—superior to any other living singer. It must, however, be owned that her Alice in "Robert le Diable" was neither remarkable for impassioned tenderness nor for dramatic inspiration, as those who remember Mademoiselle Falcon in the character will certify; whereas in the "Sonnambula," and the "Figlia del Reggimento," both parts exactly suited to her, she was simple, naïve, and in every respect charming. Her Norma was an admitted failure; the sole dissentient from the general verdict I remember meeting with being Macready, who, in the only conversation I ever had with him, strenuously maintained that she was right, and the critics wrong.

If, however, the innumerable partisans of the Swedish nightingale were to a certain extent justified in their admiration of her really sterling qualities, as much cannot be said of those—and they also were legion—who blindly succumbed to the fascinations of that strange compound of audacity and musical incompetency, Maria Piccolomini. As has been truly said of her, "She had not the faintest idea of what singing really was, and could no more accomplish a scale than she could move the Monument. Whenever she came in contact with a difficulty, she shook her little head, made a dash at it, and scrambled helter-skelter through it as she could." It is, however, but fair to add that she "never denied her incapacity, but honestly admitted the fact." A single performance of the "Traviata" had settled her pretensions in Paris, whereas in London she not only came, was seen, and conquered, but for two seasons drew more money into the treasury than any other member of the company. Her success, indeed, was an anomaly as inexplicable as the mysterious dish set before John Poole at a cheap restaurant in the Quartier Latin, the composition of which the humourist, after a minute inspection, declared to "pass all understanding."

When speaking of singers more remarkable for vocal than histrionic ability, I might have included in the list the admirable contralto, Marietta Alboni, who, whatever might be the personage represented by her, invariably adopted the same listless and unemotional manner, with a smile on her good-humoured face, and a placid indifference to any dramatic requirements of the part. She had a magnificent and finely-shaped head, but her figure had become so voluminous, that Leigh Hunt's

line, descriptive of Lady Blessington in mature age,

A grace after dinner, a Venus grown fat, might have been correctly applied to her. No words can do justice to the beauty of her voice, or to the exquisite perfection of her singing; those alone who have heard her can form any adequate idea of either.

In conclusion, a few words of recognition are due to one of the most remarkable artists and estimable women who have graced the lyric stage, Thérèse Tietjens, or, as she was commonly called, Titiens. Alike excellent as a singer and as an actress, she had attained by dint of hard study and incessant practice the highest rank in her profession, and remained modest and unassuming to the last. Far from being jealous of others, she never hesitated to sacrifice her own interest to that of the theatre; and a pleasing anecdote is recorded of her, with which I may appropriately close these memories of the past. A year or two before her death, the lessee of the theatre where she held the position of "prima donna" was in treaty with a well-known lady artist, who, among other conditions, insisted on appearing in certain parts belonging exclusively to Mademoiselle Titiens. "By all means let her have them," said the latter to the naturally embarrassed manager. "A little friendly rivalry will do me no harm; and if she succeeds, you, my dear friend, and the public will be the gainers!"

SOME SINGULAR PUNISHMENTS.

AN absolutely equitable adjustment between crime and punishment never has existed, and probably never will exist anywhere but in Utopia. The chief reason for this is, that the force of inherited tendency, the power of temptation, the bias imparted by education, training, and surroundings, being known only by Omniscience, the precise degree of an offender's guilt can never be ascertained by any fallible judge or jury. It is nevertheless much to be wished that jurists would arrive at some agreement as to what the real object and aim of punishment for crime really is. According to Sir Henry Maine, the two great instincts which lie at the root of all penal law are, firstly, the desire of the community to be avenged on the aggressor; and, secondly, the wish for a

punishment adequate to deter others from imitating him. But it has been contended that the community has no more right than the individual to execute vengeance on an offender, and that punishment has little or no deterrent effect upon others.

Some authorities hold that the reformation of the criminal should be the chief aim of punishment; others, of Carlyle's opinion, that a scoundrel remains for ever a scoundrel, hold that its true aim is the criminal's extinction. Mr. Justice Buller epigrammatically stated the deterrent theory when he said to a convicted thief: "Prisoner at the bar, you are not hung for stealing this horse, but that horses may not be stolen"; and the extinction theory was once stated from the Bench at the Gloucester Assizes by Baron Heath, when a witness stating that he came from Bitton, the Judge remarked: "You do seem to be of the Bitton breed; but I thought I had hanged the whole of that parish long ago."

The variability of human morality is curiously reflected in the penal laws of various ages and countries. In Holland, for instance, it was once a capital offence to kill a stork; and, in England, to cut down another man's cherry-tree. Idleness was punishable in Athens, but commendable in Sparta; and in Mexico, while a slanderer was only deprived of his ears or his lips, a drunken man or woman was stoned to death.

Plato and Aristotle commended infanticide as a valuable social custom, and Plutarch, Seneca, and other ancient moralists advocated suicide under certain given circumstances. Modern moralists condemn both practices without exception; and, according to English law, if two persons agree to commit suicide together, and only one of them succeeds, the survivor is liable to be tried and executed for murder.

In this country, before the Conquest, slaves suffered mutilation or death for very trifling offences; while the nobles could commit even murder and be quit of their offence for a fine to the Church and some paltry compensation to the family of the murdered man. At the present day it is our boast that we have one law for rich and poor alike, and that we do not mutilate nor, except in cases of murder, do we kill our criminals. On the contrary, we provide them with excellent sanitary dwellings and sufficient food, and endeavour to teach them useful trades, or, at any rate, give them plenty of laborious

work. Whether such treatment tends to the prevention of future crime, however, or to foster in the criminal a love of useful and honest work, is a problem on which opinions widely differ. It is now beginning to be suspected that there is very little relation between the severity of punishment inflicted and the amount of crime committed in any country; but from the earliest times until quite recently there appears to have been no doubt about the matter, and whenever a given punishment failed to repress a particular class of crime, the demand was always for more punishment.

Among our Saxon and Danish ancestors almost every punishment could be commuted for a money payment; but those offenders who were poor were very barbarously treated. They were branded and deprived of hands, and feet, and tongue, their eyes were plucked out, nose, ears, and upper lips were cut off, scalps were torn away, and sometimes the whole body was flayed alive. In the early part of the tenth century, a female slave who had committed theft was burnt alive, and a free woman was either thrown over a precipice, or drowned. A man slave was stoned to death by eighty other slaves, and when a female slave was burnt for stealing from any but her own lord, eighty other female slaves attended the execution, each bearing a log for the fire.

By Ethelbert's laws, not only did every man have his price, but every part of a man had its specified price. The wergild, or price of the corpse, of a ceorl was two hundred shillings; of a lesser thane, six hundred shillings; and of a royal thane, twelve hundred. It appears to have been a common practice for men, in those days, to settle their disputes by knocking one another's teeth out, and the law laid down a scale of compensation, according to which a front or a canine tooth cost six shillings, while a molar might be knocked out for one shilling, until Alfred was considerate enough to raise the price to fifteen. If a man could be satisfied with breaking an opponent's rib, he was only fined three shillings, but a broken thigh would cost him twelve; while, singularly enough, the loss of a beard was estimated at no less than twenty shillings. The last seems a very heavy penalty when it is remembered that a man might have knocked out his enemy's eye for a matter of a fifty-shilling fine.

William the Conqueror was averse to hanging, or otherwise killing criminals;

but it could hardly have been on humanitarian grounds, for he enacted that "their eyes be plucked out, or their hands chopped off, so that nothing may remain of the culprit but a living trunk, as a memorial of his crime."

Under Henry the First, coiners of false money were punished by the loss of their right hands, and other mutilations of various kinds were in common use. In 1160 we hear of heretics who had refused to abjure their faith being handed over by the Church to the civil authorities, to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, have their clothes torn off from the waist up, and be whipped through the public streets. Boycotting was at that time a legal practice, whatever it may be now, for the said heretics were not only forbidden to worship as they desired, but forbidden to enter the houses of orthodox believers, or even to purchase the necessaries of life.

The popular notion of the Crusaders, as an army of Bayards, "sans peur et sans reproche," is hardly consistent with the code of criminal law which Richard Cœur de Lion enacted for the especial behoof of those with whom he set out for Holy Palestine. If any one of them were convicted of theft, boiling pitch was to be poured over his head, then a pillow full of feathers shaken over him, and he was to be abandoned at the first port the vessel touched. Whoever killed another on board ship, was to be tied to the corpse and cast into the sea; whoever killed another on shore was to be tied to the corpse and buried with it. A blow was to be punished by three duckings in the sea, and the use of the knife in a quarrel caused the aggressor to lose one of his hands.

While the Lion-hearted was thus dealing with his warriors on the high seas, his brother John was behaving as unmercifully at home. The terrible ways in which he showed his displeasure may be instanced by the case of the Archdeacon of Norwich. For some slight offence he caused the poor churchman to be encased in a sheet of lead, which fitted round him like a cloak, and, after a lingering and painful death, became his coffin. In the reign of Edward the Third, a London tailor convicted of contempt of court was condemned to lose his right hand and be imprisoned in the Tower for life. The general severity of punishment, however, seems to have had no corresponding effect in suppressing crime. "When Henry the Seventh ascended the throne," says Mr. Pike, "a gibbet with a

robber hanging in chains, a petty thief in the pillory, a scold on a cucking-stool, or a murderer being drawn on a hurdle to the gallows, were spectacles as familiar to the Londoner of that day as a messenger from the telegraph-office is to us." Now and again one comes across the record of an arbitrary or obsolete punishment to which even the modern humanitarian may give a qualified approval. The fourteenth-century custom of punishing a London baker who gave short weight is an instance in point. The delinquent had a loaf of his own bread hung round his neck, and was exposed, to be pelted by his defrauded customers, in the pillory. For a third offence his oven would be pulled down, and he compelled to abjure trade in the City for ever.

Similarly, in a story of retaliatory punishment told by Sir Walter Scott, the natural man will find a pleasant spice of poetical justice. A poor widow, who had received some injury from the head of her clan, determined to walk from Ross to Edinburgh to see the King—James the First—and obtain redress. The cruel chief, hearing of her intention, had her brought before him, and, making the brutal jest that she would need to be well shod for her journey, nailed her shoes to her feet. Of course the poor woman's journey was long delayed; but eventually she did go to Edinburgh, and, when James heard the story of her wrongs, he sent for the chief and his accomplices, caused iron soles to be nailed to their feet, exposed them for some time to public derision, and then decapitated them.

In 1530, an attempt to poison the Bishop of Rochester and his family, by a cook, named Rose, who had thrown some deleterious drug into their porridge, created quite a panic in the land. Poisoning had hitherto been a rare crime in England, and was looked upon as a peculiarly horrible Italian crime. A new statute was accordingly passed to meet the new terror, and the penalty for the offence was boiling to death, without benefit of clergy. Rose was publicly boiled to death in Smithfield.

The story of the fires of Smithfield is too familiar to need more than a passing reference. Henry the Fourth appears to have been the first to burn heretics. In the reign of Edward the First, incendiaries suffered a kind of "lex talionis," in being burnt to death. Burning for witchcraft was legal until the passing of 9 Geo. II. c. 5. Women could be burnt alive for treason at the time Blackstone wrote his

Commentaries; and the ancient law of the Druids, which made the murder of a husband a sort of petit treason, was still in force in 1784, when a woman, who had murdered her husband, was condemned "to be drawn on an hurdle to the place of execution and burned with fire until she be dead."

During the "spacious times of great Elizabeth," any poor wretch adjudged to be a vagabond, if above the age of fourteen years, was grievously whipped and "burned through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch." According to Holinshed's "Chronicle," rogues were great annoyances of the commonwealth in the time of the virgin Queen; and, although King Henry the Eighth "did hang up three score and twelve thousand of them in his time," yet since his death the number of them greatly increased, "notwithstanding that they are trussed up apace." "For there is not one year commonly wherein three hundred or four hundred of them are not devoured and eaten up by the gallows in one place and another."

Harrison, in his "Description of England" (1577), says that "torment with us is greatly abhorred;" but he relates how, "such felons as stand mute, and speak not at their arraignment, are pressed to death by huge weights laid upon a board, that lieth over their breast, and a sharp stone under their backs."

And he forgets to mention that those two frightful engines of torture—the rack and the "Scavenger's daughter"—were occasionally put in use. The rack, as is well known, stretched its victim until his fingers might be torn from his hands, and his toes from his feet. The less familiar "Scavenger's daughter" was contrived, with diabolical ingenuity, to act in the reverse way, compressing the wretched culprit so that his legs were forced into his thighs, these into his body, and his head into his shoulders, until his shape was almost that of a ball.

Harrison reports a strange manner of execution in use at Halifax, where offenders were beheaded on market days by an engine somewhat like the modern guillotine. The knife fell on the pulling of a rope; and, if the culprit were convicted of cattle stealing, "the self beast or other of the same kind shall have the end of the rope tied somewhere unto them, so that they, being driven, do draw out the pin, whereby the offender is executed."

For certain offences, the same authority relates that both men and women are dragged over the Thames between Lambeth and Westminster at the tail of a boat; and, "as I have heard reported," he says, "such as have walls and banks near unto the sea, and do suffer the same to decay—after convenient admonition—whereby the water entereth and drowneth up the country, are, by a certain ancient custom, apprehended, condemned, and staked in the breach, where they remain for ever as a parcel of the foundation of the new wall that is to be made upon them."

Another class of persons who are nowadays popular and prosperous would have come off badly in the days of good Queen Bess. Conjuring, and the use of the divining-rod, were capital offences. In 1580, on "the eight-and-twentieth day of November, were arraigned, in the Queen's Bench, William Randall, for conjuring to know where treasure was hid in the earth, and goods feloniously taken, were become." Several other persons were also arraigned for aiding and abetting the said Randall, and they were all found guilty and condemned to death, though only Randall was executed.

The stocks, the cucking-stool, the brank, and the pillory, painful as they were in themselves, were all supplemented by the brutality of the populace. Cucking-stools were of two kinds: one consisted merely of a strong chair, into which the offender was securely fastened, and then exposed either at his or her own door, or in some public situation, such as the town gates, or market-place; the other consisted of a chair affixed to the end of a plank, and balanced on a beam, and was used for ducking scolding wives in the nearest pond or stream. As late as 1745, we find it stated in the "London Evening Post" that, "Last week a woman, who keeps the 'Queen's Head' alehouse at Kingston, in Surrey, was ordered by the Court to be ducked for scolding, and was accordingly placed in the chair and ducked in the river Thames, under Kingston Bridge, in the presence of 2000 to 3000 people." According to Mr. William Andrews' monograph on the subject, the cucking-stool was rarely used in the eighteenth century, although within living memory—in 1817—a woman was wheeled round in the chair, and only escaped ducking because the water was too low.

From the same authority we learn that punishment by the brank, or scold's bridle,

although frequently resorted to, was never sanctioned by law. This instrument was made in various forms, and consisted of an iron head-piece, fastening by a padlock, and attached to a chain, and was so contrived that an iron plate, in some instances garnished with sharp spikes, effectually silenced the tongue of the person upon whom it was placed, who was then led by an officer through the streets of the town. The brank appears to have come into use about the beginning of the seventeenth century, and there is a specimen preserved at Congleton, which was used on a woman for abusing the churchwardens and constables of that town, as recently as 1824.

The pillory was constantly in use for various offences until the beginning of the present century, and could be applied to perjurers up to the time of Her Majesty's accession to the throne in 1837, in which year it was finally abolished. In earlier days its own proper torments were considered by the judges to be insufficient. For instance, Timothy Penredd, who, in 1570, had forged the seal of the Court of Queen's Bench, was put in the pillory in Cheapside on two successive market days. On the first day one of his ears was nailed to the post, so that he should be compelled, "by his own proper motion," to tear it away; and on the second day the other ear was similarly dealt with. Sometimes it was the populace who considered the punishment insufficient, and in such cases they did not fail to act according to their convictions. In 1756, two thief-takers, who were exposed in Smithfield for perjury, were so roughly used by the drovers, that one of them died of the injuries he received.

Voluntary intention has been generally held to be a necessary attribute of criminal action; but the rule has not been universal. In Athens an involuntary murderer was banished until he gave satisfaction to the relatives of the deceased; and in China accidental arson is now punished by a certain number of bamboo strokes, and more or less prolonged banishment.

In the Middle Ages the lower animals were frequently tried, convicted, and punished for various offences. Mr. Baring Gould has collected some curious cases of this kind. In 1266 a pig was burnt at Fontenay aux Roses, near Paris, for having eaten a child. In 1386 a judge at Falaise condemned a sow to be mutilated and hanged for a similar offence. Three years later a horse was solemnly tried before the

magistrate, and condemned to death for having killed a man. During the fourteenth century oxen and cows might be legally killed whenever taken in the act of marauding; and asses for a first offence had one ear cropped, for a second offence the other ear, and if after this they were asses enough to commit a third offence, their lives became forfeit to the Crown. "Criminal" animals frequently expiated their offences, like other malefactors, on the gallows; but subsequently they were summarily killed without trial, and their owners mulcted in heavy damages.

In the fifteenth century it was popularly believed that cocks were intimately associated with witches; and they were sometimes credited with the power of laying accursed eggs, from which sprang winged serpents. In 1474, at Bâle, a cock was publicly accused of having laid one of these dreadful eggs. He was tried, sentenced to death, and, together with his egg, was burned by the executioner in the market-place amid a great concourse of people.

In 1694, during the witch persecutions in New England, a dog exhibited such strange symptoms of affliction, that he was believed to have been ridden by a warlock, and he was accordingly hanged. Snails, flies, mice, ants, caterpillars, and other obnoxious creatures have been similarly proceeded against and condemned to various punishments—mostly in ecclesiastical courts. And, stranger still, inanimate objects have suffered the same fate.

In 1685, when the Protestant Chapel at Rochelle was condemned to be demolished, the bell thereof was publicly whipped for having assisted heretics with its tongue. After being whipped, it was catechised, compelled to recant, and then baptized and hung up in a Roman Catholic place of worship. Probably similar absurdities may have been perpetrated in our own country; for it must be remembered that only in the present reign was the law repealed which made a cart-wheel, a tree, or a beast which had killed a man, forfeit to the State for the benefit of the poor.

It has been said that punishment is not likely to be efficacious unless it swiftly follows the offence. This was improved on by a Barbary Turk who, whenever he bought a fresh Christian slave, had him hung up by the heels and bastinadoed, on the principle, it is to be supposed—though the application is decidedly sin-

gular—that prevention is better than cure. Periander of Corinth, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, seems to have been much of the same mind, for one of his recorded sayings is: "Punish not only those who have done wrong, but those who are going to." A similar philosophy is embodied in our nursery rhyme:

That's Jack. Lay a stick on his back.
What's he done? I cannot say.
We'll find out to-morrow, and beat him to-day.

But, probably, this system of treatment would never be reconciled with the popular idea of justice in any community. Sir William Blackstone and others, however, have propounded a theory of punishment which is hardly less ridiculous, namely, that those offences should be most heavily punished which "a man has the most frequent and easy opportunities of committing, which cannot be so easily guarded against as others, and which, therefore, the offender has the strongest inducement to commit." Blackstone's own illustrations are sufficient to show the absurdity of his theory, for, as he says, it is on this principle that, while stealing a load of corn from an open field is only punishable with transportation, stealing a handkerchief, or other trifle, above the value of tweldepence, privately from one's person, is made punishable with death. Presumably, the old Chief Justice would have applauded that judge who, some few years ago, at the Middlesex Sessions, sentenced a man to seven years' penal servitude for stealing three-halfpence, and a woman to five years for stealing two pieces of meat from a butcher's shop.

A system of vindictive and excessive punishment will generally defeat its own ends, because, as was at last the case when the death penalty was inflicted for sheep-stealing and petty theft from the person, juries will refuse to convict. There is something to be said for the Chinese system, according to which, every imaginable offence has its own strictly-defined penalty. At any rate, the large discretionary power which is left to the judge in our system sometimes leads to very curious and unedifying results; and there is no doubt that whatever utility there may be in legal punishments depends less on their severity, or even on their justice, than it does on a popular recognition of their justice, and a certainty that they will inevitably follow on conviction.

NAZARETH HOUSE.

BETWEEN Kensington and Hammer-smith, on the highway once known as the Bath Road, but which has long lost sight of any such distant destination, and tranquilly accepted its more modest function of taking people to Turnham Green or Brentford, there stands a tall, extensive red-brick building, the many gables of which peer over the long, blank wall that borders the footway. Not that the wall is altogether blank, for there is a carriage-way closed by great black gates, and further on appears an arched doorway, with a massive door, a little grated wicket, and a box for the alms of such wayfarers as may be able to spare a coin for the aged and helpless—for such are the bulk of the inmates of Nazareth House.

Any one passing that way last winter, when the cold was so severe, and when the unemployed were so numerous, might have noticed, on any morning of the week, a crowd of hungry-looking men, in their working clothes of every shade of grey and rusty drab, waiting patiently at the gate of Nazareth House. The size of the crowd formed a good gauge of the severity of the prevailing distress. With frost and snow, the poor half-starved people gathered there in considerable numbers and from a radius of many miles. As spring approached, and work became more abundant, the gathering dwindled and became less and less, till at last it disappeared altogether. But all through that cold and miserable season, food was provided for all who came to ask for it. It is difficult to see how the good Sisters managed all this, seeing that the whole establishment is virtually dependent on the day by day labours of the energetic Sisterhood in collecting contributions of all kinds from every possible, and even apparently impossible, source.

It is the sight of the carriage entrance to Nazareth House that suggests all this; although, perhaps, it would be more in accordance with facts to call it the cart entrance, for the carriage of the Sisters of Nazareth is of a very unpretending character, resembling, more than anything else, a railway parcels' van, but for the black robes and white coif of the Sister in charge, which somehow establish a different impression. But the carriage from Nazareth House is familiar enough all over London—city, town, and suburb. Indeed,

wherever there is spoil to be gathered for the poor and suffering, there the Sisters, with a quiet, marvellous instinct, are sure to find their way; and if the sight of the Nazareth House van, on its daily round, or of the Sisters in their quaint religious garb, canvassing in pairs one busy neighbourhood after another, and succeeding best, perhaps, in the busiest and most business-like; if all this outward view of the Nazareth Sisterhood and their daily work excites an interest in the institution itself and a desire to know what goes on within its walls, why, then, a visitor need only present himself, or herself—between the hours of two and four p.m.—at the little wicket under the archway, and ring the big bell, and the big door will creak upon its hinges, and Nazareth House will lie open to the interested visitor.

If one has a preconceived idea of a certain air of gloom and mystery as necessarily connected with a conventual building, a visit to Nazareth House will agreeably remove that impression. The young Sister who acts as gatekeeper is as cheerful and blithe as can be. The open corridors resound with the tread of footsteps, and with the voices, positively merry voices, and laughter of children. Did one expect to have to record how, in the words of the Jacobite ballad,

The auld auld men cam' out and wept,
he would find that he had quite a different story to tell, and that the brisk old gentlemen who bustle in and out, quite full, perhaps, of some important mission to the outer world, or those who sit, and read, and smoke over the fire—for the good Sisters are tolerant of masculine weakness in the matter of tobacco—or those who, most infirm and feeble of all, can hardly stir from their beds in the infirmary ward, are as cheerful and contented as age and infirmity will allow. And yet the youngest of the party has passed the allotted age of three-score and ten, and none of them lack the one essential qualification for entrance into this charitable home, that is, utter and absolute want and destitution. Not that the inmates of Nazareth House are taken from the lowest social stage. Most of them are people who have seen better days; some have even been in possession of wealth and social importance, but, such are the sad vicissitudes of life, have come to utter ruin and beggary till they have found an asylum here. And there are cases where those who, out of their abundance, had once freely given to the Sisters

for their poor, have since come to be dependent on the same kindly hands.

And the old ladies, too — they look snug, and warm, and comfortable, gathered about the fire in their lofty, airy chambers, with their bits of work in their hands, or something in the way of knitting or embroidery. And all these old ladies have their own individual characteristics carefully preserved — their own bonnets and shawls, and cheerful little bits of finery. There is no uniform adopted at Nazareth House, except the religious garb of the ministering Sisters, nor anything to distinguish its inmates from any of the decent old bodies you may meet shopping or marketing in the world outside. And it is the same with the old men — all are decently dressed in the garb of every-day life. And yet they are all clothed from top to toe, neatly and appropriately clothed, from the old garments which the Sisters collect on their daily rounds, or which are sent in parcels by kind-hearted people; and any number of such parcels may be despatched to Nazareth House without fear of causing a glut in the second-hand clothes department. Children's clothing, too. We shall come to the children presently; but people who have growing girls should bear in mind that what is too small for their little lassies, will be sure to fit some of the tiny little bodies at Nazareth House.

The work of Nazareth House began some forty years ago, when the Sisterhood was established with the purpose of tending the infirm and aged poor, and of taking charge of helpless and orphan children — girls, at least. "We don't feel equal to the charge of boys," says the bright-eyed, intelligent Sister who acts as guide. Beginning in a small way with about seventy inmates, the Sisters, as a result of their daily, pious mendicancy, have to show this great block of fine buildings with about five hundred inmates, all poor and mostly helpless, and depending not only for daily bread, but for those hundred offices of care and affection which their helpless state requires, upon the devoted band of Sisters.

Perhaps this century of ours is a little wanting in sympathy for the troubles and infirmities of advancing years. We endow and support innumerable institutions for boys. The feeling is, no doubt, that it "pays" to bring up youth to habits of discipline and industry; but that there is a want of "results" in looking after the aged and incapable. Other ages have handed down to us fine endowments in

the way of hospitals and alms-houses, intended for the shelter of declining years; and we have generally been satisfied with taking all we could for other purposes, and leaving the poor brothers and sisters in the cold. But these Sisters of Nazareth teach us a higher lesson.

So it is pleasant to see the rows of bright coverlids; the rooms still gay with Christmas decorations; the goasps over the fire; and the grey heads bowed over the trembling hands. There is an underlying pathos and sadness, too, in the sight of the old, old heads that are lying so placidly on the pillows, soon to be garnered by the great reaper Death; and yet there is thankfulness for an end so peaceful and calm, and attended by such gentle ministering kindness. There is the chapel, too, with its dim, religious light, where all day long some may be found in silent prayer. Yet although the institution, as everybody knows, is Roman Catholic, there is no limitation of its benefits on account of religious opinions. Old people are taken care of without any distinction of creed; and those who like to attend places of worship outside can do so whenever they please. Indeed, some of the best friends of the Sisterhood have been Protestants. And in the little parlour where visitors are received, beneath the portrait of the venerable Cardinal-Archbishop, hangs that of an active, wealthy man of business, who, without any sympathy with the religious faith of the Sisters, was so attracted by the practical beneficence of their work, that he became one of their warmest supporters and most generous benefactors.

As we follow our black-robed guide through wards and corridors, faces everywhere brighten as she passes. And now we are in the children's room, where the little flock clusters about the Sister's knees bright and fearless, and in pretty frocks and garments of various hues, all adapted by the skilful needles of the Sisterhood, from the cast-off garments of richer and more distinguished, but, perhaps, not happier nurseries. For here are toys of every kind, and treasured Christmas gifts, which the children offer to be admired by the casual visitor, in the fullest confidence in his sympathetic interest. And so, with a pat on the cheek for one, and a pleasant smile for another, the Sister glides on, and now we are among the poor little invalids, some helpless and crippled from their birth; others with faces only dimly lighted by the ray of intelligence,

and yet surrounded by a cheerful, tender solicitude that robs the scene of its sadness. Then there is the schoolroom where the elder children are already seated at their desks, awaiting the beginning of the class hour. And here the girls receive a sound elementary education. And their training is directed throughout so as to fit them for that destination which the Sisters feel is most thoroughly within their grasp, that is, for domestic service. They learn to sweep and to scrub, to sew and to cook, the bright little house-servants of the future, whose lot in life is assured, with moderate well-doing on their own parts. And to those who leave the house and enter upon the great world of service, there is always a home to return to, and in sickness or trouble a hand stretched out to help them.

Passing out into the open quadrangle it is pleasant to meet the soft winter sunshine, which seems to rest upon the place with quite exceptional warmth. "We always have our full share of sunshine, whenever the sun is to be seen," remarks the Sister, cheerfully, "and yonder are the open grounds where the children play, and the old people sun themselves, when the weather is propitious." And beyond is a wide, open region dimly showing in the broken sunlight, with tall new houses here and there, and suggestions of orchards and market-gardens, which stretch away to the broad river, the presence of which is only manifested by a touch of watery radiance in the cloudy haze.

And now, what is the secret of this wondrous alchemy that has secured such great results out of the dross and refuse of the pomp and luxury of the world, the crumbs from the table of Dives, the odds and ends of houses great and small; out of cast-off clothing and shreds and remnants from warehouses and shops, together with the daily alms of the charitable, and the occasional benefactions of the liberal-minded? Day by day arise the needs of this great helpless family, day by day they are supplied; but what a stress of care and anxiety must rest, one would think, upon the shoulders of those—a band of feeble women—on whose efforts, humanly speaking, everything depends. But there is an air of cheerful confidence about the Sisters. As the need arises so comes the help—often from unexpected sources, and through unknown hands. But there is always need of fresh help, of new sources of supply. And all

who have respect for grey hairs, and would see them sheltered from the storms of the world, or for helpless childhood, orphaned and forlorn, but gathered and rescued from want and misery, and trained for a useful and honourable career, all such should count themselves as supporters of Nazareth House.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI.

THREE years had passed since Paul Beaumont had vowed an eternal friendship and said a long farewell to Doris Cairnes; and those years, which brought so many changes and so much joy and sorrow to many people, which separated friends and united lovers, and brought wealth and rejoicing to some, and poverty and heart-aches to others, brought very few changes to the Red House and its inhabitants. Miss Mordaunt had grown a little greyer and older, and also a little more grasping and avaricious, and old Margot the servant gruffer and feebler, and the Red House itself gloomier and shabbier than ever; but still the three women lived their separate lives, and the days flowed on in the old monotonous, uneventful way. There was no change, only that Doris grew taller, and fairer, and more stately, and—so Laurence declared every time he came to Chesham—bloomed among her gloomy surroundings like a tall white lily among a wilderness of briars and nettles!

There were few changes, too, at the Hall. Floss, much to her disgust, had been transferred from the nursery to the schoolroom, and from the care of her old nurse to that of a French governess, whom she detested with all her warm little heart. Sir John looked older, and a little harassed and worried, more on account, so it was whispered in the village, of my lady's extravagance, than the "bad times" at which he, like the rest of his country friends, was constantly grumbling. He and Floss were often alone at the Hall, for Lady Cecil had declared Chesham to grow more and more unendurable with the passing years, and spent most of her time either in London, or in visiting her friends. At all events, she was very rarely at the Hall; and if it had not been

for the constant change of toilettes which these visits required, and the long dress-maker's and milliner's bills which continually arrived to bother poor Sir John, neither husband nor child would have grieved at her absence.

Doris thought her looking old and changed when once, during one of her short "visits" to the Hall, they met face to face in the lane. Doris in her old blue gown, with the autumn sunshine streaming on her fair face and on the crown of chestnut plaits which wreathed her head, with her arms full of poppies and marguerites and bramble leaves, just reddened by the first touch of autumn's fingers; Lady Cecil perfectly dressed, languidly graceful as ever, but with the lines of disappointment and discontent a little more apparent than before in her beautiful face, an eager, unsatisfied longing in her blue eyes.

The two women would willingly have avoided each other had that been possible; but it was not, for the road was narrow and winding, and they were face to face before either knew of the other's proximity. Both hesitated, both coloured, and Doris, with a little proud inclination of her head, would have passed; but Lady Cecil stopped, and held out her hand.

"It is Doris Cairnes, surely," she said. "Have you forgotten me?"

"No, Lady Cecil."

Doris took the offered hand rather coldly. Instinct told her then, as it had told her years ago, that Lady Cecil disliked and despised her; and it went sorely against the grain for Doris, who was honest to the heart's core, to assume a cordiality which she did not feel.

"No, I have not forgotten you," she said, quietly.

"You might very well! I have grown old and ugly since I last saw you. Let me see, it is three years ago, is it not?" my lady went on; and all the time that she spoke her eyes were watching Doris's face with a critical, searching gaze. The girl felt herself blushing crimson under it.

"Yes, three," she answered.

"I thought so. It was the last summer I spent entirely at the Hall; the summer Paul Beaumont was so much with us," Lady Cecil continued. "By the way, do you ever hear from or of him, child? He seems to have quite disappeared of late!"

So this was the reason of my lady's unwonted affability, Doris thought, shrewdly. She was anxious about Paul

Beaumont's movements. Well, she would get very little information from her—Doris. She had not seen him since their farewell interview in the garden of the Red House; but all the same, he had not forgotten her. Every Christmas brought her some remembrance. Once a desk fitted up with everything in the way of writing materials that a desk could contain: Note-paper and envelopes enough to last a lifetime, Doris thought; dainty pen-holders; a wonderful knife; and, among other things, and which was most welcome to Doris just then, a book full of postage-stamps. Then another year came a work-basket, more beautiful and complete than the desk; and on the last Christmas Day a dressing-case with gold-topped bottles and ivory-backed brushes, such as Doris had once seen on Lady Cecil's dressing-table, but had never dreamed it possible for her to possess. And with each gift came a little note, asking her acceptance of it from her friend Paul Beaumont.

Doris had written a grateful reply to each note, and had, perhaps, secretly hoped that Paul might write again; but he had not done so. This was all she knew of him, and as it was not likely that she would tell Lady Cecil this, she shook her head and answered simply:

"I have heard nothing of him for a long time, Lady Cecil. Do you not see each other now?"

"Very rarely. Paul has turned philanthropist, I hear," and Lady Cecil laughed: There was an irritated note in the laugh, Doris thought. "He spends most of his time at Oaklands, his place in Devonshire. The estate was in a very neglected condition when he came into it, and he is draining and building model cottages, and, in fact, assuming the rôle of beneficent country Squire. He is going into Parliament, they say, shortly; so, probably, next season, I may see more of him."

"Is there any talk of his marriage?" Doris asked.

"His marriage? Oh dear, no! Paul will never marry."

Lady Cecil's face softened a little; her eyes grew bluer and softer.

"I dare say you have heard that ages ago he and I were lovers, and that I treated him badly? Have you not heard, eh?"

"Something of the kind—yes."

"Well, he is very constant, my poor Paul; and he has never forgotten. He has often told me that no other woman could take my place with him; and,

though I don't generally put much faith in a man's constancy, I believe he has kept his word."

Lady Cecil looked sharply at Doris as she spoke. She had been terribly jealous of her once. She had always connected her with Paul's sudden departure from the Hall, three years before. Paul had never mentioned Doris's name, and of that interview in the garden she was quite ignorant; but still there was a mystery surrounding his sudden departure, and grave, dejected manner, which she had long and vainly wished to solve. So now, as she spoke, she looked sharply at Doris; but the girl only smiled gravely.

"I should not have thought Mr. Beaumont a likely man to eternally wear the willow-bough," she said, carelessly.

There was a little satire in her voice and smile that annoyed Lady Cecil.

"Ah, you do not know him," she said, sharply. "By the way, how is that protégé of his, Laurence Ainslie, getting on? Is he turning out the genius Paul predicted, or only a failure, like so many youthful geniuses?"

"Not a failure, certainly," Doris answered, proudly.

A failure! Laurence, whose last picture had been hung so well at the Academy exhibition, and had gained glowing encomiums from the critics, all of whom had predicted a splendid career for the young artist. A failure! Doris, remembering the papers he had sent to her, which contained those flattering notices, could have laughed outright at the question.

"Certainly not a failure," she repeated, proudly.

"And are you two as good friends as ever, or has he forgotten you?" Lady Cecil went on, with her cold smile.

Doris flushed vividly.

"Quite as good friends," she answered, briefly.

"What, he has not fallen in love with some pretty model yet? Truly, he must be a *rara avis*! But take my advice, Doris; don't put too much faith in him, or any other man. We women are fickle and inconstant enough, Heaven knows! but men are fifty times worse. Out of sight means out of mind with them," Lady Cecil laughed; and then she gave Doris a careless nod and smile, and moved away down the lane.

She paused, however, before she had gone very far, and looked back.

"When are you coming to see me, Doris?" she asked, graciously. "I hear that you are a frequent visitor at the Hall when Floss and Sir John are alone. Come soon, child," and, without waiting for an answer, she smiled again and turned away.

Doris gazed after her with a look that almost amounted to pity in her clear eyes. Lady Cecil, beautiful, rich, and charming, did not appear a fit object on which to bestow pity, but yet Doris felt vaguely that she was not a happy woman; that the shadow of discontent which darkened her face was but the outward reflection of the discontent and disappointment which filled her mind. She had everything, apparently, that life could give, but she was not satisfied; there was just one little thing which she craved, which had once been hers, which was lost to her for ever now. Doris, in her shabby dress, sauntering slowly up the lane back to her dull home, and the uncongenial companions who awaited her there, was, after all, the happier of the two, and the most to be envied.

Miss Mordaunt, looking slowly up from her account-books, over which as usual she was poring as Doris entered, thought almost for the first time how pretty, and how like her dead mother the girl was growing.

"There is a letter for you, Doris," she said. "That is the second this week. I think it would be much better if Laurence Ainslie would save his money instead of wasting it on so many stamps and envelopes. But he was always an idle, extravagant boy—just like his father."

Doris did not answer. She took up the letter and put it in her pocket. She had not time to read it just then, for the poultry had to be gathered in, and fastened up safely for the night; and there was the porridge, which formed the usual evening meal, to prepare; and not until all this was done could Doris find time to read her letter.

She went into the kitchen, which was the most cheerful room in the house; it was empty, and Doris drew up a chair to the hearth, and stirred the fire into a blaze, and took out her letter.

Laurence had never written twice in the same week before; probably he had something important to tell her, Doris thought; perhaps he might be coming to Cheamham for a few days' rest and holiday. He had hinted at some such intention in his last letter.

And so she opened the letter and read it by the flickering firelight, and the colour flushed into her cheeks, and her sweet eyes grew strangely brilliant, and her face brightened into absolute beauty as she read. And this was what Laurence said:

"I have good news for you, dearest Doris. I have sold another picture for three hundred pounds, and have received a commission to paint a companion to it. Isn't that splendid! Mr. Redmont is almost as pleased as I am, and as you will be when you read this. I should very much like you to see the picture, Doris, before it goes to its new owner; but that is impossible, so I will bring the study with me when I come to Chesham, and it will give you some idea of what the picture is. I called it 'An Old Garden'; and it is, I think, a very faithful representation of that bit of the Red House garden where we used to sit in the old days and talk of the future. Do you remember, dear! I have painted the apple-tree, and the grey-stone wall, where the peaches grow, and the tall hollyhocks and box-hedge; and under the apple-tree you are sitting, Doris, in your old blue gown, and the sunset light is falling on your chestnut head. It is a little bent. Your hands are clasped on your knee; there is the wistful look in your eyes I remember so well. But you shall see the study when I come, dear; that will be, I think, next Thursday." Doris gave a little gasp of delight as she read the last sentence. "I shall only be able to stay one night, for I am anxious to begin my new picture; but I want to see you particularly, Doris. I have something very near to my heart which I want to tell you, and which I do not care to write. I did not mean to speak of it just yet, but my late success, and the prospect of greater success still, justifies me in doing so. I wonder if you can guess what I mean, old friend! Ah, Paul Beaumont was right when he told me years ago how good a thing it was for a man to have a friend like you. I feel the truth of his words more and more every day of my life. Half—nay, more than half of my success I owe to you, Doris."

Did ever words sound half so sweet in any girl's ears before as those words which Laurence had written out of the fulness of his grateful heart sounded in Doris's? Was ever girl as happy before as Doris that evening as she sat by the fire, with the precious letter clasped in her hands, and her happy eyes watching the flickering

flame as it rose and fell, and flashed on the rows of shining tins which hung upon the opposite wall.

"Remember, we will always belong to each other, you and I, Doris," Laurence had said; and "Always," Doris had answered, solemnly, and they had sealed the compact with a kiss.

Three years! They had seemed very long sometimes to Doris, patient though she was. But they were over now, and Laurence, crowned with the success she had helped to win, was coming back to her to lay his laurels at her feet, to bid her share his triumph.

It was not often that Doris bestowed much time or care upon her toilette; but she was very anxious to look her best for Laurence; and so, on the Thursday afternoon, she brushed out her long chestnut hair, and twisted it in shining coils round her head; and instead of the old blue gown, which was scarcely wearable now, she put on the only white frock which she possessed, and which she kept for gala occasions. It had belonged to her mother, and was sadly old-fashioned; but yet there was something quaint and becoming in the long, straight skirt with the one little frill at the bottom, and the bodice cut a little open at the neck, and finished off with a ruffle of yellowish lace; and when Doris had gathered a cluster of late crimson roses, which were still blooming in a sheltered corner, and fastened them in her belt, and looked at herself in the glass, she felt, with a little thrill of pardonable vanity, that, at all events, Laurence would not think she had grown uglier during his absence; nay, that she had even grown rather pretty than otherwise!

He had promised to meet her in their old trysting-place under the apple-tree soon after five. It was just five minutes to the hour when Doris reached it. The afternoon was bright, and unusually hot for October; and the garden, as well as Doris, had put on its fairest looks to welcome Laurence. The summer flowers were almost over, but the tall hollyhocks and dahlias were still in bloom; the winter pears hung in red and brown clusters on the wall, and though the leaves were changing rapidly, they were so beautiful in their varied shades of crimson and amber, that it was impossible to regret their vanished verdure. Doris, standing under the apple-tree on the carpet of yellow leaves with which the ground was covered, looked strangely young and fair in contrast

with the matured autumnal beauty of her surroundings. All around her spoke of autumn, of a vanished summer, of the winter that was coming; but Doris herself, in her fresh beauty, with her smiling eyes and flushed cheeks, might have stood as a type of spring!

Laurence thought so as he noiselessly opened the garden-door, and, pausing a moment, looked in on the strange yet familiar scene. How often, during his three years of absence, that garden had been in his thoughts! How often he had pictured Doris there, bending over her flowers, or gathering her fruit for market; and now once more he was there, and Doris—only a fairer, statelier Doris than the pretty rustic maiden of his thoughts—was waiting under the apple-tree to welcome him!

He went up to her softly, and put his hand on her arm; and she started, and turned and faced him with a swift rush of colour to her cheeks, a strange brilliancy in her grey eyes, that told him, even before she had time to speak, how welcome he was to her.

"Why, Doris, how pretty you have grown!" he said; and then, in his old, boyish fashion, he put his hands on her shoulders, and bent his head and kissed her.

The hour that followed—that happy hour, when they sat side by side, and hand in hand on the fallen tree, and talked of all that had happened since last they had met, and of the old days, which seemed so far off to Laurence now—was full of a perfect happiness and content to Doris. She often told herself afterwards that it was the happiest hour of her life; there was absolutely nothing, no disturbing thoughts of past or future to mar its completeness! She was quite happy; perfectly satisfied; for was not her probation, and the long years of waiting and separation over at last, and Laurence, her boy-lover, her hero, who had promised to be true to her for ever and ever, with her again—unchanged, unaltered!

It is doubtful, however, whether Laurence himself was quite as well satisfied. As they spoke of the past days, and especially recalled the day when they had parted, a strange feeling, which was partly remorse and partly dissatisfaction, stole over him. Words which he had almost forgotten until now came back to him; the remembrance of a boyish promise, which had long since almost passed from his

mind, awoke again and disturbed his peace.

"Doris, remember, we must always be long to each other—you and I," he had said; and "Always," Doris had answered. He had forgotten that promise until now, and he was conscious that he had signally failed to keep it; and there rose up before him a fair, laughing face, with sunny blue eyes, and waving, yellow hair, and red, smiling lips, and it blotted out the sweet face, and grey-blue eyes that were looking into his own with such sweet contentment. Did Doris still remember that promise, he wondered, or had she forgotten it, too?

But if the doubt haunted him and disturbed his peace, Doris was quite unconscious of it. She saw a change in him. It was not her boy-lover who had come back to her, but an older and more manly Laurence; but since the change was for the better, she could not regret it. And so she sat with her hands in his, and talked to him, and asked a hundred questions about his work and his friends, and listened eagerly as he spoke to her of the busy life he led in the great city of which she had often dreamed, and so often longed to see, and was quite happy.

And yet all the time, as they laughed and talked, there was one subject uppermost in both their minds. "What will she say? How will she take it?" Laurence was thinking. And "When will he tell me?" thought happy Doris.

Laurence knew the subject must be broached speedily. He was inclined naturally to postpone the evil day of facing a difficulty as long as possible, but he knew that on this occasion it was impossible to do so. Every moment he expected Doris to ask him what the matter was of which he had spoken in his letter, which was so near to his heart, and which he had come to Chesham on purpose to tell her. Every moment it grew more difficult to begin it. He took a desperate plunge at last.

"Doris," he began, hurriedly, "I said in my letter that I had something important to tell you. Didn't you wonder? Did you guess what it was?"

Doris turned her radiant eyes full upon him, and smiled, and blushed.

"Yes, I guessed," she said, very softly.

"Did you?"

Laurence breathed more freely. If she was prepared for it, if she had guessed at his news, half the difficulty had vanished, he thought.

"I—I fancied you would; you were

always so quick and clever, Doris. I—I would have told you before, but I was not quite sure myself; and it makes a man feel such a fool if he takes too much for granted, and talks about such things, you know, before he is quite sure of his answer," Laurence went on, with a shy, boyish laugh and blush, "so I thought I would wait a little."

Doris looked at him with a little surprise.

"Oh, but you need not have been afraid, Laurie," she said, and there was a sweet, amused accent in her clear voice. "You might have been quite sure what your answer would be."

"I don't know so much about that. Every one does not look at me through your spectacles, dear Doris," Laurence answered; and he patted her hand tenderly. "And when a girl is so beautiful, you know, and all the fellows are mad after her, and she might pick and choose where she likes, how could I feel quite sure that she would choose me out of them all?"

Doris was so far from understanding what he meant, that she laughed—actually laughed at this speech. She wondered afterwards how she could have been so blinded by vanity as to think, as she did think, that he meant her, that it was of her he was speaking.

"Oh, Laurie, how absurd!" she said. "Really you have grown modest since you left Chesham. As if there was any one fit to compare with you."

Laurie smiled.

"I think being in love does generally make a man modest, and alive to his own shortcomings," he said, gravely. "It did me, I know; and sometimes when she used to flirt with the other fellows, and would scarcely give me a look or smile, I used to get quite desperate sometimes. She says now that she only did it because she was afraid that I might find out that it

was really me that she liked best all the time. You see, Doris, I could not speak just then, I had so little to offer her; it is only since I sold my last two pictures so well, and saw, as I think I do see now"—and Laurence raised his head proudly, and his eyes flashed—"the way to success open before me, that I dared to speak. She is so pretty, Doris; her eyes are as blue and bright as that bit of blue sky up there, and her hair is the colour of corn when it is at the ripest, and her complexion is just milk and roses. All the fellows rave about her."

The little brown hand that lay in Laurence's had grown strangely cold and trembling; but Laurence did not notice it, or the startled look of utter incredulity and despair which Doris flung at him as he spoke. He was thinking far too much of his golden-haired sweetheart's pretty face, to notice how the bright colour, which he had admired so much a moment before, had fled from Doris's cheeks, or the scared, frightened look which had come into her grey eyes, and swept across her face, and left it grey and haggard.

It could not be—it was impossible—the girl told herself, feverishly, that the fair fabric which she had built up so carefully for more than three years, had never had any foundation at all, that it lay in the dust broken and ruined! It must be some dream, some dreadful dream, from which she would presently awake and find that Laurence was hers again; that the girl of whom he spoke, who had eyes like the bit of blue sky on which her own eyes were now resting, and hair like the ripening corn, was only a part of the dream! And yet, at every word that Laurence spoke, the conviction of the truth, strive though she might against it, forced itself upon her, and a cold, icy band seemed to gather round her heart, and chilled her through and through, as she sat and listened mechanically to him.

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XXVIII. A GLEAM OF LIGHT.

"My dear Vicary," said Mr. Kestell, taking the proffered chair, and trying to be quite natural; a somewhat difficult task when both men had such a vivid recollection of their last interview.

Make-believe is always painful to some natures; but it is far more painful if the person we are trying to deceive is conscious of our effort.

Was Jesse conscious that Mr. Kestell's perfect ease was put on? This question the latter would have paid several sovereigns to have had answered.

"My dear Vicary, I am glad to catch you at home. I was half afraid that after the day's hard work you might, like other young men, and very naturally, too, have gone to the pit of a theatre, and I should have had my journey here for nothing. Still, knowing you as I do, I might have guessed otherwise. How are you? Have you repented of your repentance? I was really sorry you were so resolute about that offer of Mr. Fenner's; I quite came round to your way of thinking."

"I have not repented of my repentance," said Jesse, without a smile on his face. Evidently, he was in no mood for suavity. Mr. Kestell was sorry to see the change in him. It was very evident to his keen eye. He altered his tone:

"Now, Vicary, let us be honest with each other. I mean that I want you to speak quite openly with me. You mistook some things

I said hastily. You have, in consequence, made a false step. Pure imaginary conduct and reasoning seldom brings satisfactory action. I hear from Hoel Fenner that the post you rejected has been offered and accepted by some one else. I am sorry for it. You had a chance and lost it."

Mr. Kestell was feeling his way, and forgot to add a sentence about his own original strong objection to Jesse's accepting the offer.

"It is best as it is," said Jesse, simply. He hated to have that matter raked up again, for it reminded him of the blighting and death of his manly pride.

"You acted hastily, and I fear you will regret it. I feel sure you will, Jesse. This has greatly distressed me. I cannot tell you how much I have felt it, and I have—as I was in London, I mean—I have been hatching a little scheme which will be, as newspaper advertisements say, greatly to your advantage."

Jesse was so easily swayed by kindness that all at once he tried to get over the tone of sulky reticence he had adopted.

"It is very kind of you, sir; but, after all, one thing may be as good as another. I have become so accustomed to my work at the office that it is no trouble to me, and I can improve myself at home by study. I have not done much since I came back to town; but I shall begin again soon. I hope Symee is well."

"Yes, Symee is well; quite the comfort of our lives." Mr. Kestell looked round the poor, shabby room. "And really I think her decision was wise; yes, wise for both your sakes."

This subject lay too near Jesse's heart to evoke any light response.

"She thought so, and there the matter ended."

"There you are again, Vicary, taking things too much to heart. You want change of scene and occupation; and now let me unfold my little plan. Would you like to emigrate, Vicary? A chance, such as I am not likely to meet with again, has occurred. A very desirable homestead has come into my possession. I mean, that if I can find a man who will take it from me, working it and paying me a small rent, I shall give it up to him. In three years the farm and land will become the tenant's property. Suppose you found things pretty comfortable at this 'Regina Farm,' you might send for Symee. How does this strike you? You are fond of the country and of country life, and you are strong and energetic—just the sort of man to get on famously in Canada. This North West territory is becoming quite popular, I believe. As to your journey, I could get you a free passage, having some friends among the ship-owners."

Mr. Kestell paused and looked at Jesse attentively; but the small lamp did not give a very good light, and he could not be sure of the effect of his speech.

Had Mr. Kestell come yesterday most likely Jesse would have joyfully closed with the offer; it would have been to him a way of throwing over all his past life, and beginning again with a firm determination to bury all the romance and all the noble thoughts of his youth and boyhood, and to go where one name was as good as another, never mind what past history he brought with him.

But only now had this new idea come to him. All his life he had associated the spiritual and the material; but just as this old truth, that these had nothing to do with each other, had vaguely come to him, the temptation was held out to him in a new form. He might go away and begin again a new material life, and join to it a new spiritual existence. He could, in fact, do what people call begin again. But why should he? Was it not another form of cowardice? Why should he leave his friends in Golden Sparrow Street? Why, because he could no longer view their relative position in the same light, should he throw up all his high schemes for good and go to a new world, where the chief attraction would be himself and his own welfare, and where, in the solitude of a Canadian farm, he could brood over wrongs which he could not help?

All this flashed through his brain, not in

definite words, but like a new creed, a revelation of a higher power. It was not the death of his gloomy thoughts; but it was, perhaps, the germ of the higher element in man's being.

"I cannot fly from myself," he thought; "even there, these thoughts would follow me; and, besides, I should have been a coward—I should have acted as if all my past life and my past ideas of doing some good to my fellow-creatures were a sham. They may be; but I must be sure of this first. It is too early to give up the struggle; too soon to acknowledge I am conquered by the knowledge that I am myself an outcast from the society of honest men, who care about a good and an honest name. Why should not a man make his own name, even if the struggle is hard? No, I do not care now for fame; ambition seems a worthless thing, and Symee will not share my poverty or my wealth."

Strong and clear came the conviction now that his post was here in these confined lodgings, and in Golden Sparrow Street.

There had been a pause after Mr. Kestell had made his proposal, a pause which the old man had respected, watching keenly the face before him. He could not guess the working of Jesse's mind, but he saw a half smile gradually form itself on the lips that had before been so sternly pressed together.

"He will accept," thought Mr. Kestell, with a sigh of relief. "All will still be well."

The result, however, was far different from his expectation.

"Thank you, Mr. Kestell, I am deeply grateful. If you had come yesterday I would have said yes; to-day, from reasons which I will not trouble you with, I say no. But I am none the less grateful; the very knowledge of your kindness will help me—does help me, to say no. It gives me courage to stick to the old country, and to bear my misfortune like a man."

Mr. Kestell listened to these words in sheer amazement; half of it he could not understand. What he did take in was, that if he had come yesterday, Jesse would have said yes. Was even chance against him? Was he now, after all these years of care for this youth, was he to have him turn against him? What was he saying or thinking? What did Jesse mean? It was pure nonsense; he must accept this offer.

"You would have accepted it yesterday, but not to-day. What do you mean, Vicary? Think of your sister."

Mr. Kestell saw what a mistake he had made in not bringing with him a letter from Symee, promising to join her brother in three years.

This appeal, however, had not the desired effect. A sudden flush overspread Vicary's face. He had by no means yet learnt patience and humility.

"My sister has refused, sir, through your influence, to come and join me here, it is not likely I shall ask her to come and rough it on a lonely Canadian farm. Symee has chosen; I shall not ask her again."

Mr. Kestell was circumvented by his own precautions, and that by a young fellow whose proceedings had been perfectly straightforward.

"You refuse this offer?"

"Yes, sir, entirely. I shall never think better of it."

"We shall see," thought Mr. Kestell to himself. Aloud he added:

"Well, it's no use saying anything more. I only hope Card and Lilley will be always able to give you work. There is a general falling-off of business just now."

Jesse did not attach any importance to this last remark—indeed, he hardly noticed it; he was thinking that, come what might, he would try and find a new path in the old ways.

"Thank you for coming here with your offer," repeated Jesse, wishing Mr. Kestell would go away, and yet taking himself to task for his ingratitude.

Mr. Kestell waved his hand slightly, as if to refuse all thanks; he never had been one who expected expressions of gratitude—indeed, in an indirect manner he had rejected them. He now took up his hat, cast his eyes around the room, and rose to go.

"Good-bye, Vicary. I hope you will never have to repent of your somewhat hasty resolutions; remember, I shall not repeat this offer."

"Of course not; I do not expect it, sir."

"Very well. Good evening, good evening."

Jesse was standing up, too. From his greater height he could look down upon the slightly shorter man, whom all his life he had considered as the arbitrator of his fate. All that feeling seemed now to vanish for ever; he was free, he had not accepted this last favour; but had volun-

tarily chosen a less easy path. He was free, he could say anything now, and quite suddenly a great rush of joy filled his brain, and out of this chaos of joy and pain, though the joy of freedom predominated, he was impelled to ask a question. It was not premeditated, it was entirely spontaneous, and, without preface, he looked boldly into Mr. Kestell's face, with the gaze of earnest enquiry, in which pride was no longer visible, and said:

"Excuse me, Mr. Kestell, one moment. There is a question I must put to you. You know all my history, you know the secret of my unhappy birth. Tell me honestly, who was my father?"

A livid hue seemed to spread over Mr. Kestell's face; the living light which most eyes reflect, and which appears to us to be the symbol of the soul, died down. He did not lower his eyes; on the contrary, as if by force of will, he remained gazing at Jesse, with one hand still on the handle of the door and the other holding his hat.

"Why does he not answer?" thought Jesse, hotly, the lower motive of passionate impatience at his lot gaining the mastery. "Why does he look like this? Good Heavens! what is the mystery? It can be of little importance to this rich man." Then a terrible suspicion swept over him; only long habits of respect prevented him from seizing the old man by the arm and compelling him to answer; as it was, he repeated fiercely:

"Mr. Kestell, if you know, I, too, have a right to know."

"I—I cannot tell you, Vicary," was the answer; and before Jesse could do more than make one step forward, Mr. Kestell was gone.

CHAPTER XXIX. THICK DARKNESS.

WITH his head sunk on the table, Jesse remained for a long time trying to calm himself. It seemed as if, in that moment of question and answer between the two men, the devil had taken possession of him. All the noble thoughts which had filled his mind, and which had been the cause of his rejection of Mr. Kestell's offer, were suddenly swept away, only a raging feeling of anger against the so-called benefactor was left behind. But Jesse did nothing; he did not even try to follow him except in imagination; and in this imaginary picture he seized him by the throat, and bade him, as he valued his life, stand and deliver his secret.

"It is a bad one, or he would not have looked like that. He is implicated in it. What a fool, what an idiot I have been not to see this before! Why has he spent his money on me since my childhood? Philanthropy! curse the word, it does not exist. The man who can look as he did this moment can have none, none, none. Yet it is this man under whose roof Symee has lived her useless life, under his roof— Good Heavens! Ah—I can see it now, the thread of the whole plot. This benevolence, this anxiety for my welfare, it has been all a plot to hide his own sins. Hypocrite, thousand times hypocrite, he wishes me now to go to Canada, away from the old country, away from him. This offer—why, it was all a plant, most likely. He has bought this farm, and wishes really to give it to me as my inheritance—to give it to me, to me. No, by Heaven, never! not a penny of his money shall I ever touch again. Yes, I see it all as clear as the sunshine. This very work I am doing, is it honestly got? Well, that must be honest, in spite of him. I give the worth and more than the worth of my money."

He experienced a moment of relief at this one thought of something clear and honest. The misery he had endured in the past seemed as nothing when compared with this. He had looked into the abyss before. Now he clearly saw it. He was in it.

Again he went slowly back over the past. It was as the searching of a beast of prey over past hunting-grounds trying to discover where the pitfalls had been placed for him by man, his enemy.

"He kept me within reach, and yet away from him; and Symee— Ah, this is the hardest to bear. Symee, my sister, my sister!"

He could not bear the thought. He started up to his full height, and any one present would have been frightened to see the change in Jesse Vicary's face. He looked years older, a man now possessed of terrible power for evil as well as for good. He went to the window and threw it open, not noticing the chill, foggy evening air that swept in. He felt as if he were in a stifling place, and as if he would be suffocated with the burden of his wrath.

"And how near I was to accepting that offer," he thought again and again. "Then he would have got rid of me and Symee for ever. That benevolent face might have gone on and cheated others as it has

cheated me; but, at least, now I am free, free to carry out his punishment. I will register a vow—I do—that I will bring him to justice; not legal justice, there is none in this land. A rich man can boast of being unjust. Ah! he has kept himself well within the false legal palings; he has provided for us amply—nobly—" Here Jesse laughed aloud; but let no one wish to hear a man laugh at his enemy. There is something that speaks too plainly in it of a hideous spirit of evil. "No, I will bring him a punishment he will quail before far more than anything the law could do to him. Kestell of Greystone—that sounds well enough. I have often said it approvingly; but it may yet be humbled and brought to shame. For what? For doing what hundreds have done before him. No, that will bring no shame. The world will praise him for making me what I am—able to stand alone; able to be free of him and of every one else. There must be other punishments reserved by Heaven for such deeds. Mr. Kestell's generosity was bitter before; but now it is unbearable."

The room was too small for him. Seizing his hat, Jesse rushed away from his lodgings. Anywhere, out into the street; he wanted to get away from himself, from the Jesse who had honoured this Kestell of Greystone, and had all his life striven to please him. He wanted to undo the past, and knew not how to set about it.

How long Jesse wandered about through squalid streets he never knew or remembered; but that he did come in at all that night was due to 'Liza. Jesse had so long been used to think of others that he involuntarily did so now. Poor sleepy 'Liza would have to sit up till he came in, for she was a very devoted maiden, and would never go to bed till Mr. Vicary had had his supper.

Little actions often bring about great results; and so it happened that Jesse Vicary went to bed that night because 'Liza sat up for him.

"Lor, Mr. Vicary, you be late. I most a thought you had been run'd over," she said; "but there's the supper ready, and I've kept the kettle on the boil, and missus she said you'd never done such a thing in your life before as stay out so late."

Jesse smiled now, and, though it was rather cheerless, this smile had all the sweetness which lay at the bottom of this man's nature in it.

"No, no, 'Liza, I'm not 'run'd over;' not in your sense of the word, anyhow. Go

off to bed at once. I am sorry I have kept you up so late."

"You're never a goin' to sit up later, Mr. Vicary, are you? Them nasty books are no use at this time of night."

"No, you're right. Well, there, 'Liza, I'm going to bed," said Jesse, to get rid of 'Liza; and after that he had to keep his word.

He woke up in no better frame of mind, and once more the same fierce reasoning went on surging and revolving in his brain. He was now only anxious to get calm enough to think out a connected plan of action; but in the meantime he must go to his work as usual, and life must jog on in its customary dull routine, just as if he had not discovered the secret of his life, and as if everything in the world depended on the business transactions of the firm of Card and Lilley.

When he returned home he half thought he would go and begin the scheme he was slowly trying to evolve, by visiting Obed Diggings and having a talk with him. The thought even crossed Jesse's mind whether, if he took the inventor into a public-house and treated him freely, his memory would not be made clearer about the past; but he at once rejected the idea as unworthy of himself, or of any man who respected his fellow-creatures.

However, as he thought he could speak more freely if Obed came to him, he wrote a note, telling Diggings to call that evening if he could, and if not, the next night. That poor girl of his should hear nothing of the sins of sinful humanity.

Then he sat down calmly to make a clear, defined, well-considered plan for bringing Mr. Kestell to justice—the justice of public opinion; the justice which would not allow an evil deed to be called benevolence, or cowardly silence philanthropy.

He would be quite calm, quite dispassionate, till all was ready for exposure. He, Jesse, had felt all the burden of private shame—shame of his own being. Let the author of it now feel it in some measure also, if he could, and let him experience what would touch him keenly—public disgrace.

He sat down, and fancied he was going to see the clear plan of his campaign evolve itself; but instead of this he still sat on almost stupidly; the high pressure of feeling of the day before had exhausted him; he knew not where to begin, or what to

do? Where was his proof? How could he, Jesse Vicary, bring Mr. Kestell of Greystone to justice?

He went over the short scene of the day before, gazing as he did so at the spot where Mr. Kestell had stood. Proof! what more was needed than that face, that ghastly hue, and that expression of guilt? Certainly nothing more was needed for him, Vicary; but for the world? Those words, "I cannot tell," were no proof, none whatever; it was Jesse's duty patiently to labour till he had found one.

Jesse Vicary had neither the money nor the opportunity for this difficult and delicate bringing together of facts; he saw this well enough, but it made no difference to him.

"It may take me months, years, but I shall do it," he said. "I must be prudent and cautious; I must be my own counsellor and my own lawyer, if every man's hand is against me. Let me trust to myself alone."

At this moment there was a knock at the door, and Jesse said, "Come in," without troubling himself to get up. 'Liza's advent was of little importance to him. Or perhaps it was only Diggings. But he was startled by the voice which had once attracted him so much, the voice of Hoel Fenner.

"Vicary! What, in a brown, a deep-brown study?"

Jesse started up, and held out his hand; but Hoel at once noticed the change in his face.

"Mr. Fenner, I did not expect you! I have heard nothing of you for a long time."

Hoel felt the implied reproach; for, once more in Jesse's presence, he experienced the same curious attraction which had first drawn him to this strange anomaly; this combination of power without wealth or prestige, and of strength without any much-advertised show of it. But this Jesse Vicary was changed from the Vicary he had first befriended. He seemed at once to see this, and Jesse took no trouble to hide it or to put on his old calm, hopeful manner.

"No; you disappeared like a meteor after your refusal, and I have been laid up ever since at Rushbrook. Now, however, I am coming back to work. May I sit down?" for Jesse had not even offered a chair to his visitor. "What's the matter, my dear fellow? Do you know I have not quite forgiven you for throwing us over as you did, after having made me believe

that you were thirsting for literary work? Of course Mr. Kestell did give in, as I predicted, and then—well, then—”

“Yes, I refused,” said Vicary. “Mr. Kestell did not really wish me to accept; but I did it out of my own free will, entirely.”

“Yes, I thought as much. You are not easily led by others. I suppose I must not ask what were your reasons at the last moment. I was rather put to it to explain it to the chief; but of course a post like that does not go begging. I fear I shall not get the chance again of offering it to any one, and yet the fellow we have is not half so well fitted for the place as you would have been. He is sharp and clever, certainly; but he misses your—what shall I call it?—your more original view of men and things.”

This praise—for it was no flattery—would, a few weeks ago, have made Jesse Vicary a proud and a happy man; but now he was quite impervious to praise or blame.

Hoel was so much surprised at this strange conduct that it recalled to him the curious exodus of Vicary from Rushbrook and the unexplained reason of the rejection of his offer. Was it possible that Mr. Kestell knew, and had something to do with it?

Jesse himself was touched by the appearance of Mr. Fenner in the darkest hour of his trial. He almost wished he could confide in him, and yet how was it possible? Was not Mr. Fenner—Symee had told him—the accepted lover of Miss Elva? How could he, without proof, bring the charge against this man's future father-in-law? The irony of fate made him smile contemptuously. Should he or should he not say anything to Mr. Fenner? It was a difficult question to decide, and yet this man, clever, polished, and prosperous, was the only being who had held out something better than the hand of pity to Jesse, even if it had not quite been the right hand of fellowship.

The pause that followed Hoel's last words—and during which Jesse had wearily turned the question over—was broken by Hoel saying:

“Something has gone wrong. I won't worry you to-night; I only came to hunt you up in case you still wanted occasional work. Also I—I thought I should like you to know, Vicary—I dare say you do know already—that I am going to marry Miss Kestell in January. It seems curious

that, when I first knew you, I never guessed at the connection you had with Rushbrook, nor how interested I myself should be in it soon.”

“I do wish you joy, sir. My sister told me the news.” Then, fiercely, Jesse added: “Mr. Kestell was here last evening.”

“Was he? He telegraphed that important business had obliged him to come to town. I left this morning, so I did not see him again.”

“Important business! Perhaps his offer to me was what he meant.”

There was no disguising the bitterness of the tone; and Hoel knew at once that Vicary's strange state of mind was somehow connected with Mr. Kestell.

“His offer to you?”

“Yes, he wants to get me out of the country. He offers me a farm in Canada, but I have refused. Thank goodness, I am free of him and his offers for ever.”

Hoel had always before now heard Jesse speak in tones of deepest gratitude of his patron, so he was utterly surprised at this new development.

“But might not his offer be made in pure kindness, because of your refusal of our opening? Don't you think you have taken the thing as it was not meant to be taken? Come, Vicary, I think you are a little unreasonable.”

Hoel spoke half-seriously, half-lightly, feeling at a loss to unravel Jesse's altered demeanour. Jesse did not answer for a few moments. He was trying to curb his emotion, trying to school himself to be calm, and not to disclose his secret to any one till the full truth should be discovered; but Hoel had attracted Jesse by that easy sympathy which no one else but he had given to the unknown clerk; and, in spite of his resolution, Jesse craved for sympathy as every noble soul does crave; for it is the man who has no sympathy to offer who most often rejects it when it is offered to him.

In spite of himself, as it seemed, Jesse once again appealed to Hoel.

“I don't know why you are good enough to take any interest in my affairs, Mr. Fenner; but as you do, I may as well partly explain why I am angry with Mr. Kestell, the man whom you have heard me speak of with so much gratitude. I am afraid of saying what I should not, considering that you will soon be one of the family.”

“Why, it is just for that reason, Vicary,

that you can speak out. Mr. Kestell does not guess, I am sure, that he has rubbed you up the wrong way, so to speak, and it will be my duty to set matters straight between you. Indeed, honestly, Vicary, I have never heard him speak but most kindly of you, and I know he has the highest opinion of you. There must be some little misunderstanding, which can easily be set right. One sometimes gets to brooding about imaginary wrongs. I can speak from personal experience. My own uncle once upset me—what shall I call it?—my pride, and that little rift is not yet mended. Indeed, now it has become such a permanent barrier that it has ceased to annoy me at all. But I am not sure whether, if, long ago, some third person had intervened, matters might not have been different and happier for both of us."

Jesse settled, then and there, to speak the truth to Hoel, but not the whole truth now—that was impossible.

"You may be right, Mr. Fenner, but I—well, the question may make you smile, but it is of great importance to me. I want to find out the truth about my origin. I am afraid there is nothing pleasant to find out, but Mr. Kestell knows it, and he refuses to tell me. Let it be bad—he acknowledged as much—but, anyhow, I am a man, and I must find it out. I have a right to know."

To himself Hoel said: "Poor fellow! It's a pity he has feelings on that score. I dare say it is bad, and Mr. Kestell wishes to spare him. I understand it perfectly."

"What purpose would be served by a statement of plain and perhaps unpalatable facts?" he said, aloud.

"Possibly none; but I wish to know the worst. What I am sure of, is this. My mother and grandmother lodged for a short time in a cottage, near the brow of Rushbrook Beacon. I got this from an old Mrs. Joyce, who was their neighbour at the time and knew them. My mother was young and pretty; Mrs. Joyce called her Mrs. Vicary, and yet believes her to have been own daughter to the old woman of the same name. You understand, Mr. Fenner. If Mr. Kestell knows it, have I not the right to ask for the name of my father? My mother died soon after the birth of her twins, the old woman shortly after. With them, it might seem, died the secret. They talked, certainly, of a husband abroad, and of his death; any-

how, he never appeared; he never came forward, and, alas, in these cases it is not often that the truth is told. Did he die, or was he abroad? It may be a foolish wish; but, anyhow, forgive me if I speak strongly, I am determined to find out the name of my father, even if he refuses to let me legally call myself his son."

Jesse spoke in a low, suppressed voice, he hardly dared trust himself to stop till all was said. To Hoel, this speech did seem to make a mountain out of a mole-hill; still he was ready to offer his help.

"Very well, Vicary, I am ready to help you; I see it is useless to say 'let it alone.' Besides, there can be no very great difficulty. Without Mr. Kestell's help I can find out all there is to know. I feel sure his silence is merely a wish to spare you some sad, but common, story of desertion. Look upon me as a friend, and give me a week to find it out in. Do nothing yourself during that time, and I will bring you the answer."

Jesse paused and considered, then he said, gratefully:

"Thank you. For a week I will do nothing."

ROUND BY DRURY LANE.

AT that cheerful, familiar corner, where Wellington Street divides the Strand, we are in the midst of a very whirlpool of traffic where currents from every direction swirl and mingle in the troubled tideway. Birds of passage flit across, flying from north to south, or vice versa, cabs and smart railway-omnibuses, piled with luggage, follow in their wake; and between east and west rolls to and fro the endless procession of London on wheels, while London on foot marches up and down in columns that never cease. But the region has its own particular business to attend to. It is journalistic, it is theatrical, it is fruity; and wigs, stage-swords, costumes, and spangles, rub against oranges and potatoes. Pantomimes and pine-apples are found in close proximity, nor are publishers unknown, nor the irritable race of authors. In fact, the neighbourhood knows this kind of life so well, with an experience dating at least a couple of centuries back, that it is scarcely astonished at anything that may happen. It has seen gallant captains or bellicose squires lying in wait with thick sticks for satiric editors. It saw them in the days of

good Queen Anne; it has seen them in the days of better Queen Victoria. Whatever the combatants, its fruit-porters and idlers have cheered on the fray, and rushed solidly to Bow Street when the law has been invoked. And that very name of Bow Street, what memories does it not conjure up of highwaymen, runners, magistrates, what scandals of the town, what tragedies of the streets, what unrehearsed scenes of the drama! Bow Street and Covent Garden, between the two, what stories could they tell of roysterers, rakes, and gamblers, of fair masks and delightful incognitas, of witless wits and scandalous nobles! Or we may hear the shouts of chairmen and lackeys, the clashing of swords, the rattle of dice, the roaring songs, the tumultuous applause—sounds that mingle ghost-like with the actual clatter and cries of the buyers and sellers in the great market during any of the small hours of the morning.

The Cecils rule the roast on this side of the Strand as well as the other. There was Wimbledon House, which was burnt down in the seventeenth century, and has left no memory of itself in street or court, although the Lyceum Theatre is said to occupy its site with Exeter House, reconstructed by the sagacious Lord Burleigh. The latter was called Cecil House till the family acquired the honours of the Earldom and Marquisate of Exeter, which honours are thus responsible for Exeter Street and Exeter Hall, while the shrewd founder of the family is commemorated in Burleigh Street. But before Exeter Hall we had Exeter Change, a heavy pile of buildings; encroaching upon the roadway of the Strand, and narrowing the passage for vehicles; which was removed early in the present century. Here were arcades and rows of shops, and a kind of mart for cutlery and hardware generally, while in the upper floors was exhibited "Cross's Menagerie," a small collection of wild animals, which had acquired an ancient lion or two from the Tower. Somewhere about the premises was kept the famous elephant Chunees, who held the same place in the affections of the young people as did Jumbo at a later period. Great was the scare one day in the Strand when it was reported that Chunees had gone mad, and that he might possibly break through his prison-house and carry terror through the streets. He was probably suffering from one of those paroxysms of temper to which middle-aged

elephants are liable; but some say that a decayed tooth, which the dentists of the period did not see their way clear to extract, was the cause of the trouble. Anyhow, those in charge of him lost their heads, and, unable to control the poor beast, called in a detachment of guardsmen from the barracks, who opened a brisk fusillade upon the unhappy Chunees.

One sometimes comes upon prints of the period, A.D. 1820, in which the scene is represented; the elephant furiously raging and snapping the iron chains that bind him, the soldiers firing point-blank into his carcase. Poor Chunees received one hundred and fifty-two bullets before he finally succumbed. With him departed the great attraction of the show. The elephant had brought in the half-crowns—more plentiful then, perhaps, than now—and in 1828 the menagerie was closed, and the buildings were pulled down soon after, when the street was widened and Exeter Hall built upon the new line of frontage.

Westward of Exeter Hall we have Southampton Street, named after some ancient Earl of that ilk; and out of that street opens one of London's ancient ways, known as Maiden Lane. There are many Maiden Lanes and ways about England, and the name seems generally to cling to some old British trackway; and this may have been one of them, leading from the West to Caer Lundain, even in the days of King Lud, before the men of Julius Cæsar troubled the land. The Lane long wore a weird and ancient aspect, and sundry traditions hang about it. In an ancient house, the site of which is now the Roman Catholic Church, lived a famous alchemist, who, it was said, had discovered the great secret of the "philosopher's stone," and who turned the leaden gutters of the roof into gold. And, on the opposite side of the way, at a little barber's shop, was born a more wonderful alchemist still, the great painter Turner. But Maiden Lane is now almost entirely transformed, and tall flats and lofty taverns have replaced the dingy buildings of old times.

And Maiden Lane brings us to Bedford-bury, where a few old houses still remain to remind us of the thickly-peopled quarter that modern improvements have swept away. For here, by Chandos Street, was a district known as the Caribees, from the wild and predacious character of its inhabitants, who joined hands with the kindred tribes of the Dials, by a labyrinth of intricate courts and passages. The

alms of the Strand have not altogether disappeared, indeed, but have been driven eastwards, and concentrated, in a crowded, thickly-packed district between Drury Lane and the new Law Courts; and so, retracing our steps, we pass hastily through Covent Garden, that is now growing and developing from "Punch's" "Mud Salad Market," into something more worthy of its proud position. But there is one new feature that people may notice in passing through the central avenue, and that is, the predominance of funeral wreaths and monumental emblems, over the more cheerful decorations of flowers and fruit. "There's a certainty about funerals," remarks a practical flower merchant, "that don't exist for more joyful celebrations." And that remark embodies a melancholy fact, which seems to cast a shade of gloom over the scene.

And Russell Street, which leads out of Covent Garden, has its literary traditions, for here were "Wills'" and "Button's" coffee-houses, which were the resort of wits and humorists of the past century, while this brings us to old Drury, whose ponderous façade is now brightened up by posters announcing "Jack and the Beanstalk." And the traditions of old Drury go back at least to the merry days of the Restoration, and it may have even inherited the memories of the Cockpit or Phoenix, which stood somewhere near, and was destroyed in the rigorous days of the Commonwealth.

But Drury Lane Theatre was one of the two houses which held the King's patent, and was known specially as the King's; the other being the "Duke's," in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The new house was burnt down in 1671, and rebuilt under the direction of Sir Charles Wren. And this is the building which had Garrick for a manager, and on whose boards appeared so many of the great actors of old times. Then there was a rebuilding in 1793, and in 1809 the new structure was burnt to the ground; but rebuilt and reopened three years after. And on this stage have appeared the most famous of our modern players—the Kembles, the Keans, Macready, and others.

As for Drury Lane itself, it still retains many of its old characteristics, as when poet Gay wrote :

O! may thy virtue guide thee through the roads
Of Drury's mazy courts and dark abodes.

The mazy courts are still in existence, and, in taking short cuts among them, it is

often easier to find the way in than the way out, and, in such cases, the pleasantest sight in the world is the opening into some thoroughfare, with the burly forms of a couple of policemen in their capes outlined against the comparative brightness of the open street. Yet the neighbourhood was once a fashionable quarter.

The Lane takes its name from Drury House, the mansion of one of Queen Elizabeth's stout Commanders in the Irish wars, Sir William Drury, who was eventually killed in a duel with Sir John Burroughes. Lord Craven had the house afterwards, and rebuilt it on a grander scale, and here he installed the Queen and mistress of his sword and heart, Elizabeth of Bohemia. The house was in existence till the beginning of the present century, but in a dismantled condition, and let out in numerous tenements. Then Philip Astley built on the site the Olympic pavilion, for equestrian and athletic feats, which, a few years after, was converted into a theatre, under Elliston's management. It shared the general fate of theatres in being burnt to the ground in 1849; but a new theatre was built with marvellous rapidity, and opened on Boxing Day of the same year. Then came the palmy days of F. Robson, when the greatest of low comedians convulsed the town with his humour, almost tragic in its intensity. And the Wigans followed; and after them, a strange, eventful history.

But to hark back to Lord Craven, who was a remarkable man in his way, and a well-known character in London streets towards the end of the seventeenth century. He had served under Gustavus in the Thirty Years' War; he had fought for the Palsgrave and the Palsgrave—she who would be a Queen, and lost everything but the devotion of her faithful Craven. Under Charles the Second Craven was Colonel of the Coldstreams, and his was the only sword which was drawn in defence of King James, when the Dutch guards came to relieve the Coldstreams at Saint James's. Naturally, King William deprived the veteran of his regiment, and Lord Craven turned his energies in the direction of fires. He was the first volunteer captain of the embryo fire brigade, and from Craven House he kept watch and ward, and at the first gleam and glow of fire he was abroad on the track; and they said that his horse could smell a fire miles away, and would carry him straight to his destination.

The situation of Drury or Craven House at the corner of Wych Street and Drury Lane elucidates a little topographical puzzle: why it is that the Lane has no direct outlet to the Strand. For Drury Court, which leads into the Strand, is only a foot-passage; by the way, it affords one of the last and best glimpses of old London still remaining, with its old, overhanging houses, and the spire and portico of Saint Mary's, Strand, completing the picture. The truth is, that Drury Lane is really a continuation of Wych Street, and formerly bore the name of the Aldwich way, probably because it led to the Old Wic, or village of Saint Clements Danes. Then Sir William Drury built his house at the turn of the road, and from that corner to where it opened upon the grounds of Montagu House—now the Museum—it was marked with his name.

And now for a story about an ancient denizen of the district, who had his lodgings close by Drury Lane—a man about town in the days of the first King George. Like Uncle Toby, he had served in Flanders, and under the great Marlboro'; was known as a gallant Captain, but also for deep drinking and high swearing; and, to crown it all, was a gamester of the most inveterate type. Major Oneby, the hero in question, came of a good, pious family in Lincolnshire, but his relations, shocked with his manners and general behaviour, had long been estranged from him, and he lived a somewhat solitary life, boasting a good deal of his great friends, but rarely seen in their company. With little but a meagre pension to support him, the Major's chief resource was the dice-box. Few could equal his luck in calling a main, and yet so fiery was his temper, and so supple his sword arm, that those who suspected him for a sharper prudently kept their suspicions to themselves. Wary men of the world avoided him, but he was popular enough among the young rufflers of the town. His wicked stories; his fame as a duellist—he had killed a Count in Flanders, a brother officer in Jamaica, and one or two more in various parts of the world; all this, joined to his reputation as a soldier who had served in battle, sack, and siege, commanded the respect of the gay young bloods among whom he moved.

One night a party of four gay young fellows had been to Drury Lane Theatre, and enjoyed the play of "Hecuba." They adjourned afterwards to Wills's, in Russell Street, and meeting Major Oneby, they all

went off to the "Castle" tavern, in Drury Lane, for supper and a carousal. At least, so thought the young fellows. But the Major was intent on business. Hardly seated in the tavern parlour, he called for a dice-box. The drawer said they had none. "Well, then, bring the pepper-box!" cried the Major, fertile in expedients. Dice appeared on the table—from the Major's pocket; no doubt the pepper-box served its turn, and the Major was in his element. But the young fellows were shy of risking their money, and their prudence seems to have irritated the inveterate gamester. At last, one Rich, having the box in his hand, cried:

"Who will set me three half-crowns?"

"I'll set thee three pieces," cried Gower, another of the party, producing three coins, and covering them with his hand.

The pieces were halfpence, as was presently seen, and everybody laughed at the joke, except the Major, who was boiling with rage at the insult offered to the game, which afforded him a livelihood as well as diversion.

"Impertinent fellow, impudent puppy," stammered the enraged veteran; and, when young Gower stoutly rejoined that whoever called him impertinent was a rascal, the Major hurried a bottle at his head, which missed of its aim, but knocked the powder out of Master Gower's wig.

The youth rejoined with a glass or candlestick, but missed his mark also, and both ran to their swords, which were hung up against the wall. Gower had drawn first, and stood on the defensive, while the Major, with venom in his eyes, advanced upon him. But the others threw themselves between the combatants. And after some parley they all sank down to drink again. Gower would have made up the quarrel, and offered the Major his hand; but the latter replied with an oath:

"No; I'll have your blood."

An expression which eventually cost him dear.

At about three in the morning the company broke up; but, as Gower was leaving the room, the Major tapped him on the shoulder: "Young man, a word with you." And the young man turned back. What happened immediately after was chiefly a matter of conjecture. The other guests were crowded in the doorway of the tavern, for the night had turned out rainy, and were shouting for chairs to carry them home—there were no cab whistles in those days—but no chairs came; and they all

returned towards the parlour, but found the door locked, and heard from within the sound of trampling feet and the clashing of swords. The door was burst open, and Gower was discovered leaning on a chair, in a languishing condition, pierced through the lungs as it turned out, while the Major wiped his sword with a diabolical air of triumph. Poor Gower lingered for many hours. There was not a sweeter tempered man in the world said a witness at the subsequent trial; and he would not say that the Major had fought unfairly. But he died; and there was a general feeling of pity for his fate, and of indignation at the cruelty of the practised bully.

And Major Oneby was brought to trial at the Old Bailey. The jury could not bring themselves to a conclusion upon the matter, but returned what was called a special verdict: that is, they stated succinctly the facts of the case, including the threatening phrase — "I'll have your blood"—and left it for the judges to say whether there had been murder or manslaughter.

Upon that verdict neither side seemed inclined to move for judgement; and the Major remained in Newgate for a year or more, leading a jovial life, entertaining his friends, and rattling the dice-box continually. At last he grew so confident that the law could not touch him, except for the merely nominal punishment of manslaughter, that he instructed counsel to move for judgement on his behalf. The day fixed for the hearing of the case was kept by the Major as a fête. The morrow would see him at liberty among his old haunts, and once more swaggering along the Strand. But as night came on, and none of his friends returned to bring him the good news, his spirits began to sink, and his oaths assumed a gloomier form of blasphemy. With morning came the governor of Newgate, not with an order of release, but with a pair of clanking fetters, such as condemned criminals were used to wear. The judges had all gone against him, and pronounced for a verdict of wilful murder. But on the night before the execution, when there was no more hope of a reprieve, the Major, who was still treated as a gentleman, with a room to himself and his servant to wait upon him, opened a vein in his arm, and quietly bled to death.

A little way up Drury Lane from Wych Street opens out Clare Court, of which the name records that here stood the princely

mansion of Holles, Earl of Clare, the grounds of which extended as far as Newcastle Street. It was this Earl of Clare who obtained a Royal charter to establish a market which at one time was flourishing enough. And Clare Market is still in existence as a mart for the poor who inhabit the dingy, overcrowded dwellings thereabouts.

In days not far remote the nearest way from the Strand to Holborn on foot was by a mazy, intricate route through gateways, and across shady little courts and passages; and one heedless turning would bring the pedestrian into some of the most evil-looking slums of London, where a decently-attired visitor attracted a good deal of unenviable notice. Tales were current of people who had attempted the passage and had never been heard of again; and these stories seemed scarcely improbable to those best acquainted with the district. But the clearance for the new Law Courts has considerably circumscribed the area of the slums, although not materially diminishing their population. And when the proposed new thoroughfares shall be driven through the heart of the rookeries, there will be little left of the ancient labyrinth.

But though a certain proportion of the predatory classes find refuge in the slums of the Strand, they are chiefly inhabited by honest, hard-working people, who gain a livelihood in the petty traffic of the streets. Costermongers, flower-girls, watercress-sellers, and numbers of others whose business lies about the early markets, form a considerable proportion of the denizens of the slums; and it is to be hoped that due provision will be made for them, as well as their donkeys, barrows, and general stock in trade, when any great clearance is made.

Our way now brings us into the Strand, where Saint Mary's Church pleasantly breaks the dull regularity of the street. People are accustomed to complain of the narrowness of the Strand at this point, but our eighteenth-century poet was of a different opinion, as witness the lines:

Amidst the area wide, they took their stand,
Where the tall maypole once overlooked the Strand.
But now, so Anne and piety ordain,
A church collects the saints of Drury Lane.

And Saint Mary's, indeed, was one of the fifty London churches which were built during an access of ecclesiastical zeal in the reign of Queen Anne. But there

had been a Saint Mary's in the Strand long before, and the Duke of Somerset had pulled it down when his nephew, Edward the Sixth, was King, to build Somerset House; and for about a century and a half the parishioners were without a church, and were accustomed to attend the Savoy Chapel. And the Maypole stood there, close by, and was removed as obstructing the view of the church—that famous Maypole which was cut down by the Roundheads, but triumphantly raised anew at the Restoration. There had been a cross there once upon a time, old Stow tells us, where the itinerant justices sat to administer justice for the inhabitants of outer London. And the Maypole seemed to many a type of the ancient jollity and merriment that had seemed so characteristic of old England. But that was gone past restoration, and the Maypole itself was eventually turned to scientific purposes in propping up a monster telescope. But we must remember that the Maypole—it is still commemorated in Maypole Alley, out of Newcastle Street—was the site of the first Hackney-coach stand. One Captain Bailey, a sea captain, was the adventurer who first established this coach-stand, now represented by the cab-stand near Saint Clement's Church, which may claim to be the father of all the cab-stands in London.

It is curious, by the way, to note how strongly the seafaring mind runs upon speculations in horses and wheels, for Shillibeer, who first introduced the omnibus to London, had spent his early years in the navy. And his first conductors—the first to cry "Bank!" and "Piccadilly!"—were the sons of naval officers, dressed in a handsome uniform.

YORK MINSTER.

Just so it looked, you know,
When we, how many years ago?
Looked from the bridge across the Ouse in a red
sunset's glow,

And saw against the sky,
Over the quaint old city, towering high,
The Minster, in its grey, grave grace of ancient
sovereignty.

Slow-rolling at our feet,
Flowed the broad stream the ocean's kiss to meet,
Behind us rose the hum and stir, borne from each
busy street,

The stream whose current bore
The conquering Viking and his bands to shore;
Where Roman galleys lay at ease, in the fierce times
of yore;

That in the later days
Saw the twin roses rival banners raise,
When rival factions closed in strife, in all York's
winding ways;

That heard the joyous shout,
When glad and gay the Cavaliers rode out;
That flowed, all bloodstained 'neath the walls, from
Marston's fatal rout.

While, changeless through it all,
Watching o'er Fort, and Bar, and guarded Wall,
The Minster, as God's witness stood, solamn, and
grand, and tall.

Lingering at autumn eves,
Hearing the west wind as it sobs and grieves,
While slowly heaping at our feet, drifted the falling
leaves,

We live our lives again,
The hopes and fears, the gladness and the pain,
The joys that woke, and laughed, and died, the
sweet dreams dreamt in vain.

Living through old, dead times,
Till through the branches of the yellowing limes,
Clashing through the still, brooding air, we hear
the Minster chimes;

And, with our heavy load,
Following the paths so many feet have trod,
Seek the wide doors that, for our North, guard our
grand House of God.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMINATION.

I AM a dreamer of dreams. Not, however, every day, nor every night—or, rather, every early morn—but occasionally. At times, frequently.

The dreams are of two widely different qualities: very pleasant, and very much the contrary. The first—the result of smooth, frictionless action of the animal machinery, aided by bedclothes saturated with sunbeams in summer and with well-radiated fire-heat in winter—are made up of cheerful intercourse with persons long since dead. I never dream of the dead, as dead, but as living still, although, in bad dreams, living persons sometimes appear as if dead; I dream of lovely landscapes, often recognisably the same, or very nearly the same, in dream after dream, but never the scenery which I have beheld in a waking existence; of exquisite music, but so vague and ethereal that I cannot recall and note the melody after the dream has come to an end.

Unpleasant dreams—suggested by a chill or some other ungenial physical cause—place me in a vast city or a lofty castle, groping my way through labyrinthine passages, with high blank walls on either side, and no possible means of exit. Or I have undertaken to act a part in a

play, and, at the moment of appearing on the stage, in full costume, before a crowded and critical audience, I find that every speech assigned to me, every word I have to utter, has completely faded from my memory. This, however, is only another form of the next, and worst, of my distressful visions.

It is the eve of an examination, which I must pass or be disgraced for life. The subjects with which my mind ought to be stored and ready to produce at word of command are numerous and difficult. One great point is Euclid and Geometry, which I have neglected more than any of the others. The square of the hypotenuse looms indistinctly, enveloped in a hazy fog. Even the Ass's Bridge, if I were put to it, must prove impassable by me. That I should ever reach the final Q.E.D. is hopelessly quite out of the question.

Curiously enough, just before waking, I become conscious that this is only that same horrid dream again. By an effort, turning over to the other side, I chuckle and say to myself: "Thank Heaven, I am not to be examined after all. If I were only in last night's happy valley, I should not mind dreaming on another hour; but I had rather not dream at all than be haunted by such a terrible vision as that."

One day, after having once more failed to pass the examination threatened in my sleep, I met with a book, "*L'Art de passer avec Succès les Examens, par Guyot-Daubès*,"* which promised relief if I could only, while dreaming, call to mind its contents, to interrupt the current of uneasy slumbers. Some of its hints and anecdotes might even make one smile in one's bed, which would be better than tossing and tumbling for hours under the weight of imaginary misfortune. Although written in view of what takes place in France, it contains a great deal which is applicable and profitable in England.

"I will put it under my pillow," I exclaimed, "as a talisman to ward off impending examination."

To begin with; there are preliminary counsels which the student will do well to bear in mind. When the day of examination has arrived, it is useless for him, whether he has worked well or not, to give way to vain regrets, now too late to render service. He should rather endeavour to turn to the best account the stock of knowledge he has managed to acquire.

* Paris: Librairie Central des Sciences, 25, Quai des Grands Augustins, 1889.

During the time immediately preceding examination, he should observe certain hygienic rules. Sleep should have been sufficient to induce complete repose of body and brain; meals should be substantial, but composed of easily-digested food, accompanied by an accustomed beverage. The last meal should be finished at least two hours before the examination, whether oral or written, begins.

For the close connection between stomach and brain must not be forgotten. With an overlaid stomach the ideas are seldom bright, or the answers given in the clearest form. A young man is known to have failed because he took it into his head to breakfast heartily off *pâté de foie gras*. Some fancy that strong liquors, alcoholic drinks, taken just before examination, give steadiness and self-possession. It is a most dangerous mistake, causing confusion of ideas, which can only have a disastrous result. On the other hand, a little coffee may act as a tonic and a gentle stimulant of the brain.

All fatigue, bodily or mental, should be avoided. Hard and hasty study, to make up for lost time, is then worse than useless. It proves a drawback instead of a help. Strict punctuality at—that is a few minutes before—the appointed hour is evidently indispensable.

The clock strikes; the doors open; the examiners are ready to undertake their delicate and unthankful task.

Examiners are men—sometimes sensitive, even touchy, men. Not a few are sympathetic, unwilling, unless absolutely obliged, by duty, to crush a weakly candidate. Such was M. de Rossi, whose indulgence, moreover, was proverbial. One day, at the Sorbonne, he was examining a young man who, so far, had answered fairly well; but, to a final question, the unhappy youth heaped absurdity upon absurdity in his answer.

"Excuse me, sir," said De Rossi, interrupting him, "but if you like, we will suppose your examination to have been concluded before your last reply."

It is possible, therefore, that apparently trifling circumstances may influence an examiner favourably, or the reverse. Politeness, urbanity in tone and manners, cannot fail to make a good impression. Dress, even, has its importance. A hint to candidates to let it be simple, modest, and scrupulously neat, will not be entirely thrown away.

On the other hand, numerous stories are

told of young men whose failure has been attributed by their comrades to an eccentric costume—too ultra-fashionable, too dandified. Some are even said to have owed their rejection to the bright-coloured, over-big bows of a necktie.

M. Francisque Sarcey, the well-known journalist, relates what a narrow escape he had by appearing before his vivâ-voce examiners in a shabby, old frock-coat, a red-striped shirt, and a flaring cravat. A red shirt! Of course, they were shocked, taking it for a manifestation of revolutionary opinions; whereas young Sarcey had put it on simply because it was the first he found in his trunk.

Happily, one of the examiners, who took an interest in his welfare, wrote to his friend, Edmond About, begging him to warn Sarcey not to repeat such a dangerous freak.

About hastened to admonish his friend, whom he found on the point of starting for his second hearing, again wearing the same offensive red shirt, and the rest. He insisted on his immediately undressing, made him put on his best suit of clothes, tied his cravat with his own careful hands, and then sent him off, metamorphosed, to the Sorbonne.

Sarcey boasts that his entrance, thus renovated, caused a sensation. When he advanced to the bar, correctly clad in black, all shining new, an "Ah!" of surprised approval escaped from the lips of every beholder. That change of dress soothed his judges' susceptibilities, and he was admitted with good notes all the more laudatory that his complete and radical conversion was unexpected.

On the other hand, a candidate who displays needless assurance, and who gives himself airs, is sure to draw down from his examiners some humiliation of his vanity, some disagreeable or severe reproof. And if, in his answers, he indulges in smart repartee or sharp retort, he is certain to provoke, if not a reprimand, at least the severity of his judges.

Before giving an instance I must first premise that Guizot, the examiner on that occasion, had recently published a "Life of Cromwell," which the public received with mortifying coldness; also that the Black Sea, in Latin "Pontus Euxinus," is shortened, in French, into "Pont Euxin," also that "pont" is French for "a bridge."

While Guizot, then, was examining at the Sorbonne, after questioning a student,

whose answers seemed to him wide of the mark, he asked, derisively:

"You can at least tell me how many arches the Pont Euxin had!"

"Easily enough," the young man pertly answered. "Exactly as many as your 'History of Cromwell' has had readers."

Such a gross insult, uttered in public, naturally did the candidate more harm than good.

Sometimes, however, Greek meets Greek, and a dual ensues between examiner and examinee.

Arago, afterwards the great astronomer, had to be examined at the École Polytechnique, in order to pass from one division to another. His examiner was Legendre, the celebrated geometrician. Just as Arago came forward, two attendants were carrying out, in their arms, one of his fellow students, who had fainted under the pressure of the difficult questions put to him. Arago was indignant at the sight; he nevertheless felt sure of himself, and was not to be frightened easily. His answers, rapid, blunt, abrupt, irritated Legendre by their very promptness, of which Arago soon became aware. For, while solving a problem, which required the employment of double integrals, Legendre interrupted him, saying:

"You have not learned that method from your mathematical tutor. Where did you find it?"

"In one of your 'Mémoires.'"

"Why did you select it? Was it to curry favour?"

"Nothing was farther from my thoughts. I only adopted it because it seemed preferable."

"If you cannot explain the reasons for your preference, I warn you that you will have bad marks, if only for your display of temper."

Arago triumphed in the end. But it is evident that his independent manners and defiant tone had rendered his examiner much more exacting, and that a less accomplished mathematician, under the same circumstances, would have been mercilessly plucked.

But fancy dreaming you are in Arago's place, with a foul-visaged nightmare playing the part of Legendre, and the result of the struggle still uncertain!

When a pupil is well prepared, he considers written exercises less formidable than examination by word of mouth. In the former, he can coolly reflect on the best mode of proving his proficiency. His

thoughts are not checked, nor his mind intimidated by the immediate presence of the examiner. It is during the first hour that composition flows on most easily; he ought, therefore, to improve that hour, neither hurrying too fast, nor lagging too leisurely. In the hours which succeed, to intellectual fatigue is superadded the weariness resulting from long immobility in a sitting posture.

But when the manuscript is finished, the candidate's task is far from ended. He is strongly advised to re-peruse it with all the attention of which he is capable. A second reading has enormous influence in perfecting the composition which he has just completed. It is a rule which applies to every intellectual effort—to literary productions as well as to examination papers. The first text written is only a rough sketch in which minor details are unavoidably neglected.

In most French examinations there is a maximum number of mistakes in orthography, by exceeding which a candidate is rejected. Inattention and carelessness, even if he has committed only two or three half-faults of accent or punctuation, may easily make him exceed the "three faults" which are the limit of his acceptability. Or he may be so occupied by his subject as to omit to put an s to a plural, a dot over an i, a cross to a t, or a full-stop at the end of a sentence.

To avoid such errors, candidates are warmly counselled, when once their copy is finished, to read it over again most carefully, pen in hand, following the text not merely line by line, but letter by letter—which is the best mode of detecting trifling errors amounting altogether, uncorrected, to serious faults.

What a blessing it would be for editors, printers, and the world in general, if contributors, correspondents, and other scribes could be compelled to follow this good advice!

In oral examination in mathematics, of whatever degree, the candidate, standing close to the blackboard awaiting the examiner's questions, naturally feels a little embarrassed by the consciousness that everybody is observing him. He is evidently placed in conditions unfavourable to cool reflection before writing his answer on the board, and is consequently sometimes puzzled by very simple questions, whose solution requires a moment's presence of mind. It may even be said that many unlucky candidates owe their failure in a

vivâ-voce examination in mathematics to their replying too hastily and without sufficient reflection. The questions, moreover, are often puzzling on account of their very simplicity.

Frequently examiners ask a question in which the candidate has to add together quantities of different denominations, such as cubic mètres, litres, and cubic centimètres.

The way to resolve this sort of problem consists, as the pupil ought to know, in reducing all the several items to the same denomination or unity, namely, the cubic centimètre.

Another example: What is the third and the half of the third of one hundred? It is a simple sum of vulgar fractions. One-third is equal to two-sixths, the half of which is one-sixth. A third and a half-third, therefore, is two-sixths added to one-sixth, namely three-sixths, or one-half. The third and the half-third of one hundred is, therefore, half one hundred, or fifty.

In examinations bearing on the physical sciences, the most embarrassing questions are often those relating to facts which every one must have observed in the course of his daily life, but which, though scientifically explicable, are not found in treatises or text-books. The candidate hesitates, or answers incorrectly, because, not expecting this line of questioning, he is not prepared for it.

Why, when your soup is too hot, do you begin to take with your spoon that which is nearest to the edge of your plate? [This only shows that warming plates is not a general custom in France.]

Why is a rope diminished in length, or shortened, by being wetted?

Why does the air in cellars and deep subterranean excavations feel warm in winter and cool in summer?

Why does your breath, in winter, warm your fingers and cool your soup?

Why are you apt to open your mouth when you listen attentively?

What is the peculiar form of the incisor teeth in the upper jaw of an ox?

Answer: The ox, like other ruminants, has no incisor teeth in his upper jaw.

In an examination in chemistry, the examiner asks: "What are the uses of water?"

The uses of water are so numerous and so well known that the pupil, taken aback by such a simple question, answers, with assurance, and half contemptuously, by enumerating: Navigation, motive power,

steam, irrigation, washing, sanitation, and so on, and stops, supposing his answer sufficiently complete.

"But," says the examiner, looking at him with a smile, "you forgot to mention that water may also be employed as a beverage by man and beast."

Which illustrates the treachery of simple questions.

Sometimes importance is attached to the meaning of words. An examiner asked :

"Is a melon a fruit or a vegetable?"

A young candidate replied :

"Botanically, a melon is a fruit, because it succeeds to a flower. As an article of food, when eaten in the middle of a meal—as in France, with unsalted boiled beef, or other meats—we may say that it is a vegetable."

The answer was admitted as appropriate.

But is it quite fair to lay traps and pitfalls for unwary youth, such as, "Of what disease did Louis the Sixteenth die?" Or, "Give the date of the battle in which Joan of Arc was slain?"

From all which precedes, it appears that a competitive examinee is expected to know everything about everything. He must be as wise as Solomon—or a little wiser.

RINGS.

"SITTING by a sea-coal fire," my slippered feet upon the fender, my head thrown back in my easy-chair, I enjoy the soothing solace—so dear to many a weary brain-worker—of a pipe of good Virginia.

As I watch the smoke-wreaths slowly rising, my thoughts dwell upon the smokers of the past, upon the old divines and thinkers who found comfort, and perchance ideas, in this the veritable "contemplative man's recreation."

My thoughts fly to and fro in the realms of time. I think of Ben Jonson at "The Mermaid." I think of Dick Steele, the jovial; and of Addison, the grave; of Carlyle, who enjoyed a long clay.

Now I lazily watch a smoke-ring floating gracefully upward with a rolling sinuous motion, and I gratefully remember Raleigh, that gallant and unfortunate adventurer. His image calls up that of the great Elizabeth, and of the splendid ring of men that fenced her round. Was ever other monarch surrounded by such a noble circle of gallant gentlemen? Brave, daring soldiers and adventurers; seamen and dis-

coverers; statesmen, lawyers, poets, wits, ready to dare all for renown, and to attempt all for wealth, which was spent as lavishly as it was gained gallantly.

Never did ruler boast a ring set with so many gems, amongst which only an immortal Shakespeare could be called the greatest.

And, as the image of Shakespeare arises, we see it surrounded by a wondrous ring of characters—embodiment and epitome of men and women of all conditions, and of all times—sorrowing Queens and happy peasant maids; love-sick lads and aged counsellors; the quibbling jester and the sad dethroned King; the London 'prentice and the Roman Conqueror; the British warrior in his coat of skins, and the feudal Baron in his coat of mail; with all people and in all places—in Royal Castle, in the peasant's hut, on firm battlement, or on unsteady shipboard—he is as "to the manner born."

Not only has he rescued from "Time's oblivion" the creatures of earth, but has thrown the mantle of his genius over

Fair Titania with her pretty crew,
All in their liveries quaint with elfin gear.

So that even in these prosaic days, when we see the fairy rings in the meadows, we evoke a pleasant picture of the little elves lightly tripping in the pale moonlight, whilst the fair Titania, whose eyes have been anointed by the mischievous Puck, dotes upon an ass and thinks him an angel—a mistake not uncommon in our own time.

This reminds us that there are other rings besides smoke-rings and fairy-rings. From the most ancient time rings have been worn either as personal adornments or as insignia of office. Fingers and toes, arms, legs and feet, necks, ears, lips and noses, all are or have been decorated with this universal ornament.

We read of Pharaoh investing Joseph with a ring when he made him a ruler over Egypt; we read of the men and women of Israel contributing their ear-rings—part, no doubt, of the Egyptian spoil—to the making of the golden calf. In all times the ring seems to have been a symbol of dignity and authority.

In the early days of the Roman Republic, Ambassadors wore golden rings as part of their official dress. Later on every free Roman wore one as a right, although some who affected the simplicity of olden times wore iron rings. In more degenerate days

the luxurious Romans loaded their fingers with rings, some of the more exquisite dandies even going so far as to have different rings for winter and summer wear.

The Lacedæmonians, as became their rugged simplicity, wore rings of iron.

Cæsar mentions gold and iron rings as used in Gaul and Britain for money, a thing customary among ancient peoples, and practised even in Sweden and Norway down to the twelfth century as it is now amongst some of the tribes of Africa.

In days when writing was a rare accomplishment, a seal or signet-ring was a necessary to Kings and nobles; and such rings were never parted with, even temporarily, save to persons in whom implicit confidence was placed.

These rings would pass from father to son for generations; and were, in fact, the sign-manual of the head of the house. In "All's Well That Ends Well," Shakespeare makes such a ring the principal turning-point in the plot.

A ring the County wears

That downward hath succeeded in his house
From son to son, some four or five descents
Since the first father wore it.

We must suppose that old Jack Falstaff made some pretensions to gentle ancestry in that scene at the "Boar's Head," where he complains of having been robbed during his vinous sleep behind the arras.

"Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn, but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark."

At which old Dame Quickly remarks:

"I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper."

All the old romancers and dramatists have allusions to the customs of wearing and giving rings. When lovers parted they made an interchange of rings. At a betrothal rings were the sign and evidence of troth-pledge.

In "Twelfth Night" a betrothal is described in the Priest's answer to Olivia:

A compact of eternal bond of love,
Confirmed by mutual joinder of your hands,
Attested by the holy close of lips,
Strengthened by interchangement of your rings;
And all the ceremony of this compact
Sealed in my function, by my testimony.

Chaucer, also, in his "Troilus and Criseida," refers to the interchange of rings.

In "Cymbeline," Imogen, parting with Posthumus, gives him a diamond ring.

This diamond was my mother's; take it, heart;
But keep it till you woo another wife.

Similarly, in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," Proteus and Julia exchange rings as a pledge of constancy.

Even Shylock, that "currish Jew," had, in his youth, wandered in the realms of love's romance. One cannot but sympathise with him, when, mad with grief and rage for the loss of his daughter and his ducats, he meets with his friend Tubal, who, with other news, tells him:

"One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey."

The poor old Jew replies:

"Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise! I had it of Leah, when I was a bachelor."

This heartless action of his ungrateful daughter cuts him to the quick, and there is a touch of pathos in the mental torture of the poor, lonely old Jew as he thinks of the gift of his dead wife thus lightly cast to mocking enemies. In the same play Shakespeare makes other references to the customs of his time concerning rings. Portia, as a reward for saving Antonio, demands a ring from Bassanio, who says:

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.

Nerissa also obtains Gratiano's ring, and a nice quarrel arose thereafter, as he explained:

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me; whose posy was,
For all the world, like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me and leave me not."

These posy rings, as they were called, were at one time very popular, though the posies were not of great poetical merit. We may quote as specimens:

In thee, my choice,
I do rejoice.

Again,

Constancy and heaven are round,
And in this the Emblem's found.

A certain Bishop of Lincoln, in the last century, had engraved on the wedding-ring of his fourth marriage:

If I survive,
I'll make them five.

Perhaps the most important ring—certainly in the opinion of the fair sex—is the wedding-ring. Ordinarily, a plain gold ring is used; but any ring will do, even the ring of a key has done service before now. It is well known that the second of the three beautiful Gunnings was married with a curtain-ring, the impatience of the bridegroom—the Duke of Hamilton—not permitting him to wait till the usual ring could be procured.

Although any ring is sufficient, there is a very natural objection to the use of a mourning-ring; and there is a superstition that fatal consequences will ensue therefrom. In exemplification of this has been quoted the story of Colin, Earl of Balcarres, who was married to the daughter of a natural son of Maurice, Prince of Orange. The Prince of Orange, afterwards William the Third, presented his kinswoman with a beautiful pair of emerald ear-rings. We may note here that any articles of clothing or ornament of a green colour are considered extremely unlucky at weddings. On the day of marriage, Colin, who appears to have been very absent-minded, forgot all about his engagement; and the messenger sent for him found him quietly seated at breakfast. He hurried to the church; but, at the critical moment, found that he had forgotten the ring. A friend handed him one, which he placed without examination on the bride's finger. On looking at it, after the ceremony, she discovered that it was a mourning-ring with the death's head and cross-bones, and immediately fainted. On recovering she declared that she would die within the year, a prognostication which was fulfilled.

The delivery of a ring has always been considered a sign of confidence, of delegation of power; and hence in marriage shows the trust of the husband in his wife, and his investing her with authority in his household. It is also looked upon as a symbol of eternity and constancy.

Some consider that the left hand was chosen to signify the wife's subjection to the husband, and the third finger because it thereby pressed a vein supposed to communicate directly with the heart. The third finger, on account of certain fancied virtues, with which it was credited, has always been selected as the one on which to wear official rings. To the Greek and Roman physicians it was known as the medical, or healing, finger, and was used to stir their mixtures, from an idea that nothing noxious could communicate with it, without giving immediate warning by a palpitation of the heart.

In some parts of England the ring finger is supposed to have the power of curing any sore or wound which is stroked by it. Also, it is believed that any growth like a wart on the skin may be removed by rubbing a wedding-ring upon it.

Among the Puritans there were many who desired to forbid the use of the

wedding-ring as a Popish and superstitious practice. Butler, in his "Hudibras," refers to this:

Others were for abolishing
That tool of matrimony, a ring;
With which th' unsanctified bridegroom
Is married only to a thumb.

When the Venetian Republic was at the height of its power, there was an annual ceremony of marriage between the Doge and the Adriatic. On Ascension Day, with much ceremony and rejoicings, a ring was thrown by the Doge into the sea, to denote that as the wife is subject to the husband so was the Adriatic Sea to the Republic of Venice.

So universal has been the belief in charms, and so various the articles that have been used as such, that it is not to be wondered at that rings should be included among them. In the Middle Ages, rings inscribed with the supposed names of the Wise Men of the East who visited our Saviour, namely, Melchior, Balthasar, and Jasper, were believed to act as charms against accidents to the wearer while travelling, as well as to counteract sorcery, and to guard against sudden death. They were made of silver, and sometimes even of lead cast in a mould, to be sold cheap to the lower orders.

Silver rings are by no means uncommon at the present day, worn as charms against cramp and rheumatism.

The use of rings, in England, as charms against cramp, dates from the eleventh century.

In Catholic times cramp-rings were blessed by the King on Good Friday. Coming in State into his chapel, he found a crucifix laid upon a cushion, and a carpet spread on the ground before it. He crept along the carpet to the cushion, as a sign of his humility, and there blessed the rings (which were in a silver basin), kneeling all the time, with his almoner kneeling by his side. After this was done, the Queen and all her ladies came in and crept up to the cross.

Undoubtedly, belief in the power of the cramp-rings was strong and general. Lord Berners, while Ambassador in Spain, wrote to Cardinal Wolsey (twenty-first of June, 1518): "If your grace remember me with some crampe ryngs ye shall doo a thing muche looked for; and I trust to bestow thaym well with Goddes grace."

Of the romance connected with rings, pages might be written. We may remind the reader of the ring given by Queen

Elizabeth to her gallant, but unfortunate, favourite, Essex, at a time when his fortunes were in the ascendant. After his mad attempt to raise a revolt in London and seize the Queen's person, he was thrown into the Tower and condemned to death. Bethinking himself of the ring which she had instructed him to send to her when he should be in trouble, he entrusted it to the traitorous hands of the Countess of Nottingham. She promised to convey it to Elizabeth, who, no doubt, only awaited this sign of submission and repentance before she pardoned her weak favourite. The Countess, whose husband was a bitter enemy of the Earl's, retained the ring, and Essex was left to suffer his sentence. The Countess, in what she supposed to be a fatal illness, confessed her crime to Elizabeth, and besought forgiveness. The enraged Queen seized her by the shoulders and, shaking her violently, cried, "God may pardon you, but I never can."

Both Nathaniel Hawthorne and Dr. O. W. Holmes refer to the incident of Dr. Harris, of Dorchester (America), who, when a poor youth, trudging along, one day, staff in hand, being then in stress of sore need, found all at once that somewhat was adhering to the end of his stick, which somewhat proved to be a gold ring of price, bearing the words, "God speed thee friend."

A curious anecdote concerning a ring and a walking-stick is given in "Notes and Queries." A servant boy was sent into the town with a valuable ring. He took it out of its box to admire it, and, passing over a plank bridge, let it fall on a muddy bank. Not being able to find it, he ran away to sea, finally settled in a colony, made a large fortune, came back after many years, and bought the estate on which he had been servant. One day, while walking over his land with a friend, he came to the plank bridge, and there told his story. "I could swear," said he, pushing his stick into the mud, "to the very spot on which the ring dropped." When he withdrew the stick, the ring was on the end of it.

THE GENTLEMAN IN FICTION.

WHEN Adam delved, and Eve span, some superior persons of our own time might have had some difficulty in telling where was then the gentleman. At any

rate, some writers seem to be chiefly concerned in telling us, not where he is now, but where he is not. Our American friends, for instance, have been greatly exercised of late on the subject of gentlemen and gentlemanliness in Fiction. Of course, we know that the "Grand old Gardener," who, presumably, was also the first gentleman, smiles at the claims of long descent; and we also know that the grand old name of Gentleman is

Defamed by every charlatan
And soiled by all ignoble use.

But surely of all the mob of gentlemen who write with ease, Mr. R. L. Stevenson is the last one would expect to defame or soil the designation. No doubt he is aware that in Ireland there are "gentlemen of four outs"—which is to say, persons without wit, without money, without credit, and without manners. The breed is not confined to the "distressed country," but in other lands it bears other names. There are, it may be, gentlemen of the long robe who are no better than their neighbours; and in the main, the mass of the people may be divided into "the gentlemen of the four outs," and "the gentlemen of the three ins"—which is to say, in debt, in danger, and in poverty. Let us not forget, too, that in the West Indies, a negro is never a nigger or a black man, but always "a coloured gentleman;" and that in Cockneydom, a "gent" is a very objectionable person, who burlesques the latest fashions, and vulgarises the very atmosphere he breathes.

It is, of course, a popular superstition that His Satanic Majesty is a most polished gentleman, although the poets and others who have made use of him for literary purposes have not usually grasped this idea. The most famous of all the diabolic characters—that of Mephistopheles in "Faust"—certainly does not come up to the gentlemanly standard.

Would it be fair, then, to say that Goethe could not draw a gentleman? Goethe, certainly, had a magnificent opportunity; but he missed it. He missed it also in the character of Faust himself; and, upon the whole, it is possible enough that, with all his intellect and imagination, Goethe could not construct a real, live, recognisable gentleman.

Could Shakespeare? Certainly not, if Mr. Ignatius Donnelly is correct in his hypothesis. It is difficult, indeed, to suppose that even Bacon, who stooped to such

ungentlemanly abuse of his tool—if the Great Cryptogram is rightly interpreted—could have drawn a gentleman. Yet Hamlet was, in the main, a gentleman; although Hamlet was not a gentleman when he abused his mother.

No doubt manners alter with times; but in no times can it conceivably have been good manners to rate one's mother like a pickpocket—or worse. When you come to think of it, is there not more of the true gentleman in some of Bret Harte's rough Californian rowdies—who, in spite of their brutality, can yet always remember the dignity even of fallen womanhood—than there was in Hamlet when he rounded on the poor wretch to whom he owed his being?

The point which Mr. R. L. Stevenson sought to establish, however, was, that you can always tell a gentleman when you see him "in fiction;" and that although Shakespeare's gentlemen are not quite ours, still they have "the root of the matter" in them. One is not disposed to dispute this; but then, does not the acceptance of the proposition commit one to the admission that Shakespeare himself must have had "the root of the matter" in him? That a gentleman may draw a boor, is not to be disputed; but can it be conceded that a boor can by any possibility draw a gentleman?

Here, of course, we are met with the difficulty—what is a gentleman? We use the term as freely and as frequently, and with as much assumption of saving grace about it, as Matthew Arnold used "provincialism," or "distinction," or "interesting." But, while a good phrase, or a good word, may be admirable, it is not necessarily appropriate or instructive. When Matthew Arnold wrote—as he did in one of the very last papers he ever penned—that Abraham Lincoln lacked "distinction," what did he mean? No one knows; while every one recognises in the rail-splitting American President one of the most distinguished and interesting figures in modern history. Nay, further: the world saw in Abe Lincoln—the uncouth, the long-limbed, the coarse-tongued, and the rough-mannered—more than enough to recognise that he also had the "root of the matter" in him, and was in heart and conscience a gentleman.

Could one say as much for Talleyrand, or Bonaparte, or Peter the Great, or Cromwell, or even of Cromwell's defender, Great

Thomas of Chelsea? It is possible, of course, to exaggerate the merits and uses of the polished gentleman. A world of Sir Charles Grandisons would be an intolerable place to live in, and perhaps an unsafe place also, for the man who has no defect, or flaw, or redeeming vice in his composition is often a dangerous person.

Somebody has remarked that a well-trained dog is about the most gentlemanly thing in creation; and really there is a great deal to be said in favour of the proposition. For, after all, the chief distinctive marks of a gentleman are of a passive character. It is not so much by what he does as by what he does not that we know him. Thus, it is even possible to suppose that the spouse of the Aberdeenshire lady was a gentleman by comparison with the vices of his companions; for, according to her testimony, he was just a "gweed, weel-tempered, couthy, queat, innocent, daidlin' drucken body, wi' nae ill practices aboot him ava."

Mr. R. L. Stevenson says that for years and years Dickens laboured to create a gentleman; and laboured in vain, because the task was beyond him. Fortunately Mr. Stevenson is not the sole judge of what constitutes a gentleman; but Dickens, as we know, did not seek his types in "Society" circles.

Dickens, however, could draw a thorough gentleman when he wanted one. Sydney Carton was a gentleman, if a dissolute one; Eugene Wrayburn was a gentleman, although an irritatingly insolent one.

Thackeray's forte lay in another direction. He could never have drawn Mr. Pickwick; but not many novelists have been able to draw such gentlemen as Thackeray drew. Even Thackeray's rascals are gentlemanly; and he created the most finished, the most noble, and the most eminently human gentleman that ever lived in the flesh, or on canvas, or in books—Colonel Newcome. Has it not been well said, that, if the art of being a gentleman were forgotten, like other lost arts, it might be learned anew from that one character? And yet Mr. R. L. Stevenson, more by insinuation than by direct assertion, conveys the impression that he does not look upon Thackeray as an "ideal gentleman." Perpetual nosing after snobbery, he says, suggests the snob. Surely this is the very mockery of criticism. "Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat." A gentleman may draw a snob, but could a snob create a gentleman as "by the gift of Nature?" The idea is untenable, and no

one who reads Thackeray's letters to his intimate friends can fail to see that he was the creator of gentlemen, simply because he was a gentleman. "His strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure."

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "*Count Paolo's Ring*," "*All Hallow's Eve*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

LAURENCE did not notice the change in Doris's manner after his announcement. Once the plunge taken, and he fairly launched upon the boundless ocean of his sweetheart's perfections, his tongue flowed on unceasingly.

"I never mentioned her in my letters to you, Doris," he said, "because, as I said, I was not sure of her. She is a little bit of a coquette—no wonder, when she is so much admired—besides, I thought I would rather tell you all about her myself. You would like to hear, eh, Doris?"

"Of course I would. How can you doubt it, Laurence?"

Was Laurence deaf that he did not hear the sharp note of agony in Doris's voice; blind that he did not see the despair in the sweet grey eyes which sought his face in one swift, agonised glance, and then hid their despair under their veil of dark lashes? He must have been, or else he could not have gone on so glibly.

"She is an artist's daughter, and her name is Bessie Trafford. She has not a very happy home, poor girl, for her father is not one of the most exemplary of parents; and, as they never mention the mother, I conclude that she was not much to boast of either. She is dead, however, and Bessie and her father live in the next street to Mr. Redmont. Trafford is really a clever fellow, and could make a lot of money if he liked to work and keep steady; but he does neither, and Bessie has to work very hard sometimes just to keep the pot boiling. She is governess to Mrs. Redmont's children; or rather she was governess until a few weeks ago. There was some little unpleasantness, I don't know what about, exactly, but I believe," and he laughed, "I had something to do with it. Mr. Redmont did not approve of the attention I paid Bessie; and Bess, who is very high-spirited, was angry, and went

home at a minute's notice. Since then she has remained at home, and of course will do so now until we are married."

"Will that be soon, Laurence?"

With a great effort Doris spoke. She had naturally much self-control and a fair share of pride; and now that the first shock was over, and the first awful greyness had faded from her face, she was able to steady her voice, and to look Laurence calmly in the face. He must not guess, he must never know what a terrible blow his news had been to her, the girl told herself frantically; she would not betray herself! By-and-by, when he was gone, she could give way, and let herself moan over the fierce pangs which were rending her heart now; but in Laurence's presence she would not betray herself. So she forced herself to ask the question calmly.

Laurence smiled.

"Very soon, I hope," he said, cheerfully.

"There is no need to wait; and though I cannot give her a very grand home at present, at all events it will be better than the one she has now. We talk of November for our wedding."

November, and it was now October; and in another month the Laurence she had known and loved and looked upon as her own during the greater part of her life, would be hers no longer, would belong to another woman! Nay, did he not in truth belong to her now? Doris thought, bitterly. He was lost to her, at all events!

"He will forget you," Paul Beaumont had said. "A boy's will is the wind's will. He will forget you."

She had laughed at the warning then; it returned to her with a terrible sense of its truth now as she sat by Laurence's side with her chill fingers still in his, and the yellow leaves falling round her.

"November isn't a very pleasant month for a honeymoon, is it, Laurence?" she said in a voice which sounded odd and far off in her own ears.

Laurence laughed again, and shook back his curly head.

"That all depends where the honeymoon is to be spent," he said. "We are going to Rome for ours. We shall stay there till February or March, and come back to London in time for the Academy and the other exhibitions. I intend to work harder than ever this winter, and have something really good to show in May. Old Redmont shakes his head over me, and declares that 'a young

man married is a young man marred,' so I am bent on showing him that he is making a mistake in my particular case!"

"Doesn't Mr. Redmont approve of your engagement?" Doris asked.

"Not altogether," and Laurence frowned and shook his head. "That is the only cloud on my happiness. They have all been so good to me, that I should have liked their approval; and that I haven't got at present. Mr. Redmont thinks I am too young—too young at five-and-twenty!—and Mrs. Redmont doesn't cordially like Bessie. I can't imagine why, for the dear girl is so fond of her, and would be just like a daughter to her; but the fact is apparent enough. Bessie herself says it is because of me," Laurence went on with a laugh and blush; "that they are disappointed because I did not fall in love with Frances, the eldest daughter; but I am quite sure that that has nothing to do with it! However, when we are married, and they know her better, and know how sweet and lovable as well as beautiful she is, they will change their opinion," Laurence added, confidently.

"I wonder why Mrs. Redmont does not like her?" Doris said, absently.

"Oh, I don't know. For one thing she says that Bessie is not domesticated enough, that she is not a fit wife for a struggling artist, because she knows nothing about cooking or housekeeping; but I know better. If she is ignorant of these things at present, she can easily learn. She has had no opportunity, so far, for they live in lodgings; but when she has a house of her own it will be quite different," Laurence went on, cheerfully. "It is easy enough, isn't it, Doris?"

"Oh, quite easy."

"I thought so; but how clever it was of you to guess my meaning, Doris;" and Laurence looked down at her with innocent admiration of her cleverness in his eyes. "How did you know? I never mentioned her in any of my letters, did I?"

"I don't think so; but I know what to think when a young man hints that he has something very near to his heart which he wants to talk about! Women are very quick in scenting love affairs, you know," Doris cried, with forced gaiety; "but it was clever of me to guess after all, for you kept your own counsel so well! But there, I was always so clever, you know!"

Her colour had come back now; the dazed, bewildered look had gone from her

eyes; they were bright, and cold, and glittering as stars on a frosty night, as she looked up at him. Laurence was struck afresh by her beauty.

"How pretty you have grown, Doris," he repeated. "It is a shame to keep you shut up in this dreary old house, where you never have a chance of seeing anybody."

"Or anybody seeing me, eh!" Doris cried, in her gay, feverish voice. "Never mind, Laurie, old Margot comforts me sometimes by declaring that every Jack has his Jill, and, if I am fated to be married, my Jack will come for me, no matter how much out of the world I live. I suppose she is right. It is no good struggling and fighting against one's fate. I must dree my weird like other people."

"But it is such a dreary place for you to live in."

Laurence looked round the garden and gave a shudder of disgust. The short October day was already closing in; the sun had set suddenly behind a dark cloud; the wind blew chill and damp across the garden and shook the leaves from the trees. Now that the latter were so nearly bare, the house could be distinctly seen, and the bare, uncurtained windows, through which no gleam of friendly fire or lamp-light shone, looked dark, and cheerless, and forbidding. Laurence, remembering the pleasant house in London where, just at this hour, round the wood fire in the pretty drawing-room the artist, and his wife, and daughters, and some of the friends, who rarely failed to drop in for a cup of tea, would be gathered, felt unspeakably sorry for Doris. By-and-by, when he was married, and had just such a home of his own, she must often come to them, and, indeed, consider their house her home. He said something of the kind, and Doris smiled and thanked him, and inwardly thought with a shrinking repulsion that any home, however dreary, would be preferable to the home of which Laurence's wife was mistress.

"Shall I see you again to-morrow, Laurence," she asked by-and-by, when Laurence had looked at his watch and exclaimed, at finding it later than he thought, "or do you leave early?"

"Very early; almost before you are up." Then, hesitating a minute, "Doris, you will send some little message to Bessie, won't you?" he said.

"What shall I send?"

"Oh, what messages do girls send to

each other? Your love, I suppose, and good wishes. That is the best and most acceptable kind of message on such an occasion, is it not?"

"Take both, then. Tell her that Laurence's oldest friend sends her love to Laurence's wife; that she asks her to make him happy, as happy as he deserves to be, as she prays with all her heart he may be," Doris said, in a strained voice which was curiously unlike her own. It seemed even to Laurence's unobservant ears as if pride, and pain, and passion were struggling there for victory. He looked down at her keenly, and something he saw in her face checked the light answer that had risen to his lips. What did that look mean? He had seen it once before somewhere; he could not remember where; but it awed and chilled him. He bent and kissed her forehead. It was very cold. The hand he held was colder still.

"I know you do, dear Doris—truest friend," he said.

And then, without another word—for somehow his heart was too full for any further speech—he turned and left her, and not until he was half way to town on the following morning did he remember where he had seen the look which had puzzled him when he saw it reflected on Doris's face—the look which some great artist had painted on Rispah's face as she watched alone by her dead!

Doris never knew how long she sat under the apple-tree, with hands lightly clasped together, with vacant eyes fixed upon the door which had closed behind Laurence. It had closed, alas, upon other things beside Laurence, she told herself, drearily; upon love and happiness, and the bright hopes of which the future, only a few hours before, had been so full. The sunshine had faded from the garden, just as the sunshine of hope had faded from out her life; and the garden, with its fast-decaying leaves and dying flowers, seemed but a fit image of her life, dreary now with vanished happiness and dead delight.

When at last she roused herself from her reverie, it was twilight; the dew was falling, and her white gown was limp and damp. Slowly she dragged her lagging steps across the garden to the house, and entered it. As she crossed the dark, gloomy hall, her aunt's voice called to her from the dining-room, where she usually sat.

"Doris, come here, I want you," Miss Mordaunt said; and Doris unwillingly retraced her steps, and entered the dining-room.

It was a large, gloomy room, with three long windows draped in dark crimson curtains, so old and moth-eaten, and darned in so many places, that they would scarcely hang together. The paper on the walls was mildewed, and stained with damp and old age; two or three portraits of dead and gone Mordaunts hung there, and looked down out of the darkness at their little sad descendant, as she came slowly down the long room and stood before Miss Mordaunt. There was a long table in the centre of the room; at one end a couple of candles stood, and their feeble light showed Miss Mordaunt sitting grim, and pale, and grey, bending over her everlasting account-books. She looked up as Doris approached, and stood before her, but she did not speak; only her keen eyes wandered with a kind of grim amusement over the tall figure that stood before her in its limp, white dress, with the fading roses in its belt.

"Did you want me, aunt?" Doris said.

"Yes, I wanted you. Was it Laurence Ainslie you went to meet in the garden just now?"

"Yea."

The girl hesitated an instant before she answered. "Just now," Miss Mordaunt said; but it seemed to Doris as if hours—nay, days had passed since she had danced across the garden to meet Laurence.

"Yes, it was Laurence," she repeated.

"What did he want? Did he come to ask you to marry him?" Miss Mordaunt asked, abruptly.

"No. On the contrary, he came to tell me that he was going to marry somebody else," Doris replied, in a cold, expressionless voice; and she raised her dull eyes and looked steadily at Miss Mordaunt. She laughed bitterly, and the unaccustomed sound echoed strangely down the long room.

"So that is the meaning of your pale cheeks and red eyes? I guessed as much when I saw you come back from the meeting to which you went in such glee; for which you donned your prettiest gown, and decked yourself out with roses. Oh, you little fool! Have I not warned you often enough? Have I not told you what men are—that they are alike, all of them? That all they care for is to win a woman's

heart, and as soon as it is won, trample it under foot and crush out all its life and happiness! Was not your mother's example enough, but you, too, must follow in her footsteps!"

The grim, grey face flushed with passion, the sunken eyes glittered, and such an angry colour burned in the pale cheeks, that Doris, even in the midst of her trouble, was startled, and could not help but stare at her aunt.

"Laurence never tried to win my love," she said, loyally. "If I gave it unasked, if I fancied that the boy's affection meant the man's love, that is my fault, not his. He is not to blame for my folly."

"Who is he going to marry? Some rich fool, I suppose, who has taken a fancy to his handsome face," Miss Mordaunt sneered.

"No, you are wrong again. The girl to whom he is engaged is young, and pretty, and very poor," Doris answered, quietly. "It is quite a love match."

"And how long will the love last, I wonder? Laurence is a fool. I always thought so, and this confirms my opinion."

"You do not share it with others. Every one says he has great talent, and all predict a great future for him," Doris answered, still in her impassive voice.

Miss Mordaunt nodded emphatically.

"That depends altogether on the kind of wife he has chosen," she said, enigmatically. "He is just the kind of man whose life will be made or marred by his wife. You would have been a help to him; with you to encourage and inspire him he might have risen to be a great man. I doubt very much if he ever will now. He is blind, and by-and-by he will awake to a knowledge of the mistake he has made, and awake also to repentance, and the misery which repentance will bring," she added.

She took up a morocco case which lay on the table before her and opened it, and looked at Doris.

"See, I intended these for your wedding present," she said. "I am a poor woman, as you know well enough; so poor, that it is all I can do to get food and clothes for us both; but I have never parted with these. They belonged to Lady Sybil up there," and she pointed to a portrait hanging on the opposite wall of a pretty, brown-haired girl, with a laughing face, and coquettish

lips, and a white hand that played with a diamond necklace, "and I meant to give them to you for a wedding present. See, they are beautiful, are they not?"

"Very beautiful."

Doris looked down at the sparkling gems as they glistened in the candle's feeble light.

"Well, you can lock them up again, Aunt Joan. I shall not need any wedding gifts," she said, with a hard laugh.

"Yes, I may lock them up again." Doris fancied that Miss Mordaunt gave a sigh of relief as she closed the case. "But, Doris, mind you do not tell any one, not even Margot, that I have these in the house. Our lives would not be safe for an hour if it was known."

"Don't be afraid, Aunt Joan. No one would ever dream that there was anything worth stealing in the Red House," Doris said, with a faint smile. "Every one knows how poor we are."

"Everybody is very wise," Miss Mordaunt retorted; "and so Laurence Ainalie will find out some day, when I am—gone. He will be sorry enough then. Doris, just see how that candle is wasting. You must have left the door open. Shut it directly, and put the candle out of the draught. You must think I am made of money," the old lady snapped.

Doris left the room, and went upstairs to her own. It was lighter than the one she had left, for it had two large windows, which faced the west; and in the long slip of mirror which hung between them, Doris could see herself dimly reflected. She went closer to the glass, and looked at herself with a sad smile. Could this limp, white figure, with its sad face and eyes, and ruffled hair, really be the radiant vision which had smiled back at her from that same mirror a few hours before, she wondered?

She turned away and looked out into the garden, lately so bright with summer flowers, now covered with falling yellow leaves, over the landscape where the harvest had been gathered in, and the fields looked bare and desolate, and thought—as many a young heart, breaking under its first great trial has thought before her—that truly for her the summer was past and the harvest was ended, and that nothing remained but a long winter of gloom, and sadness, and evil days!

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"
"*A Faire Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXX. THE UNSIGNED WILL.

HOEL had undertaken a task, without counting the cost; and, when he was indulging in his evening pipe, he saw that he had done rather a foolish thing. In the first place, Mr. Kestell had, of course, some excellent reason for withholding the truth; and, not even for a moment, did Hoel doubt that his future father-in-law's reason was good. The idea that had taken possession of Jesse, did not even enter his brain. Still, he could not help puzzling a little why there should be any mystery about what was, most likely, a very ordinary case.

"I should say," meditated Hoel, "that the father was some friend of Kestell's, and that, in the capacity of lawyer, he looked after these luckless twins. Most likely, he was given a sum of money for the purpose, and was bound down to secrecy. Of course that is it; it is as plain as a sign-post. It is far better for Vicary to accept his position such as he can make it; and if he were not a little wrong-headed, he could have made it a splendid one. It seems to me I have undertaken a foolish task. Mr. Kestell, being a man of honour, is bound by a promise. Still, I am not; and, of course, were he not bound, he would have no earthly objection to telling Vicary everything he cared to know. Vicary takes the consequence on his own head. It is, after all, a simple matter, and, were I a lawyer, I should soon unearth the secret. Well, it might be unpleasant for Mr. Kestell if he

thought he had to refuse me, if I asked him the question point-blank; or, if he told me, he might also bind me to secrecy. I think I'll work on my own lines. I'll run down to Greystone, and from there I can go to the village and hunt up a few facts. The two women came from somewhere, I conclude, and did not drop from the clouds. Registers of births, deaths, and marriages tell their tale pretty plainly; and, in these out-of-the-way places, tradition is strong. The only awkward part is appearing to spy out the land unbeknown to my future father-in-law, who, by the way, must possess somewhat of a suspicious, secretive disposition, though he hides it well in ordinary life."

Hoel resolved to go to Greystone the next day; but the morning post brought him two letters which changed his mind. The one he first opened was from Elva. Such a happy letter, full of trust in Hoel and very unconcealed admiration. The little cloud had blown over; she was only ready to take his word and his opinion in everything. She made a beautiful picture of him in a mirror of her own, and then described to her lover what she saw. The originality of her views peeped out in delightful little sentences, the merit of which Hoel was well able to appreciate. He was even slightly glad that he was aware of this, and that Elva was ignorant of her own merits. In his matured mind, a woman lost much of her charm of cleverness when she became conscious of possessing it. And just now, Elva was conscious of nothing but of her great love for Hoel. It was best so; by-and-by, Hoel could himself watch over any dawning feeling of separate identity, and, if necessary, he could smother it at its birth. A wife must have but one view; her horizon

must be bounded by a lower line than that at which her husband gazes. Anyhow, it must never be placed further.

He read the last page twice over, and was satisfied, and we know Hoel was not easily contented with mediocrity.

"DEAR HOEL,—When you were really gone I began to realise my loss, even though it is for such a short time. I think there must be some natures who are created imperfect, so that their happiness may be given to them in the shape of a complementary human being, without whom they cannot recognise their own natures. I have had a happy life, you know, and yet it is only now that I have suddenly discovered I was not really living before. I wanted you to teach me myself. You will understand this, although I cannot explain it. Words seem such poor things to give to those we love; we want to give our fresh-created thoughts in all their perfection and imperfection. I have often tried to make Nature understand what I mean when I lie down on a bank of heather in summer, or sit by one of the Pools; but now I see how far, far above Nature is one human soul. The trees and the wind, everything we see, are all so intensely above us and below us; above us in their irritating calmness, and below us in their want of sympathy with suffering and joy. There, I must not go on writing like this; you will think me childish. But I feel so happy, my own dear Hoel, that I must say so even at the risk of your answering that I am foolish. You will teach me wisdom, won't you? I blame myself for being too much absorbed in our happiness. Books say this is natural, and yet I don't want to be just like everybody else.

"Since you left I see that papa is really unwell. I made him call in the doctor again. He suffers so much from sleeplessness. Dr. Pink says that is the cry of our modern men of business. I believe he does not like my going away; and yet I cannot feel sorry to leave everybody as much as I ought to do. I don't believe any girl ever had a better father than mine. Such love and tenderness must be rare. If it were not that I know his whole heart and mind is wrapped up in mamma, I don't think I could leave him, even for you, Hoel. There, what do you say to that? I am going to devote myself to my own family, sir, for these last few weeks, so do not expect much from me. Amice and I are going to take a secret expedition to

London this week—towards the end of it—and we do not want to see any one above the rank of a shopman, so I shall not even tell you the day. It will do Amice good to see the wicked world. Your loving,

"ELVA KESTELL."

Hoel heaved a little sigh of utter contentment as he opened his second letter, which was from his uncle, and was short, if decided.

"DEAR HOEL,—Come down at once to see me; I want to talk over your settlements with you. I don't think Mr. Kestell is doing enough for his daughter, considering that I hear his fortune is considerable, and he may live for years. Hunter will draw up the settlement; and I assure you he is a very sharp fellow.

"Your affectionate Uncle,

"MELLISH FENNER."

For a moment Hoel thought he would disobey the command. He had made up his mind to go to Greystone after Jesse's business, and he had a good deal of work in town; but second thoughts made him decide to give in to his uncle. It is easy to be magnanimous when one is in a blissful state of mind. He telegraphed that he would run down for the night; and then wrote a very hasty but lover-like letter to Elva.

That same evening Hoel was sitting by his uncle's invalid chair.

Mellish Fenner was not by any means a man who inspired love; he had a fretful restlessness of manner, coupled with a slightly cynical way of expressing his opinion, which grated on Hoel's susceptibilities. The uncle was disappointed that his nephew had done very well without him, and yet even now he could not bring himself to treat him as his son; he had no fault to find with him, but he secretly guessed that Hoel was not now capable of much gratitude. Long ago this would have been different. There are many who can do nothing but curse their own shortsighted folly, and this occupation cannot be enlivening. It had not improved the natural asperity of the elder man.

Hoel had come down prepared to uphold all Mr. Kestell's doings and arrangements. Mr. Mellish Fenner, on the contrary, was specially carping and contentious over the proposed settlements; but Hoel had determined to keep his temper, and he kept it. His uncle was further irritated by this perfect cheerfulness, out of which no dispute could be extracted. But at last Mellish Fenner spoke out:

"You insist on accepting no advice, Hoel. I suppose all young men, nowadays, think they know better than their elders. You resemble the Pellews much more than any Fenner I ever knew, and the result with you will be the same as it was with most of them. Their obstinacy led them into every possible misfortune, and two or three went utterly to the dogs."

Hoel smiled good-naturedly, the sins and iniquities of these cousins once or twice removed touched him but little; but suddenly, however, he remembered Amice Kestell's question: "Who was John Pellow?"

"By the way, sir, talking of the Pellews, I find Mr. Kestell knew something of them. He mentioned them the other evening. Can you tell me anything about a John Pellow? Not the present man, of course, but a John Pellow of a former generation."

"He was one of those who went to the dogs. He was the youngest son, and was, naturally, a fine fellow; but his obstinacy was boundless."

"And what did it do for him?"

"Oh, I knew nothing of him, he was my junior; but I saw him once when he came back from India, years ago. He had gone there in opposition to his family, and was secretary to some official I believe. The last time he came home they wished to marry him very suitably; but he utterly refused, went back to India, and died soon after. And yet he was a very promising young fellow, and might have been anything he chose."

"There was, surely, another John Pellow?"

"Oh yes, but quite another sort of man, he made a great deal of money, and left one son, the present Godfrey. You don't know him."

"The other never married?"

"No; utterly refused a pretty wife and four thousand a year. His father never forgave him, and washed his hands of him, after that."

"You see I have not quite followed in his footsteps," smiled Hoel.

"Yes, you have, only in another way; here is a man as rich as Cræsus, who offers you a miserable pittance with his daughter. In these days, a wife is not kept on nothing in London. Besides——"

"Elva is not extravagant."

"I shall write to Mr. Kestell."

Hoel was irritated, but kept his temper.

"Then, pray write as my guardian, sir, not as my uncle."

Melliah looked up at his nephew, he half put out his hand, and the words, "As your father," were on the tip of his lips; but a bit of mechanism, long uncoiled, refuses to work at a moment's notice, and the words were not said.

"Very well. Now, my dear Hoel, I am tired; shall I see you in the morning?"

"I am afraid not. I must take the first train. Thank you, sir, for the interest you take in my affairs; but, indeed, I am anxious to spare you all trouble."

"Yes, yes, Hoel, I believe you; but—— Well, remember I shall certainly write to Mr. Kestell."

When the door shut behind Hoel, Melliah Fenner wheeled himself to his writing-table and took out his will from a private drawer. It was all made out in very legal language, and it left everything he possessed to his nephew, Hoel Fenner; but at present it was waste paper, for it was not signed.

"I shall send for Hunter to-morrow," he said, half aloud, "and I shall sign this; I intended it all along; but there was no hurry about the matter, no hurry whatever. I wish I had told Hoel to-night; but the boy is provokingly independent. I shouldn't like him to be cringing; but really——ah well, I'll send for Hunter to-morrow, and write to Hoel in the evening."

Melliah Fenner put away his unsigned will and rang the bell for his servant. His bedroom was on the ground-floor, Hoel's was upstairs; if this had not been the case, the invalid would have gone in and told Hoel at once; but the extra trouble of sending again for his nephew prevented him. "There's time enough to-morrow," he thought. "I'll tear up that old will, when I sign this one," he thought. "Of course I have no intention of leaving my money to Arthur Fenner, who is already rich; I thought of that when Hoel's father was so aggravatingly foolish, but I never meant it after I adopted Hoel. He has never given me any trouble, never."

The next morning Hoel was called an hour earlier than he had ordered.

"Master Hoel," said the old man-servant, looking pale and horrified as Hoel opened his eyes, "master is ill—we have sent for the doctor; but——"

Hoel started up.

"Well?"

"Oh, sir, the master's dead. It is his heart."

Before evening, Hoel knew that his uncle had not signed his will, and that he had not left him a penny.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AT THE "GREYSTONE HOTEL."

IT was a new outlook for him, and Hoel was not quite prepared to face it. He had lived on a high level of expecting nothing from his uncle, and had acted on these honourable and independent ideas; but in the background of his mind Hoel had fully expected that Mellish Fenner would leave him his fortune when he died. Hoel had judged rightly, and knew he had when the new will was discovered unsigned.

He recognised now that he would have to live upon his own income in the future without the delightful salve of showing his uncle that he could do without him, and, as we have said, the idea was not pleasant. True, he was on the eve of marrying a rich wife, but this was the very feeling which had previously galled him, and which had only been softened by the moral certainty of his uncle's intentions. One moment, and all this had ended.

Hoel behaved with conventional propriety; he determined to betray no sign of resentment or surprise. The family lawyer, Mr. Hunter, came and promised to undertake all the necessary business. Without a word Hoel handed him the unsigned will, which he had discovered in his uncle's drawer.

"He meant this one," said the lawyer, much annoyed, "he really did, Mr. Fenner. It was only last week that he told me he should want me about his new will."

Hoel smiled. What a lie can be hidden in a smile!

"Only he put it off. But you know, Mr. Hunter, I never expected anything from my uncle."

"You have always been exemplary," said the lawyer, distressed beyond measure. "But your cousin will certainly not accept the—mistake."

"Why not? It was a chance. Pray think nothing of it. I should certainly not accept a gift from a distant relation. Thank you for your trouble, Mr. Hunter, I am quite unable at this moment to leave town, so you will kindly do all that is necessary. I shall come to the funeral."

Mr. Hunter was not taken in; his only consolation was that Hoel had a good prospect of being a rich man in spite of

his uncle's mistake. Still, it was the look of the thing which made the lawyer angry. It was just like Mr. Fenner to put off doing what was right because of some stupid reasoning. What would the world say?

In the meanwhile, Hoel returned to London, and wrote to Elva, saying that his uncle's sudden death need not postpone their wedding. It would only be necessary to have a very quiet affair; and that they would both prefer. He said nothing about money.

"That will be known on the day of the funeral," thought Hoel, "and by that time I shall have become quite reconciled to the inevitable, and ready to smile at what the world thinks."

There are some events which make a deep dent in the character, even when that character is formed. Hoel felt that this was now the case with him. He was pulled up short, and was forced to look back at his own conduct. He had so much prided himself on his dealings with Mellish Fenner; they had been so irreproachable, and yet—was this result altogether his uncle's fault? If he had conducted himself less as an equal with the old man, and had given him more patient affection, even with the same result, the position would not be so irritating as it now was.

Very dimly Hoel began to realise that his own life had been all along a beautiful sham, an idol set up for his own worship, a galvanised lay-figure. He put away the idea from his mind again and again, and yet back it came, as if worked by a self-acting spring. He was, he always had been, a sham, and there was every probability that he would be one to the end of his life.

For how could a man of his age alter? No, the idea was ridiculous. Better brave it all out on the old system, better be the gentlemanly, the clever, the agreeable, the irreproachable Hoel Fenner to the end of the chapter, than begin again at the beginning.

Worse thought, was it this sham that Elva was setting up also to worship? Was he trying to persuade her that his hollow perfection was a satisfying ideal for a woman whose charm was intense reality? Why not, if she were satisfied, why trouble her ideal?

Hoel spent a bad hour over all these gloomy ideas, and at the end of it he threw away a cigar which seemed tainted with sham, and recollected that three days

had gone by, and that Jesse Vicary's week was passing away.

Action is the only relief to some dismal thoughts, and Hoel determined to run down to Greystone the next morning. To make this possible he had a few matters to see after; and hoping the effort would be once for all, he thrust away his gloomy subject of meditation, and returned to the ordinary habitation of the natural man—Hoel.

His programme was simple, and he believed would be quite efficacious. Most likely Elva would not be at home, so there would be little likelihood of meeting her. He would keep his visit a secret, or invent an excuse if he were found out, about some arrangements as to farms or other business, which convenient word, as we know, covers a multitude of extraneous matter when used by a man to a woman. The thought of Jesse Vicary seemed to be especially acceptable to Hoel just now. It represented a simple figure, and no complex sham about it, and yet a man who could err, as he certainly was doing, in this matter of Mr. Kestell. The whole business was foolish, and the sooner it was set straight the better. To a man whose ideal of self has just been slightly shaken, it is a great panacea to pose as a reformer or a mediator. That is a character which every one admires, and which no one need mind claiming. It fills the abased soul with new oil of gladness, and helps to restore the fallen idol.

The "Greystone Hotel" was dull and respectable; and Hoel, smiling at the strange circumstance which made him put up here, instead of being a guest at the luxurious house of Mr. Kestell, deposited his modest portmanteau, ordered a late dinner, and then started out for his delicious walk across the heather-lands. Though colder than it had been, the sun was shining brightly. All Nature was rejoicing in her own beauty, so that Hoel was carried back to the day when he had first seen Elva on her native heath.

There was a haze over the forest land when, at last, he reached the solitary cottage at the foot of the Beacon. Before entering, he paused and looked around. The shadow and the sunlight were alike softened by the thin veil of mist. A distant song of a bird was heard, then the sighing of the wind among the trees near at hand, waving the yellow, large-fronded bracken at their base.

Below him he could discern the clear Pool, partly blue and partly shadowed; turning his head a little, he could see the bank where Elva had sat unconscious of his admiring gaze. He looked towards the trees of Rushbrook, and wondered whether he should not be forced to run down and see Elva just for a minute. On the other hand, she might not be there, and he might only find Mr. Kestell or Amice. That would be too disappointing. Ah, by the way, he must write to Amice about John Pellow. In the shock of that sudden death he had forgotten her anxiety to know about John Pellow.

Hoel pulled himself together and dismissed these attractive thoughts. He had come to do a service to Vicary. He must make haste and get it over, so as to return to town early next morning.

So, walking up to the cottage door, he knocked at the door, and entered, just as Jesse himself had done some weeks before.

The knock was answered by the old woman's "Come in." She was quite alone. Her daughter and the children were all out, and she was knitting contentedly. Hoel had prepared his introduction, and was ready with it.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Joyca. Don't disturb yourself. I am Mr. Fenner, a friend of Jesse Vicary; and he told me you were glad to hear about your grandchild from any one who knew him."

"Thank you, sir. Come in and take a chair. I'm that crippled with rheumatism that I can't move much. Well, yes; we be glad to hear of 'Liza. She's a good girl, is 'Liza, and Mr. Vicary is mighty kind to our girl. There's not many young men like he, sir."

After this it was not difficult to launch into the subject of Jesse, and gradually to lead it round to the time when old Mrs. Joyca was wondering about the pretty young woman who was lodging in the cottage below, with her mother.

"You never saw the father?" asked Hoel.

"No, sir; and to tell you the truth, sir, I think the poor young thing never had a lawful husband. When a wife is a wife, why there's nothing as will stop her talking about her husband; but both mother and daughter were mighty close on that subject. He was abroad, and always coming back; but never did he come. And when it was convenient, then the mother said he was dead. I mind the day the twins were born, sir, and how old Mrs. Vicary took on so till Mr. Kestell come up to her."

"Poor things! The mother was pretty, you say?"

"Pretty! Lor, sir, she was a pretty gal. Mr. Vicary don't favour her at all; no more does the sister; though when I see her I can fancy I'm looking at a bad likeness of the mother. She was too pretty, sir, for a poor girl. It's the ruin of them often, when their looks is merely useful for show. I'm not the one to throw stones; but I'm sure that poor thing was never a wife, as the church made, albeit her mother stunk by her so, as a mother should do, seeing if she had brought up her girl better these misfortunes wouldn't happen."

Hoel could get no more information except as to the name of the village, the other side of the high table-land of forest which bounded the horizon.

"They came from Crowcutt, so I understood; but, as I said, they were very close—both mother and daughter."

Hoel turned the conversation, so as to avert all suspicion from Mrs. Joyce's mind, and after some more ordinary talk he took his leave.

Crowcutt was a good walk, but he had time, and he would enjoy the tramp across the moorland. The only difficulty was, that he must pass close by Rushbrook, and take the path by the Home Farm; however, he hoped fortune would favour him, and that he would meet no one.

Jesse's story now and then came uppermost in his mind; it seemed to open out one more the problems of life which Hoel had been accustomed to accept as inevitable. His well-regulated mind—for thus he styled it to himself—had made no illusions on the subject, he had neither soared to the height of believing in moral perfection on earth, nor had he sunk to a platform where such subjects are treated as merely questions of self-interest; no, Hoel had kept to that happy mean which may perhaps be more fatal to the improvement of a character than the lowest depth. Some catastrophe may startle the reprobate into improvement; but what can rouse the self-satisfied?

At present, Hoel had nothing of the spirit which once made a man exclaim: "I should die with hunger were I at peace with the world." In this sense, Hoel was never hungry, and, till now, he had had a cordial understanding with the world! He had thought out problems as often as do most clever men, and on every question he had brought his learning, his acute percep-

tion, his more than ordinary acumen to bear; but one thing Hoel had never given to abstract question, nay, had never given to any one or anything—his soul. Philosophers will laugh at this visionary word, men of science will ask us where the soul resides; but every one who has the power of giving that which we call his soul to a subject, will understand, without any definition, what that state is which makes some men take hold of a subject—not as one takes up a piece of delicate china—but with all the loving force and energy that one holds what is one's most precious possession.

Now, at last, Hoel reached one of the great landmark-clumps before mentioned. It was not the same which he had climbed with Elva, but at some distance from that; from here he could look down on Crowcutt, which might be about two miles off. Here was the object of his journey, and, at present, there seemed quite a comforting end; he was doing something for somebody besides himself, something for the one man who had first roused him to a belief in an invisible power apart from character. In trying to find out all he could about his parentage, he would help to calm down this man's misguided anger, he would perhaps get new ideas about social subjects, such as the far-stretching obligations of responsibility; he might even get some clue about the father who had cared so little for Jesse, a son who had now begun to wage war against his own name and origin. He might—but with a strange smile at himself and his new mission, Hoel Fenner pulled himself together and said aloud:

"Dreaming is certainly not my object for coming here. I want bare facts, not fiction; by to-morrow I shall be able to satisfy Jesse Vicary that life must be accepted in the shape which the gods give us. It must be the sign of a weak nature to fret over the inevitable; but Vicary will soon see reason, even the soundest oak will warp before it is properly seasoned, and the noble fellow has to learn this."

Then Hoel walked rapidly down to Crowcutt.

TRAVELS WITH VIATOR.

It is a wild, tempestuous day, and, as the wind beats down over the house-tops, with driving showers of sleet and rain, one

thinks of the ships, big and little, which are now battling with the elements, the green seas roaring high above them, while every plank, and bolt, and shroud is strained to the utmost, and wails, and groans, and rattles as the mad waves rush by. Yes, there is wild work in the Atlantic, no doubt; and, as the bruised and battered leviathans of the deep come struggling into port, there will be—or ought to be, anyhow—thankful hearts among those who have escaped the perils of the sea. There will be brave rescues, too, and heroisms done under the leaden canopy of driving clouds, with a bottomless gulf beneath yawning for its human prey. We get the clouds, which come sailing over London town in their endless battalions, with something of the angry glow upon them which they have gathered from the wild waves.

But whatever may be the state of the weather outside, there is calm within the charmed circle of the Museum library. Sometimes a heavy shower of sleet may rattle hollowly upon the glazed dome above, or a darker cloud than usual may spread a gloom of blackness over the scene. Tired eyes are strained to the utmost, and then, perhaps, if the darkness lasts, the electric arc lamps are turned on, and the glowing beam of light springs into existence, singing as it comes and showing all kinds of coloured rays, and enjoying a vigorous dance ere it settles down to its every-day work of lighting up dull folios, to say nothing of quartos, octavos, and duodecimos, and bringing out the crow-feet and wrinkles, the badger-like fur of some bowed heads; the unredeemed baldness of others. Even youth looks a little sallow: too much museum, like an overplus of dull care, is calculated to turn a young man grey. But even the youngest of them look a little blanched and wearied under the fierce light that shines upon the radiating lines of readers; upon the central circle, where the attendants enjoy a nodding acquaintance, for it does not come to speaking, with the literature of all languages and of all ages; upon the concentric circles where the catalogues repose, if that can be called repose which is disturbed continually by the researches of anxious students.

The storm-cloud passes over and the tempest murmurs indefinitely in the distance; daylight floods in once more, and faces soften and brighten under its influence. Something like sunshine breaks over the scene, burnishing the gilded bind-

ings of the books that line the dome, and filling the whole area with soft, mysterious radiance. And the confused murmur of the busy hive goes on; the rustling of leaves, the leaves of the tree of knowledge; the resonance of footsteps; the smothered coughs; the whispered murmurs; the soft slamming of distant doors. One breathes the learned dust of centuries—an atmosphere somewhat dry and exhausted, and wanting in the ozone which is so freely scattered outside by the wild westerly gales. How dry and musty seems the list of references; how profitless the search for something new and fresh in this vast storehouse, the contents of which have been so carefully harvested, garnered, winnowed and made use of by one generation after another. There is only one name among the list that slightly stirs the imagination with the hope of something in the way of the unknown—"Viator, what of him."

Like "Anon," that voluminous and painstaking, if discursive, writer, Viator, has a long, literary record. He contributed to the "Spectator," no doubt, in the golden days of Steele and Addison. He was a valued correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" when it issued from the old office over by St. John's Gate, and when Cave was its proprietor, and Samuel Johnson did the hack-work for its pages. It would be the task of half a lifetime, and not a very profitable one at that, to trace Viator through all the voluminous periodical literature which has since appeared under his name. But when it is an affair of his individual works, the Museum catalogue gives us a tolerably complete list of them. The name seems to promise all kinds of pilgrimages up and down the world; and if Viator's performances are a little disappointing, still they give us a hasty glance at many widely-separated times and places.

First of all, we have Viator's "Thoughts of a Traveller upon the American Dispute—1774," which was when the "colonists" had just tossed the India Company's tea-chests into Boston Harbour. But Viator's opinions are now a little out of date. His next venture with the publishers is in the way of a poem, which bears the title of the "Bronze Dove," and suggests hopes of something to interest the fancy on the subject of bronze-wing pigeons. But it proves to be nothing but a foolish legend, of which nobody could make head or tail. Nor is Viator's next essay as a

poet more satisfactory, although on hot-pressed paper, with a dedication to Lady Blessington, then—1843—in the fulness of her brilliance as the proprietress of "Gore House." And the summit of disenchantment is reached in Viator's "Poem on the Public Worship Act, 1874." And when two years later we discover our friend tuning his lays at Lahore, and singing of pig-sticking, and princely visits, although the strain is more lively, it fails to rouse enthusiasm.

In fact, the fear suggests itself that Viator is but a delusion and snare, and that the little heap of volumes collected from remote presses, and of all shapes and sizes, is of no more value than a heap of withered leaves. Yet a yellow-leaved journal, with pages uncut, gives one a pleasant glimpse of a trip "From Bhimbur to the Vale of Cashmere."

And then we come across a French Viator, who tells us in a didactic manner of his travels all over Europe. But we have only time for a peep at Angleterre, and find our Viator at Calais hesitating to cross, "the night dark, the wind violent, the sea very strong." But he gets over somehow, and so to Dean Street, Soho square Leicester, where he feels quite at home with his compatriots; and visits Hampton, where three things impress him: the pictures, the Maze—perhaps not so scrubby then as now—and the enormous vine. Also he visits Kew, and Richmond, and St. Gilles—that unhappy St. Gilles—where he is duly impressed with scenes of squalor and indigence.

Then we have a home-staying Viator, who travels with us round the London streets, and discourses learnedly and pleasantly on the pavements. The fine old granite cubes, a bequest from Roman road-makers which was lasting and safe, but ear-splitting with its hideous din. Poor old MacAdam, unable to bear the racket of London life, slippery asphalt, and only a degree less slippery wood, of which we learn the first sample was laid down in the Old Bailey, in 1839, in the form of huge blocks which soon got out of level.

And then we meet with a really pleasant, chatty Viator, who runs us off the stones of London, its wood and its asphalt, and starts us from Charing Cross on a flight to the sunny south. Dripping and buffeted, the swift steamer runs alongside the Calais quay. The train is waiting for us, perhaps the club-train, with its buffets and its

sleeping-cars, its brilliantly-lighted saloons, and the crowd of passengers muffled and furred, who hurry across through the howling wind, from the boat to the train de luxe. Have we through tickets for the Riviera? There is our carriage; and eating, sleeping, or chatting, we may pass the time, as we whirl through wintry lands on the track of sunshine and blue skies.

A pleasant companion, too, is our most recent acquaintance on this winter flight. Even Calais interests him—jolly old place once. Dessin's Hotel—ah, Diligence or the Royal Post—whips crackling, bells jingling. But now it is the train de luxe; and so, with gossip by the way, Paris is soon reached; and while the train split up and shunted here and there, is finding its way across wintry Paris, shivering over its stoves, and apprehensive of la grippe, Viator entertains us with reminiscences of Paris in 1833. What noble gaming-houses then, with grand staircases and obsequious lackeys, and the roulette-table always spinning, and rouge et noir continually called by the vigilant croupiers! But no 'buses, no trams—nothing but the "coucou," a hideous four-wheeled vehicle, that shook up its passengers into a heap, while the coachman scrambled about on the roof above.

Our Viator knows his France by heart, and suggests pleasant excursions for the coming summer. Try noble old Rennes, with the lovely scenery on the Vilaine. Or what say you to Languedoc, with Le Puy and noble hill scenery? Or there is Nantes, and voyages up the Loire; and a nice old place is Pornic, where the hours pass pleasantly enough! Or run south to Carcassonne, a model unique of an ancient fortified city, with a modern town near at hand, but quite apart.

But as for the warmth and sunshine you are seeking, you may find it anywhere on the Mediterranean Coast. Hyères, perhaps, may suit you, with its tall palm groves, where the orange and the olive are giving place to the universal market-garden, where fruit and vegetables are raised of the earliest for Covent Garden and the Paris Halles. And some people may like Cannes. As a Frenchwoman observed the other day to an English visitor, by way of making conversation:

"There are many English at Cannes!"

"Oh yes," replied the other, innocently; "but there are French also!"

And what a place it is, too, for flowers, orange-trees, roses, and all the rest, grown

by the sore for the scent-distillers. And the wild-flowers in spring that carpet the fields and woods. But these are assiduously rooted up by the English young lady; and where she is in force, the country soon becomes bare.

Or, perhaps, if you have the tastes of a flaneur, you may prefer Nice, a mixture of Paris Boulevards, New York Broadway, and London Regent Street, with the palm and pepper-trees to remind you of your latitudes. But thank you for Nice! says Viator, and the Promenade des Anglais. You may have it all for me. Give me rather Monaco—one square, one palace, one street; or Mentone, called by some a stuffy, little hole, but by other tastes deemed delightful. And there is that splendid Corniche, the crest and crown of loveliness, a rapturous region even from the inside of a stuffy railway carriage. But take my advice, says Viator, blandly, and try them all.

Yes, gladly would we try them all; but a blast of wind and rain reminds us that we are in Bloomsbury, and not in the sunny south, and that what we have to try for is a seat in the omnibus at the corner of the Tottenham Court Road.

EARLY TELEGRAPHY.

WHETHER or not all perceive the germ of the idea of the Electric Telegraph in Puck's girdle round the earth in forty minutes, the idea is a great deal older than most people suppose. And not only the idea, but also the effort to carry it out.

Sir Kenelm Digby, the alchemist and philosopher of the seventeenth century, believed that warts and corns could be removed by baths of "moonshine;" but he also believed in a "sympathetic powder," which was something very like stored electricity.

Butler satirised the philosophy of his day in such lines as:

Cure warts and corns with application
Of medicines to the imagination;
Fright agues into dogs, and scare
With rhymes the toothache and catarrh;
And fire a mine in China here
With sympathetic gunpowder.

But had he lived until now, the alchemical knight might have had the laugh against the poet. Is it not now within the range of possibility to fire a mine at Pekin by the touch of a button in Peru?

Another philosopher of the seventeenth century was Glanvil, who also believed in

sympathetic powder' and many other scientific absurdities, as we now consider them. But more than two hundred years ago he addressed these memorable words to the Royal Society of his day:

"I doubt not but that posterity will find many things which now are but rumours verified into practical realities. It may be, some ages hence, a voyage to the Southern unknown tracts, yea possibly to the moon, will not be more strange than one to America. To those that come after us, it may be as ordinary to buy a pair of wings to fly into the remotest regions, as now a pair of boots to ride a journey. And to confer, at the distance of the Indies, by sympathetic conveyances, may be as usual to future times as to us in literary correspondence."

We have not got the wings yet—although Professor Baldwin has been trying hard to show us how to fly downwards—but we confer daily and hourly with the Indies, and even with the Antipodes, by sympathetic conveyances.

No doubt Glanvil's contemporaries laughed, with Butler, at such an impossible notion; but, as the shrewd old philosopher went on to say:

"Antiquity would not have believed the almost incredible force of our cannons, and would as coldly have entertained the wonders of the telescope. In these we all condemn antique incredulity. And it is likely posterity will have as much cause to pity ours. But those who are acquainted with the diligent and ingenious endeavours of true philosophers will despair of nothing."

Bravo, old Glanvil! We can forgive his witchcraft in face of such true philosophy and such keen perception.

There was, even in quite recent years, a popular belief that the idea of the electric telegraph originated with Bishop Watson, chiefly noted for a book written in reply to Paine's "Age of Reason;" but who, although a prelate, without any knowledge of the science, was appointed professor of chemistry at Cambridge, towards the close of the last century. Bishop Watson confesses that, when he accepted the chair he did not even know the chemical symbols, had never seen a chemical experiment, and had never read a chemical book. Yet, after some few months' study, he began his lectures, and, in course of time, published several works on chemistry.

This was a curious example of a round man adapting himself to a square hole, and

not a little edifying as illustrating how the physical sciences were regarded a hundred years ago in the curriculum of an English gentleman's education. But let us do justice to the Bishop-Professor—he not only did not conceive the idea of the electric telegraph, he never even mentions the word electricity in all his books.

On the other hand there was a London chemist of the same name who was labouring away at electrical experiments about the time that Bishop Watson was thinking more about Tom Paine than about natural science. This chemist, William Watson, actually succeeded in transmitting an electric current from a Leyden-jar along wires suspended along the ground on sticks, and even under the water. Here, then, was the practical germ of the telegraph; only Watson, like many other discoverers, knew not the power of the creature he had evolved. Indeed, his own written words declare his belief that the properties of electricity which he had demonstrated could not then be rendered conducive to the service of mankind.

Of course, some system of communication of intelligence to a distance by signal has been in vogue from the earliest ages. Five hundred years before Christ, the Greeks used torches to transmit messages from army to army by night, just as our own forefathers used beacon-fires to spread the alarm of war from hill-top to hill-top. The Greeks elaborated their methods of communication, but they were always dependent on fire. The heliograph, which has been of such service in the Egyptian campaigns of late years, is merely an elaboration and improvement of the Greek method adapted to sunlight.

All this is telegraphy—writing afar off—but it is not electric telegraphy, the feasibility of which Sir William Watson is believed to have first demonstrated. But long before him, as far back as 1663, the Marquis of Worcester had a plan for signalling by signs; and in 1684 a systematic telegraph was suggested by Dr. Hooke. Almost simultaneously the Frenchman, Amontons, was working out the same idea.

The electric telegraph was really the child of the eighteenth century; for while Watson was learning how to transmit an electric current through wires to a distance, the Duke of York—afterwards James the Second—was devising a set of flag-signals

for the navy, which the famous Admiral Kempenfeldt afterwards systematised, and a telegraphic dictionary was being compiled by Sir Home Popham.

It was just about the same time that a clever French boy was contriving a means of communicating with his brothers some few miles off. The boy was Claude Chappe, and when he became a man he laid down the first systematic line of telegraphs ever constructed. It was between Lille and Paris. It cost two thousand pounds to put up, and the first message it transmitted was the announcement of the occupation of Lille by Condé.

The distance from Lille to Paris is one hundred and forty miles, and the time taken for the transmission of a message was two minutes. This was certainly a remarkable feat for the time, but it required twenty-two stations en route, each provided with a signal-apparatus of beam, regulator, wings, and flags, which could be turned and manipulated in various different ways, so as to reproduce nearly two hundred separate signs. Unlike the Greek torch-telegraph, Chappe's telegraph could not be used at night, and it was useless in hazy weather.

Whether Lord Murray got the idea from Chappe or not, we cannot say, but in the last decade of the last century, he set up in England a telegraph consisting of two rows of three flags each, revolving on their axis, which gave some sixty or seventy different signs.

These optical telegraphs were in considerable use in both England and France at the beginning of the present century. There were two in connection with the Admiralty, before the semaphore was introduced in 1816. The flag system of communication between vessels of the navy was also so elaborated, that no fewer than four hundred sentences could be passed from ship to ship by code.

The discoveries of the German, Sömmering, and the Frenchman, Schilling, between 1808 and 1820, sounded the doom of the optical telegraph. But it was not until 1833 that the first attempt to set up an electric telegraph was made by Weber, and not until 1837 that Wheatstone and Morse utilised the magnetic needle. The first long line of electric telegraph in Europe was put up between Trèves and Berlin in 1853; the first in America between Washington and Baltimore in 1844; and the first submarine cable at Portsmouth in 1846. Not until 1850 were

France and England united by telegraph, although for more than fifty years they had been competing with each other in the invention of instruments of telegraphy.

It was just about this time, 1850, that an ingenious Frenchman propounded the idea of dispensing with communicating wires altogether, and of transmitting messages to any distance by the utilisation of animal magnetism. This was one Jacques Toussaint Benoit, who, in conjunction with a mythical French-American, named Biat-Chrétien, submitted to the wonder lovers of Paris a scheme for telegraphing by means of—snails.

As described in the French newspapers of 1850, this "discovery" was a reputed evolution of galvanism, terrestrial and animal magnetism, and of natural sympathy. The base of communication was said to be a sort of special sympathetic fluid—strongly suggestive of Sir Kenelm Digby's sympathetic powder—which was composed of the blending of the galvanic, magnetic, and sympathetic currents by a certain process.

Why snails were selected as the developers of the required animal sympathetic current, was thus explained. M. Benoit declared that by experiment he had found that snails, which have been once put in contact, are always in sympathetic communication. When separated, he affirmed, they discharge a species of fluid, of which the earth is the conductor, which unrolls like the thread of the spider or silkworm, and which can be uncoiled and prolonged almost indefinitely into space without breaking. But this thread of "escargotic fluid," he said, is invisible, and the pulsation along it is as rapid as the electric fluid.

With such a marvellous fluid it was not necessary to have connecting wires. All that was required was that a wire, at each end of the sympathetic telegraph, should be carried into the earth, and the earth would complete the circuit. All that now remained, therefore, was to construct the apparatus for developing and transmitting the magnetic fluid. This was described in the Paris paper, "La Presse," of the twenty-seventh of October, 1850; and we use a translation made by Mr. Baring-Gould, who has preserved the curiosity from oblivion:

"The apparatus consists of a square box, in which is a Voltaic pile, of which the metallic plates, instead of being superposed, as in the pile of Volta, are disposed

in order, attached in holes formed in a wheel, or circular disc, that revolves about a steel axis. To these metallic plates, used by Volta, MM. Benoit and Biat have substituted others, in the shape of cups or circular basins, composed of zinc lined with cloth steeped in a solution of sulphate of copper, maintained in place by a blade of copper riveted to the cup. At the bottom of each of these bowls is fixed, by aid of a composition, a living snail, whose sympathetic influence may unite and be woven with the galvanic current, when the wheel of the pile is set in motion, and, with it, the snails that are adhering to it."

Alas! poor snails; but they required brethren in misfortune to complete the circuit. Each galvanic basin, we are told, rests on a delicate spring, so that it may respond to every "escargotic commotion." Such an apparatus obviously required a corresponding apparatus at the point to be communicated with, disposed in the same manner, and having within it snails in sympathy with those in the other apparatus. This was necessary so that the "escargotic vibration" should pass from one precise point in one of the piles to another precise point in the other complementary pile.

"When these dispositions have been grasped," goes on the report, "the rest follows as a matter of course. MM. Benoit and Biat have fixed letters to the wheels, corresponding the one with the other; and at each sympathetic touch on one, the other is touched. Consequently it is easy by this means, naturally and instantaneously, to communicate ideas at vast distances by the indication of the letters touched by the snails. The apparatus described is in shape like a mariner's compass, and to distinguish it from that it is termed the psilalinic—sympathetic compass, as descriptive at once of its effects and the means of operation."

On these principles M. Benoit—no one ever saw M. Biat—constructed his apparatus at the expense of an admiring friend. Then he held a select "private view" in his workshop, at which the enthusiastic reporter of "La Presse" was present.

The machine proved to be a large scaffold, formed of beams ten feet long, supporting the Voltaic pile, in which the poor snails were stuck by glue at intervals. Or rather there were two such machines—one at each end of the room, and each containing twenty-four

alphabetic and sympathetic snails. They looked very unhappy, and tried hard to get away from the unsympathetic solution of sulphate of copper which dribbled upon them. But whenever they put out their horns to creep away, a dribble sent them back quickly to their shells. This was doubtless the "escargotic commotion."

It was rather objected by the spectators that the two machines should be in the same room; but M. Benoit explained that while space was limited in his premises, it was of no account to the snails. They would communicate as freely, and almost as rapidly across the globe as across the room. Indeed, he professed to be in daily converse with his friend Biat, in America, and intended telegraphing to him after they had themselves tested the machines.

So the journalist went to one of them to manipulate a message, while M. Benoit went to the other to receive it. The words certainly did seem to be reproduced, with some errors in orthography; but then the inventor was rushing about so much, examining, adjusting, and explaining, that he seemed to be at both machines at the same time. The journalist touched the alphabetical snails at the one end as he spelled the words, and the snails in M. Benoit's machine, after a slight interval, put out their sympathetic horns in response to M. Benoit's sympathetic, but not perfectly grammatical, fingers.

The spectators were puzzled, but not incredulous, and they waited with anxiety to see an interchange of messages with America. Somehow, the snails refused to respond to the adamic-current in the mythical Biat across the ocean, and the scene ended in some confusion.

A further test-séance was promised, and arranged for, when the machines were to be placed in different rooms. The day arrived, but M. Benoit did not. As for M. Biat-Chrétien, he is supposed to have been a sort of scientific Mr. Harris.

Such is the story of the snail telegraph, surely one of the most curious episodes in the history of telegraphy. And there is no doubt that it was for a time firmly believed in by some intelligent men, who had persuaded themselves that the crazy Benoit was an inspired genius. We may laugh at them now, of course; but have we not among ourselves, and in our own time, persons who devoutly believe in the production of spirit-photographs?

VIOLET'S LOVERS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"WELL, I am rejoiced to hear it," exclaimed Nigel Hayward, with a sigh of relief. "Poor, dear George, a wife is the very thing he wants!"

"And such a girl as he describes!" he went on presently, smiling involuntarily. "I wonder, though, what she could see in George; but I suppose engaged couples always view each other through rose-coloured spectacles." This time he sighed again almost regretfully.

He could not help casting a glance round his neat bachelor-like study. There were tall, upright chairs, rows of books against the walls, and a half-written sermon on the desk. He had never felt dissatisfied with it before; but to-night, after reading that letter, something seemed lacking—the touch, perhaps, of a woman's hand.

Nigel Hayward had led a rather lonely life; but his days were so filled up, that he had, indeed, scarcely time to be conscious of the fact.

During the past five years—spent in an East London curacy—and still more, now, in this new living, which brought responsibility of a different nature, he was too busy for such thoughts, only to-night, after reading his friend's letter over again, he was conscious that, perhaps, after all, he had missed something.

George Landon appeared so very happy. True, he himself had been happy too, because his heart was in his work.

The living of Saint Clement's, which had just been presented to him, was indeed, though not valuable in itself, proverbially recognised in the diocese as the stepping-stone to greater things. His beautiful voice qualified him for a minor canonry at the Cathedral; while his friends prophesied he would not stop there.

But Mr. Hayward thought very little of the future.

From the very beginning he shrank instinctively from the cliquy society of the cathedral town. He took life simply and in earnest, and confessed that he did not care for such things; while the marriageable young ladies, and even their mothers, divined in an instant that Mr. Hayward, though very charming and delightful, was different from the other clergy they came across.

And then his eye fell on the concluding

sentence of the letter: "You won't refuse me this one request, old fellow, you will come over to Neale Bay and see Violet. Mother says—and I am sure she is right—you must need a holiday; you were always a favourite with her. I have been telling Violet all about you——"

"Violet!" echoed Nigel, aloud. "What a pretty name!"

Somehow, the name, and its sweet musical ring, rang in his ears all the evening.

Presently he sat down to the unfinished sermon, but could with difficulty resume the broken thread. The strange feeling of discontent came back. He felt as though he had lost his youth, and were growing preternaturally old.

He could not forbear glancing at himself in the looking-glass over the mantel-piece.

It was a close-shaven, delicately-chiselled face, the hair slightly waving and worn rather long, eyes which produced the impression of black, though, in reality, dark-blue, a face which possessed a nameless attraction, and bore unconscious testimony of earnest purpose.

But there were deep lines round the mouth, and the cheeks were pale and rather thin.

"Perhaps they are right, I do need a change," thought Nigel. "It is a long while since I took a holiday. There is no reason why I should not go. I want to see poor George, and—and—I might work better afterwards."

He sat down and began to write the answer at once.

The thought of sea-air and country seemed tempting, in the almost unendurable heat.

The letter found its way on to a very pretty breakfast-table set in a pleasant bay-window.

Around the table were sitting an elderly lady, with a soft, good-tempered face; a young man, a plain reproduction of the mother; and a girl of about twenty. The latter was the first to speak, and the letter was the subject of her remark.

"What nice writing, George; so clear, you can read every word."

"Ah, Violet, I know you will like him. He is a capital fellow."

"A most estimable young man," Mrs. Landon added, in her provokingly even voice, "and quite an orator. No doubt he will preach for Mr. Sayle, and then you will hear him, my dear."

"You both praise him so much," laughed Violet, "that I almost wonder whether I shall dislike him. He must be a paragon, and paragons are not always nice to live with."

It was one of the peculiarities of both mother and son that they were slow to take in a joke. George eyed her rather perplexed. Even though they were engaged, and even when what he had looked forward to and longed for all his life had really come to pass, Violet sometimes puzzled him.

If George often could not understand Violet, she, herself, was still more aware than he was of the fact.

She supposed when they were married it would be different.

They had been engaged so short a time, and had neither of them quite recovered from the first glamour. Every one seemed, Violet thought, almost more pleased than herself, from her guardian and George's mother down to the very servants of the family.

Violet Court had been left an orphan when still a baby. Her father and mother had both fallen victims to fever in a far-off African station, leaving their little daughter to be sent home to England.

Mrs. Landon was a distant connection, so that Violet had spent all her holidays, and practically made her home, at Bramble Grange.

All the time George Landon, though nobody took much notice of it, had been her devoted slave; and now, when rather suddenly he had asked her to marry him, and really become one of the family, it had seemed the most natural thing in the world.

Violet found it very nice to have some one to take care of her, even although "poor George," as she always thought of him, was not quite like other people. He was so slow at catching an idea; so terribly unromantic and matter-of-fact, and—and—every girl has her own little dream of an ideal lover. But then there was scope for her to improve him. Violet, who drew most of her impressions from books, had frequently read that women did improve the most uninteresting of husbands.

And, of course, in a way, he was clever, though it was just that cleverness which does not make a mark in the world. Violet had a great admiration for intellect—but for the trained and cultured intellect of the century. Mere capacity, weakened, as George's, by a long course of desultory

reading, did not commend itself in her eyes.

She was as womanly for her age as he was boyish and undeveloped; she had tact where he was constantly blundering. Besides, Mrs. Landon had grown wonderfully fond of the girl; there was something sweet and natural about her, which won hearts even more than the pretty face.

Mrs. Landon had a touch of sentimentality in her composition. She liked to watch the two wandering together over the sands, while she sat high up under the rocks; it brought back her own youth.

Violet used to sketch sky, sea, boats, and bay—anything that struck her accustomed eye; and George was never tired of watching her. She handled the brushes so deftly that he was lost in admiration; for Violet was one of those people who do everything well.

He never discovered the beauty of Neale Bay, the golden patches in the water, the sunbeams through the mist, the pathetic strength in the faces of the fisherwomen, until Violet's fingers reproduced it on her canvas.

Even then the discovery only dawned upon him gradually, because he had never been accustomed to look out for loveliness. His intercourse with Violet, this new aspect of everyday things, was to George Landon like an awakening.

"You will like Nigel so much," George had been saying for the hundredth time one sunny morning, as Violet sat, surrounded by tall, white lilies. She had been painting, as usual, and the palette and brushes were still in her hand.

George had scarcely uttered the words when Mr. Hayward himself suddenly walked in upon them.

They had not expected him till later in the day; but, however, he had managed to catch an earlier train. Somehow, for the moment, in the excitement of his arrival, Violet was forgotten. She sat among the scattered flowers, awaiting her turn. At last Nigel looked away from the others to her, he was curious, for George's sake, to see what she would be like.

He felt a little sorry—vaguely, of course—for the girl who was going to be George's wife.

For recognising George's good qualities, he was equally conscious of his faults, of a great want of development, an uncultured side of his friend's mind.

He saw a bent, golden head.

"This is Miss Court," said Mrs. Landon.

"Why, Violet dear, I had forgotten you!"

"She is like a flower herself," thought Nigel, as he looked from her to the lilies, and back again at her, and somehow she reminded him of a little, lost, bright-haired sister who had died in his childhood.

Nigel was not a man to be struck by pretty faces, yet every detail of her surroundings remained with him—the sunlight flooding the pleasant room, the mealy, scattered gold of the lilies' cups, every little gesture of George's, the way he sat down, and his short, abrupt sentences were engraven indelibly upon Nigel Hayward's memory.

Usually he was so ready to make allowances, but in that fragrant atmosphere he felt out of tune. His friend jarred upon him perpetually. He could not help wondering whether Violet was conscious, too, of his growing dissatisfaction, whether she was satisfied herself!

It was a most unreasoning thought; Nigel drove it away with an effort, and endeavoured to behave as usual, but his eyes kept wandering away to the further window.

When Nigel took his leave, he had never spoken to her, scarcely looked at her beside that once, yet he carried away a never-to-be-forgotten memory of her face, the deep sheen of her hair, the likeness to his little sister who had worn that self-same smile.

The presence of Nigel Hayward made a new element in his life at Neale Bay. From the time of his coming, Violet was conscious of a vague sense of unrest. The doubt grew upon her whether it were well to accept George's unwavering affection, when she herself had so little to give in return.

She considered the question all ways, and came to the conclusion that other girls loved more when they were engaged. And then—astonishing discovery!—she became certain that in those first early days she had cared more.

Violet was very inexperienced; this engagement seemed only a little while ago to have made life quite plain and simple to her, yet here she was, involved in fresh difficulties. There seemed no way of drawing back. She scarce knew if—had there been—she would have had decision enough to take it.

Once, however, half in fun, with, nevertheless, a grave undercurrent of earnest,

she did say to George that she was not good enough to be his wife; and then they had ended by both laughing over it as a joke.

George's puzzled bewilderment had quite destroyed her gravity. Still, Violet did not feel any nearer being satisfied, and the trouble grew upon her daily—a rather vague, undefined distress, which she hardly could put into words even to herself.

One Sunday evening Nigel preached a sermon for Mr. Sayle, who proved to be an old college friend. As Violet listened, the thought dawned quite suddenly upon her that this man, who was so much in earnest, who did not take life lightly like everybody else, who, besides, was George's friend, could help her.

She understood more than ever now, while his clear utterances, in which there seemed no fault or flaw, fell upon her ears, how it was that that early friendship approached, on George's side, almost to idolatry.

Chance appeared to favour her idea. They came out together into the dusk, stumbling over grassy mounds. Mrs. Landon was tired, anxious to reach home. She took George's arm, while Violet volunteered to wait for Nigel. When he came down the dark church and out into the star-lit night, he found her standing in the little porch alone.

"The others have gone on," she explained. "Aunt May was rather done up. We shall soon overtake them."

Nigel was very silent, and cold to a degree.

"Is he vexed with me?" Violet wondered, "or only thinking still of his sermon?"

They passed, side by side, among the graves and along the cliff.

It was a perfect night—the moonlight lay in broad patches below on the sea, the furze-bushes threw sharp, defined shadows, rarely seen except in clearer foreign atmosphere—and Nigel could not suppress a wild, tumultuous joy at the fact of sharing the beauty of it all with her alone.

At last, Violet began, rather hesitatingly. It had appeared easy enough a minute ago. Still, she must not waste the opportunity, for, already in front she discovered the two other figures.

"Mr. Hayward," she said, "there is something I wanted to ask you. I am troubled with a great difficulty, like you spoke of just now; and perhaps you could advise me. I wonder whether I love George Landon enough to be his wife!"

Nigel gave a low, suppressed exclamation, but did not speak. His face changed visibly in the moonlight.

"I know," Violet went on, gaining courage, "it is perhaps wrong of me—I, who ought to be the happiest girl in the world; I dreamt once—we all dream such dreams you know—of—of—a different sort of man. Life is so very difficult, and I am afraid at times whether I do love him enough."

Again Nigel was silent; his face turned away.

He knew quite well that she did not love George Landon in the best and highest fashion; and yet, alas! what could he do, seeing he was George's friend?

Violet felt sure now he was angry; her face overshadowed.

"I have vexed you," she said, deprecatingly. "You think it very wrong? Of course you are George's friend."

"Yes," he echoed, and his voice had changed as well as his face, and grown strangely tempestuous, "I am George's friend."

Something about him, in gesture rather than word, almost frightened her. She gave a faint shiver, though it was so warm.

Nigel bent forward, drew the thin shawl tighter round her shoulders with a strange, tender severity, and at that little kindness her fear died away.

"You think I ought not to feel any doubt?" she pursued, still uncertainly.

Nigel turned towards her once more. His tone sounded quite natural, and very calm.

"Child, that is a question every woman can only answer for herself. I, as you say, am George's friend. I know all the sterling worth in him; I, least of any one, am able to judge. Yet people's faults are of different sorts, and perhaps his are what we might call surface ones."

He spoke now to counsel and advise, as he might to his own sister; and he went on to tell of little incidents in George's life, touches of real feeling, peeps of the under-current of worth breaking upward.

He talked so calmly, and was so much himself, that Violet began to fancy that the suppressed emotion, the choked passion of his previous utterances, must have been the result of her own fevered imagination.

Still she did say, when he broke off:

"Then you are not angry with me for speaking? I would not like to vex George's friend."

"I could never be angry with you," replied Nigel, in a smothered tone. "Whatever happens, remember that, whatever I appear to be hereafter."

And then he hurried her on abruptly, with unreasoning speed, to overtake the other two.

Violet felt herself somehow unnerved by what had passed. She made some excuse to go to bed, and sat a long time by the window of her room in the moonlight.

Looking at it all ways, how strange, how very strange, he had been that night. Had she unwittingly grieved or hurt him? She could not bear to imagine such a thing. And yet he had said distinctly that he was not angry, that he never would be with her. It was wild, illogical, yet her heart throbbed unnaturally at the idea. The mere possibility of his anger would have made her miserable.

I don't know how it was, but sitting there in the white moonlight that Sunday night, it came upon her with a great rush that, since Nigel joined them at Neale Bay, she herself had changed.

She shivered again, in spite of the hot summer night. She knew that the one man she might have loved with her whole heart was hopelessly and utterly shut off from her; that even supposing he, too, cared, he was bound by the most sacred ties of honour and friendship never to betray the fact.

It was possible—nay, probable that, during her future life as George's wife, she would be frequently thrown into contact with him, would have to listen to the sound of his voice, and never own that it was sweet.

And she was bound—hopelessly, irretrievably bound. There were only a few more weeks to run out, and they would return to town for the wedding.

Violet's was not a very strong nature, she shrank from anything like vigorous effort; she would rather go on, painful and wrong though it was, than resist her guardians, Mrs. Landon, and George.

She wished vaguely that Nigel would go away, that her old self might return, and that she could forget they had ever met.

The very same thought occurred to Nigel himself. Would it not be better for him to go away? Excuses came plentifully enough; his parish alone afforded sufficient plea.

And yet, a vision of her face floated back. Was it, could it be necessary for

him to go if he chose to stay? The pain was all his own, and should be till the end.

She was indifferent enough to him, for, had she been otherwise, would she have thus sought his advice? No, she thought of him only as George's friend.

And he decided to stay another week, at least, so he kept on his rooms, and wrote to make arrangements for his Sunday duty. Another week, and then he would go back to his work and forget this pleasant summer holiday.

Violet seemed a little more reserved, Nigel fancied, with them all. She had developed a fancy for being alone, and often started off to sketch immediately after lunch by herself. George acquiesced in this arrangement, and Mrs. Landon only remonstrated feebly.

It was wonderful how little in the way of results Violet had to show for those long, solitary hours. She used to sit on the rocks with her colour-box spread open, and the paper stretched ready on her lap, gazing at the sea in a dreamy, indifferent sort of way.

Every day, which was in itself so long, was hurrying her nearer the end, and every day made her life more difficult.

Once she thought of writing to her favourite guardian, Colonel Tristram; but his regiment was in India, and it would be three weeks before the letter could reach, and three more before she could hope to receive an answer.

The other guardian, a confirmed old bachelor—who was anxious to rid himself of the responsibility of a young girl—aided and abetted the marriage more than any one else.

Poor Violet always ended by feeling more hopeless and undecided than ever. She drooped and flagged a little—with the heat, Mrs. Landon averred.

"I wish the weather would change," remarked George's mother one night, as they sat round the soft, lamp-lit table in the window. "It is quite unbearable."

The dusk had fallen, and Violet had not yet returned. Her altered looks had been the subject of conversation.

"Do you think she—she is ill?" broke out George Landon, abruptly, turning almost fiercely on his mother. The languid little woman drew herself together.

"My dear boy, don't be so—so energetic. There is nothing serious the matter, only I don't approve of these sketching expeditions."

George heaved a smothered sigh of relief.

By-and-by, as Violet still did not return, Mrs. Landon grew uneasy.

Nigel, who had sauntered in to tea with them, shared her apprehensions. A sort of foreboding fell upon them all.

He and George started off in search of the truant; Nigel choosing the shore, while George walked inland along a road Violet frequently took.

The night was fast growing windy, and great clouds rolled together in the west.

Nigel strode on, reckless of the advancing tide, his feet sinking deep in the sand at every step.

He rounded one point after another until he began to think Violet must have chosen the other road. After all, it was only some vague instinct which had guided him along the shore.

One more point loomed ahead. He determined to reach that, and then, if he caught no sight of her, to turn back.

On he stumbled in the dusk. The headland seemed very far away, much farther than it looked.

He knew the stealthy waves were gaining on him fast. He heard their low sob, but still hastened on regardless.

At last he turned the corner. There was a sheltered, sandy cove, running deep into the land between two arms of cliff, and amongst the rocks stood Violet, apparently unconscious of danger.

Her pretty white dress had been torn, and she was pinning it up.

Nigel sprang to her side.

"Make haste," he cried, "don't stay to gather up your——"

And then he paused abruptly. It was too late, the waves had already closed up the way of escape upon the side he had entered.

He sprang across to the other edge. Alas! it was even now shut in by the creeping tide. Then he went back to where Violet stood, startled, dazed, but still unconscious.

His face was very white, and for the moment he could not speak.

"What is the matter?" she asked, inquiringly. "I know I am late; it seemed such a long way home. Did you come to look for me, Mr. Hayward? We will make haste back."

Involuntarily Nigel took her hand.

"It is too late," he said. "We cannot get back."

"Not get back!" echoed Violet.

Nigel pointed towards the darkening sea.

"The tide has come up. We cannot get round the point."

"Do you mean we shall have to stay here till—till it goes down again?" enquired Violet, with a feeble laugh.

Nigel took hold of her other hand. This was almost more than he could bear—to have to tell her such a cruel thing.

"Dear," he said, and he had not courage to look at her as he spoke, "I fear we shall neither of us ever go back again."

For a moment there was perfect silence, save for the sobbing waves, then a more tempestuous breaker than the rest broke at their feet. Instinctively they both drew back, and it seemed then as if she understood.

"Do you mean we are going to die?" she whispered, in a hushed, awe-struck voice; "you and I here alone?"

They were both holding hands still, and Nigel found courage to look at her at last.

"Yes," he said. "That—that is what I mean."

"But can't we climb up the cliff?" she interrupted, eagerly, struck by the fresh idea. "I am such a good climber, Mr. Hayward."

"No," he returned, glancing at the steep, unkindly surface. "Impossible! No one could scale that height without men and ropes."

After that she did not speak for some time, and he had not the heart to disturb her.

Silently he made her sit down on the rocks beyond the reach of the waves.

"It is terrible," at last she said, with a shudder, as the spray touched their faces.

He drew her back further under the shelter of the cliff. He wrapt his coat over her thin dress with that old, tender severity.

Then he spoke without preface of any sort:

"I love you, Violet! Perhaps you might have grown to love me, too. Ah! dear, the world is wrong for us both."

But Violet lifted her face to his, her voice clear and unflinching.

She played her part in the strange scene with a sense of wild, throbbing pain. She was possessed with a passionate feeling that she must tell him all before it was too late.

"I began to care, too, from—from the

very beginning. There is no harm in saying so now we are going to die."

It was so much easier, now death seemed close, to speak the truth. The black stain of treachery appeared far removed.

Violet had clung to him convulsively at the first cool splash of water round their feet. Her hat had fallen off, her hair swept his cheek.

"Dear," he went on, "do you remember that day—the first day I ever saw you, Violet? You were sitting in the sunshine, with lilies in your hand. Dear, you almost reminded me of a lily yourself, with your bright hair——"

But Violet was sobbing passionately upon his shoulder.

He kissed and soothed her as he would have done a child.

"I cared then," he added, when her sobs grew softer, "even when I knew you belonged to George. It cannot be wrong for us to talk it over now."

Violet still cried softly.

In spite of all her troubles, the world had been a very happy one to her on the whole. In some things she was still almost a child; and death seemed very terrible, even with one she loved.

The night grew darker. There was water now up to their knees. Nigel felt as though they were being drawn downwards by the rising waves.

He spoke to Violet once, and she did not answer. She had fainted, and hung upon him like a leaden weight.

He began to feel as though his knees must soon fail him. He tried to shout, but his voice was hoarse and feeble. What use for the effort; who was there to hear? But then, even then, came a moving speck of light on the dark sea nearer and nearer, as though skirting the coast.

Nigel gathered up his failing strength. He shouted till he could shout no longer, and answering shouts came back to him over the water.

They were saved.

The first person who stretched out his hand from the boat was George Landon.

Violet was apparently unconscious; but she still lay in Nigel's arms, moaning a little faintly when they tried to move her.

"Let her be," said Nigel, beseechingly, to George. "Let us humour her in this."

So they were rowed homeward through the grey, chilly night, Violet lying upon

his breast. George watched them in the stern of the boat. He was naturally slow of thought. He did not grasp things perhaps so quickly as most people; and yet he saw the way Nigel looked down upon the white face.

Somehow it dawned upon him that she did not belong to him as before.

Nigel did not relinquish his burden till she was lying on her own bed. Then he stooped down before them all, and kissed her brow.

So many strange events had been hurried into one night, that no one seemed surprised at the action. But George, standing somewhat apart, saw it, and knew that Violet was his no more.

They told him at last that she was sleeping tranquilly enough, and would take no harm.

So he sat in his rather bare-looking room alone, the grey, morning light streaming in. He was still dazed with that look, that kiss, stupefied as it were by an unexpected shock.

Naturally slow-headed, and not very quick of perception, the fact broke upon him but slowly. But once knowing, he did not hesitate; slow natures are often at critical times most decisive. Right and wrong stand out to them in distinctive colours, there is no such thing as self-deception. George drew towards him pen and paper, and wrote in a steady, unflinching hand two letters—one to Violet, the other to Nigel Hayward. He did it gravely, and with steadfast determination.

It did not seem to him anything like an act of heroism, but rather right and just that he who had always been to him like a god among men should have Violet for his own.

So he wrote to Violet more like some elder brother, that he thought it was better their engagement should end; that he himself had a fancy to go away for a few years and see something of the world; and would she and Nigel take care of his mother?

While to Nigel he said, he was sure he would make Violet a better husband than himself.

That morning, when Mrs. Landon came down, after a few hours' sleep, she found George walking restlessly about the dining-room.

"Mother," he began, in his odd, awkward way, "mother, I am going away. I—I have broken off my engagement with Violet."

Mrs. Landon sank back into a chair with an exclamation of horror.

The events of the past few hours seemed more than she could comprehend. There was poor Violet, not recovered from the effects of her adventure, calmly thrown over by George!

"But Violet—Violet won't like it!" she exclaimed, utterly bewildered.

"Violet will have plenty of people to care for her without me, mother. She will marry Nigel."

Mrs. Landon gave another gasp, and appeared on the verge of hysterics.

George poured out a cup of tea, and brought it over to her.

"Believe me, mother," he added, almost beseechingly, as she drank it, "it is the best thing for both of us. Don't say any more. I was never good enough for Violet."

In relating the events afterwards, Mrs. Landon never could explain the matter clearly.

All she could say was, that suddenly, quite suddenly, almost without saying good-bye, her son made up his mind to go abroad. He talked of Switzerland, and ended in Australia, leaving his friend, Mr. Hayward, to marry Violet.

Mrs. Landon could not but cherish feelings of anger for George, who thus reversed all her favourite plans. She regarded Violet in the light of an injured person, and wondered audibly how she and Nigel arranged things so easily between themselves. Only, she was sure, because both were so good and accommodating.

Even they themselves, in the midst of their new opening world, did not fully understand.

"He never cared for me, really," Violet used to say, with a laugh and a shrug of her pretty shoulders, "poor George! or he would not have given me up so easily."

news of Laurence's marriage reached him in a letter from Laurence himself, full of a long description of his wife's charms and his own happiness.

Paul scarcely knew whether to rejoice or grieve over that letter. His thoughts turned at once to Doris. Would this be a great blow to her, he wondered, or had she, also, like Laurence, forgotten their boy and girl love-story, and would she be willing now to listen to him, Paul, and give him a different answer? He doubted, but he hoped; and, within twenty-four hours of receiving the letter, which had been wrongly addressed and had followed him from place to place, and did not reach him until three months after the wedding, he was on his way back to England to try his fate again. But Doris, though she was unfeignedly glad to see him, and gave him the heartiest of welcomes, would not listen when he urged his suit again.

"I could not do you so great a wrong. How could I be yours, or any man's wife, feeling as I feel!" she said.

And when Paul assured her that time would bring forgetfulness, and that he was willing to wait, she had looked at him with pained, surprised eyes.

"Do you think I would not forget if I could," she said; "but I cannot—I cannot!"

And then she had broken into such wild weeping that Paul almost forgot his own grief and disappointment in the endeavour to soothe her.

Laurence had written to her several times since his marriage, and more than once had sent her a pressing invitation to visit him in the London suburb where he had set up his household gods; but she had always made some excuse. His letters were very jubilant at first, and full of his wife's perfections and his happiness; but by-and-by it seemed to Doris, who knew Laurence so well, and could read between the lines, that a shadow of discontent had crept into the letters, that he mentioned his wife less freely, and spoke more of his work and his professional triumphs than of his home life.

A year after his marriage a little girl was born to him, and he wrote to tell Doris that he intended to name the child after her, and asked her to be its godmother. If it was impossible for her to be present at the christening, Mrs. Redmont would willingly act as proxy. Doris could not refuse that request; and, much to her surprise, when Miss Mordaunt heard of it,

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two years came and passed slowly away. They were long, monotonous years to Doris, only broken by one great event, and that was a visit from Paul Beaumont. He was in Egypt when the

she presented her with a case containing a most beautiful silver spoon and fork, which she told her to send as her present to the child.

Henceforth Laurence's letters were full of the baby! He seemed to be both father and mother to it, Doris thought, for he admitted that Mrs. Ainalie did not like children, and would not trouble herself with it.

"Doris is quite her father's girl," Laurence wrote once. "She is just beginning to crawl about alone; and the little rogue is never so happy as when she is with me in the studio. It is on the same floor as the nursery, and if ever the door is left open she will crawl along the passage and beat with her little hands against my door; and when I open it she will sit on a rug and watch me paint as good as gold!"

There was something infinitely pathetic in these letters to Doris, and in the resolute silence he preserved respecting his wife. Had he repented? Was his marriage a failure, she wondered?

A great longing came over her one day to see his wife and home, and judge for herself. She determined, not without many inward misgivings and much deliberation, to ask her aunt for a holiday and money enough to carry out her plans. It was years since she had been from home, even for a night; and as the garden had been unusually productive, and the poultry equally profitable that year, and as both results were owing to her careful supervision, she felt that she had earned both her holiday and the money it would require.

"I'll ask her this very evening," Doris thought, one October afternoon as she was gathering the last basket of plums from the wall, and packing them carefully for market. "Surely she cannot refuse; and she has been rather more amiable lately. Why, she actually thanked me quite pleasantly this morning when I mended her dress, instead of grumbling and finding fault as usual. There, that is the last of the plums. I'll take them in."

Doris shouldered her basket, and, having left it in the larder, went quickly—for she felt her courage oozing out of her fingers' ends—to the dining-room, where she expected to find her aunt. She had reached the hall, when she remembered that she had left the gate, which led from the yard into the vegetable-garden, open, and, hurriedly retracing her steps, she closed it;

and then, instead of returning to the kitchen, she went round by the garden and entered the house by the hall door.

As she passed the dining-room window she glanced in, and saw her aunt standing by the table, and saw, too, or fancied she saw, that she had a companion—a tall, grey figure, who stood facing Miss Mordaunt, with its back to the window, dressed in grey, and with a long, shadomy grey veil floating round it.

It was such an unusual thing for Miss Mordaunt to have a visitor that Doris forgot her good manners, and stopped before the window and looked in curiously, and then rubbed her eyes and stared, and rubbed her eyes again in blank amazement.

"Surely I was not mistaken! There was some one there," she reflected. But whether there had been, or whether her eyes had been deceived by the uncertain light, it was certain now, as she looked again, that Miss Mordaunt was the only occupant of the room. Doris concluded that she had made a mistake. It was most probable that she had, she told herself, for visitors were almost unknown at the Red House.

She went through the hall into the dining-room. Miss Mordaunt was still standing by the table. Her tall figure was drawn up to its full height; but one hand was clasped firmly on the back of a chair, as if for support, and her face wore such a strange look of mingled defiance, and terror, and awe, that Doris forgot altogether the errand on which she had come and the request which she was about to make, and stared at her in surprise.

"What is the matter! Are you not well, Aunt Joan?" she said.

"Quite well."

Miss Mordaunt's voice sounded odd and absent, Doris thought. She did not look at her as she spoke, but gazed straight before her, across the room, where the twilight shadows were rapidly gathering, with bright, absorbed eyes. Doris knew that she disliked to be asked any questions about her health. It had not been so good as usual, lately, and Doris had more than once suggested that she should see a doctor, and had been promptly snubbed for her pains. So now, though she felt a little disturbed by her aunt's odd looks, she did not make any further remark on them.

She walked across the room to the window where the dingy curtain was

swaying to and fro in the cool breeze. It blew chill and damp into the room, and Doris closed the window and looped back the curtain, while Miss Mordaunt watched her with dreamy, bright eyes, which seemed to see and yet not to notice her action.

"I suppose it was the curtain I saw," Doris thought, and then she went on aloud: "Have you had a visitor, Aunt Joan? I thought I saw some one standing by the table, as I passed the window, dressed in grey, with a long grey veil."

A change came over Miss Mordaunt's impassive face. It grew grey and haggard, and she gave a little shiver.

"What! did you see her too? Then it was not only my fancy," she said, in an absent, awed voice. "Yes, I have had a visitor, child."

"Who was it?"

Doris felt awed and half-frightened. Her colour came and went, and her eyes dilated as she looked eagerly at her aunt.

"Who was it?" she repeated in a low whisper.

Miss Mordaunt looked at her gravely.

"It was Death's messenger, child," she said, solemnly. "The messenger whom he sends to every one of our house to prepare them for his coming! You have heard of the 'Grey Lady,' haven't you, Doris?"

"Yes," Doris gasped, "I have heard of her——"

"I was sitting here at my work, as usual, and I looked up and saw her standing before me, and we looked straight into each other's face, and she smiled and held out her hand to me. 'Have you come for me?' I said; and she nodded and smiled again, and then—she was gone. I might have thought it was only my fancy; but it was no fancy if you saw her too."

"I fancied I did; but I dare say it was only fancy," Doris answered, in a frightened voice, which she vainly tried to keep clear and steady. "Don't think any more about it, Aunt Joan. It was some shadow—shadows take such queer forms in the twilight—or the curtain flapping to and fro," she urged.

Miss Mordaunt shook her head.

"I know better," she said. "It was the 'Grey Lady,' and she came to warn me that my end is near, and that I must set my house in order."

The ghastly greyness had passed from her face, the absent tone from her voice; she was quite herself again now as she opened a drawer in her writing-table, and

taking out a sheet of paper and an envelope, hastily wrote a few lines.

"Has the carrier called for the plums yet, Doris?"

"Not yet, Aunt Joan," Doris, who was watching her with fascinated, frightened eyes, answered faintly.

"Then when he does, give him this letter, and ask him to leave it at once at the address. Wait a minute."

She took her purse from her pocket, and, after a little hesitation, carefully counted out two halfpence, a penny, and four farthings.

"This is for the carrier, Doris; he will expect to be paid for his trouble; nobody does anything in this world for nothing," she said, grimly; and then she snapped the clasp of her purse sharply, and returned it to her pocket. "There, take the letter at once, child, or he will have gone."

Doris obeyed. She felt very bewildered and frightened, and yet was, in a measure, relieved by her aunt's sudden return to her usual manner. Of course, it was all fancy, but yet it was odd that the same fancy should have occurred to them both, Doris thought; and she shuddered, and glanced timidly round her, as she crossed the hall, where the portrait of the "Grey Lady" hung over the fireplace.

The carrier was at the door when she reached the kitchen, and his rosy, good-tempered face, and loud, hearty voice as he chattered with Margot over the plums, came in welcome relief to Doris. There was no gloom or mystery about him, at all events, or about Margot, as she stood with her hands on her hips and talked to him.

Doris went into the kitchen after she had given him the letter, and he had driven away, and stood by the fire absently watching Margot, who was energetically scouring her milk-bowls.

"Margot, did you ever hear of the 'Grey Lady'?" she asked, abruptly, at last.

Margot started, and dropped the tin she was scouring.

"Laws sakes, Miss Doris! How you startled me! Why, of course I have, hundreds of times. Didn't my mother, who was own maid to the missis's mother, see her with her own eyes just three days afore poor Mrs. Mordaunt died? She was in her room, standing by the window, looking out at th' children playing on th' lawn, and my mother was tidying out a drawer of lace at the other end of th' room. She looked up to ask Mrs. Mordaunt some

question, and there, standing by her in the window, she saw a tall figure dressed all in grey, with a long, grey veil. My mother gave a jump and a scream as the figure vanished, and Mrs. Mordaunt turned round. 'Did you see her also, Belle?' she says, and turned deadly pale, and fainted. She was as well as you are now, Miss Doris, and three days after she was dead," Margot added, impressively.

Doris shuddered. She looked fearfully round the rapidly-darkening kitchen.

"Margot," she said, in a low whisper, and she went up to the old woman and put her hand on her arm, "oh, Margot! I saw her not half an hour ago."

Margot started, and her healthy, brown face grew grey and pallid.

"Nonsense, Miss Doris!"

"I did. I was passing the dining-room window and I looked in, and saw her standing by Aunt Joan's side, and as I looked, she disappeared."

"It was only your fancy, honey."

"So I thought, but I found afterwards that Aunt Joan had seen her too!"

It would be difficult to say which of the two faces which gazed at each other looked the most terrified at that moment. There was a little silence, then Margot whispered:

"Did Miss Joan see her face, honey?"

"Yes, and she spoke to her. She asked her if she had come for her, and the 'Grey Lady' nodded and smiled. Aunt Joan told me so. She thinks—oh, Margot, she thinks she is going to die," Doris whispered in her frightened voice.

"That was why she sent for old Pearson th' lawyer, then, I reckon, honey. An' she's right. The 'Grey Lady' never comes for nought. No one knows who she was, or anything about her, except that afore every death i' th' family she comes to warn them. Eh, and they needed warning, most on 'em, for they've been a hard, bad lot," Margot added, emphatically.

"But, Margot, can we do nothing? Shall we send for the doctor?" Doris faltered.

"An' what good would a doctor do, child? Miss Joan ails nought at present, though she's seemed a bit weakly of late weeks; but she ails nought to need a doctor. Even if she would tell him what she saw, which I doubt he would only laugh at her, an' tell her her stomach was out of order, and that it was all fancy! I know what doctors is well enough! Nay, honey, they is no good at all! If her time

is come, it is come, an' we can do nothing to stop it. I have heard o' folks who had been warned that they would die at a certain time, an' their friends put th' clock forward to deceive them into thinkin' the hour was past; but death takes no count o' clocks, an' they died all the same! All th' Mordaunts die sudden. There's somethin' wrong wi' their hearts, the doctor says. It is a family complaint. Hush, honey!" and Margot caught up her tin and polished away vigorously. "Here's th' missis coming."

Miss Mordaunt came into the kitchen as Margot spoke. She looked a little paler than usual; but her manner was unaltered, and the rebuke which she gave to Margot, for her reckless use of the whitening, was quite as sharp as ever. Doris felt somewhat relieved by it, and was almost inclined, next morning—when she awoke to find the sun streaming in at the window, and the robins, which she fed daily on the ledge, singing their sweetest notes, as they flew about waiting impatiently for their breakfast—to laugh at the gloomy terrors which had haunted her most of the night.

"Of course it is all nonsense, all idle superstition," she told herself as she entered the dining-room, where Miss Mordaunt was already seated, eating her breakfast; "and, of course, Aunt Joan thinks so also."

But later on in the day she did not feel quite so confident of this, especially after the lawyer had arrived, and, after being closeted with Miss Mordaunt for more than an hour, had driven away, and Doris, timidly venturing into the dining-room, found her aunt sitting at the table with her head bowed, and her face hidden in her hands.

She had looked up directly as Doris entered, and spoken to her quite in her usual manner, and asked a few questions about the poultry; but the girl felt anxious, and nervous; and once timidly asked if her aunt felt quite well, and if she might be allowed to send for the doctor.

Miss Mordaunt first stared, and then nearly snapped her head off.

"Doctor, indeed! I'll have no doctors here. There's nothing the matter with me!" she said sharply, and Doris said no more.

So two days passed over, and nothing had happened, or seemed likely to happen, and Doris, seeing that Miss Mordaunt seemed in her usual health; that her appetite was as good as ever; that she rose

as early and worked as hard as usual, began to feel reassured again; and her terrors of the "Grey Lady" receded into the background once more.

On the evening of the third day, which fell on a Friday, the choir practice was held. Doris, as organist, was obliged to be present; but she went somewhat unwillingly. All day, a sort of gloom—a kind of anticipation of some coming evil—had seemed to rest over the house. Doris struggled hard against it, but in vain. Old Margot went about her work with a gloomy face and preoccupied air, and started if any one spoke to her, and cast nervous, furtive glances around her.

Miss Mordaunt was the only one who seemed unaffected by the general depression. She was very busy all the morning turning out drawers and cupboards, work which she always did herself, and in which no one was allowed to assist. Doris scarcely saw her until tea-time. Then she fancied that she looked pale, and tired; and she timidly asked if the work was finished, and if she might stay at home from the practice to assist.

"Stay at home? No; I have quite finished," Miss Mordaunt answered absently; and then, much to Doris's amazement and alarm, she left her seat, and, crossing the room, put her hand on the girl's shoulder, and looked down at her earnestly:

"You are a good girl, Doris," she said; "and, if I have been hard on you sometimes, it was all for your own good. You'll remember that by-and-by, won't you?"

And then she had suddenly, as if she was half ashamed of the unusual action, bent and kissed Doris's brow, and left the room abruptly without waiting for an answer.

Doris felt anxious and restless during the practice. She made it shorter than usual; but it seemed an interminable time before it was over, and she free to hurry home. There was no light in the dining-room window. The moon was bright that night; and Doris, glancing up hastily at her aunt's bedroom, saw her sitting by the open window, apparently looking out into the garden. Doris entered the house by the kitchen-door. There was a bright fire burning in the grate, and by it Margot was sitting with her face hidden in her hands, rocking herself to and fro in her chair. She started and looked up, and gave a little scream; and then a relieved exclamation

as Doris crossed the room and stood by her side, and put her hand on her shoulder.

"Eh, Miss Doris, is it you at last? I am glad to see you. I thought you would never come," she cried.

Doris's face paled.

"Why, what is the matter, Margot. Is Aunt Joan——"

She did not finish the sentence. In truth, she scarcely knew what to say, or how to give words to the hidden terror in her heart. She could only look the question. Margot shook her head and sighed.

"I haven't seen her for over an hour, Miss Doris. She is up in her room now; but she fairly frightened me out of my seven senses a while ago. I was in th' hall an' she came out o' th' dining-room with a light in her hand, an' she went first into one room an' then into another all over th' house, an' looked round—oh, so odd like, just as if she was saying a good-bye to 'em all. I watched her, Miss Doris, an' by-an'-by she comes downstairs, an' looks round th' kitchen—she was allers fond o' th' kitchen, you know—wi' wide-open, blank eyes, more as if she was asleep than awake. She did not see me, but I watched her—she was holding the candle up, an' it fell upon her face—an' oh, Miss Doris," and Margot's voice faltered, "there was just th' same look in her eyes as there was in poor old Bruce's—do you remember when th' keeper shot him, an' he crawled in here, an' looked round at us all, an' then trailed himself into his kennel to die?"

"Nonsense, Margot."

But though Doris tried to speak cheerfully, and made an attempt at a little incredulous laugh, she felt her heart beat fearfully.

"Aunt Joan is sitting at her window. I looked up and saw her as I passed just now."

"Is she? Well, I am right glad to hear you say so, honey."

Margot did not look much reassured. She rose and looked at the clock. "It's getting on for supper-time, Miss Doris. Suppose you go and tell her," she suggested.

"She will be angry, I am afraid. She hates being disturbed in her room; but I will go."

Doris left the kitchen, and ran quickly up the broad staircase to her aunt's room, and gave a loud knock at the door.

"Aunt Joan, supper is ready," she said.

No answer. Doris knocked again, and more loudly, with the same result. She tried the door; it was locked. She called again, and again the rustle of the trees, as the wind swept over the house, was the only answer. Margot had crept upstairs behind her, and was standing near, holding a candle in her hand. The light fell on her pale, troubled face, and showed a reflected trouble and a growing terror in Doris's eyes.

"Margot, I can't get her to hear; and the door is locked," she said, in a low whisper.

"Call again, honey. You saw her sitting by the window, you say, maybe she has fallen asleep in her chair."

"Aunt Joan! Aunt Joan! Are you there? Open the door, please," Doris cried; and then, as no answer came, she flung herself with all her strength against the door, and shook it violently.

Doris was strong, and the lock old and crazy; it gave way suddenly, and the door burst open. Doris made a step forward, then paused suddenly. The room was all in darkness, except where, through the uncurtained window, a streak of moonlight fell on the floor, and showed Miss Joan still sitting in her chair, with her face turned towards the window. She sat bolt upright as usual—Miss Joan was never known to lean back in an easy-chair in her life—her hands were clasped tightly on the arms, and there was something rigid, something unnaturally still and statue-like in the attitude which sent a chill through Doris's heart. She stood quite still for a moment; she felt as if she could not cross the room, could not look upon that hidden face, then, ashamed of her cowardice, she went forward and stood by the chair, and looked on her aunt's face.

"Aunt Joan! Aunt Joan!" she faltered, "you will get cold sitting by the open window. And——"

She broke off suddenly. There was no answer, not even a look which showed that Miss Joan heard on the still, pale face,

whose wide-open eyes were still intently gazing out of the window. Margot had often told Doris that Miss Joan was very handsome when a girl, and Doris had felt half inclined to laugh, and doubt the assertion; but now, for the first time, a conviction of its truth flashed across her mind. Yes, she was very handsome; her face looked like a clear-cut marble mask in the moonlight, Doris thought. But why did she not speak? She touched the hand that was clasped tightly round the arm of the chair. It felt icily cold to her warm, young fingers, and sent an added chill of terror into her heart.

"Aunt Joan, Aunt Joan, why won't you speak? Don't you hear me?" she cried, wildly.

The trees waved to and fro in the breeze, the ivy rustled outside the window, somewhere in the house a door banged. Margot's heavy breathing sounded loud and distinct in the silent room, as she came softly to Doris's side, and looked long and earnestly at her mistress's face.

"Nay, Miss Doris; she'll never hear thee nor me, nor anything else now," she said, solemnly. "The dead must rise, an' th' archangel's trump ring in her ears afore she sees or hears anything more, honey. Eh, but I knew th' warnin' didn't come for nought."

Miss Joan had lived a lonely, loveless life for years. She had shut herself out from all human love, ever since the one being whom she had loved had deceived and deserted her, and had declared to herself that for the future she would be sufficient to herself, that she would not trust or care for any human being again. Alone she had lived, and when she felt that death was drawing near, and that her hour was come, she had taken a last farewell of the old house where most of her life had been spent, where she had known so much mingled joy and suffering, and then silently, like the wounded dog, she had crawled to her room, and turned her face to the wall, and died, as she had lived—alone!

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Jean Vallacot,"
"A Faïre Damzell," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XXXII. HOEL KNOWS ALL.

AMICE KESTELL had been waiting patiently for guidance; she had become more silent, more shy and frightened in the presence of her parents; even with Elva she now and then seemed to have lost her old trust. She was like a person who is always listening for the arrival of some one. Had Elva been less busy, and less taken up with her own affairs, she would have been more keenly alive to her sister's strange looks and conduct. As it was, she only made happy plans for the future; Amice should often stay in London with her, and she would be brought forward, and lose her shyness in the pleasure of having her musical talents appreciated.

Just now Amice's spirituality somewhat jarred on Elva; she could not feel much response herself, and the glimpses of a possible life of sacrifice faded away. This was natural, considering Hoel filled up all her heart and her mind.

It so happened that Elva's approaching wedding had much excited her cousins, the Fitzgeralds, and that a pressing invitation to come to town had arrived on the same day that Elva had written to Hoel. Mrs. Kestell was so anxious that her daughter should accept, that Elva reluctantly agreed to go and spend two nights in London, and get through her shopping with her cousins' help, instead of going up with Amice for the day. It was impossible for them both to leave home

together, for Mrs. Kestell could not bear the idea of being without one daughter; and Elva, knowing how busy she should be, and that most likely Hoel would be seeing after his uncle's affairs, determined not to tell him. Besides, the Fitzgeralds were so very foolish, and so fast, that Hoel would not like them; he was so particular about women, and his creed about them included a clause against flirting.

Amice seemed almost glad to be alone, she had to put such a strain upon herself in order to appear at all cheerful, that she looked forward to two days of intense quiet. She determined that she would somehow manage not to be alone with her father, for it was this she so much dreaded.

Almost unconsciously, when she had done her usual cottage-visiting, she turned her steps towards the Home Farm. The silence of the woods was so calming, and here she could think out her plan about Symee. Whenever she passed the spot where she had found Jesse that memorable evening, the whole scene came back painfully to her. Some minds can recall so vividly, that it almost seems to them as if they saw with their worldly eyes the scenes they imagine.

To-day, as Amice passed the spot, she stopped involuntarily, she fancied she saw Jesse sitting there, plunged in despair; she fancied that once more she beheld the dejected figure, the look of misery on the strong features, the . . .

Amice had an inward shudder; she pressed her hand over her eyes. Was the curse coming upon her again, that past scenes forced themselves on her as new realities, for surely in the same spot, in the same attitude, Jesse was there!

Her heart seemed to stop beating, wild fancies rushed through her brain that Jesse

had appeared to her again to claim her help against something—or somebody, that she had waited too long, and that Herbert Heaton had not yet been to London.

She seemed rooted to the spot, not daring to approach nearer to that figure, for fear it should vanish into thin air, and thus confirm her belief that it was a spirit come to reproach her; but Amice was brave. In another moment she resolved to go forward, and just as the quiet evening breeze swept through the tall fir, and shook the dead, crisp branches, she took a step forward and murmured "Mr. Vicary."

The figure started up. It was no ghost; yet it was not Jesse that suddenly turned towards her, but Hoel Fenner!

Amice was not prepared for Hoel's appearance in this spot. But this fact did not startle her. She knew Elva had not told him she was in London, so his presence could not concern her sister; but what did startle her now was the expression of Hoel's face. To her poor, overwrought brain it seemed to be merely a repetition of Jesse Vicary's look, only worse, for Jesse's usual expression was somewhat grave and severe, whilst Hoel's had been always placid and calm. For three or four seconds the two stood there speechless, and almost motionless; only once again Amice passed her hand over her brow, and her large blue eyes looked bewildered.

It was Hoel who first broke the silence; but his voice seemed changed. Could it be the same man who had laughed so happily, and talked so amusingly, only a few weeks ago?

"Miss Kestell, I have frightened you," he said. "Don't look so startled. I was a little surprised at seeing you here, just because I was thinking of you—wanting you."

"Me!" said Amice, leaning against a fir-trunk in order to recover herself, and find strength to be quite natural.

"Yes, you; I wished for you intensely, and you came. We sometimes are frightened when our wishes are realised in this way."

"You want to see Elva," said Amice, taking no notice of his words. "I am sorry she is in London for two days. She is with the Fitzgeralds, our cousins. She will be so disappointed to know you came when she was away. She fancied you were busy with your uncle's affairs."

"I am glad she is away," said Hoel,

still in an altered voice. "Do not tell her I have been; do not mention our meeting. It was you I wanted to see, you alone. It is getting chilly; will you walk towards the farm, or where can we go?"

Amice looked slowly up into Hoel's face with the thought that he must have gone mad; and a cold feeling came at her heart as she said to herself: "Is Elva to suffer, too? Will it reach her, my own noble-hearted sister, who has never had my feelings? No, not her, let me suffer doubly for her."

"I do not understand you, Mr. Fenner," she said, aloud, and with as much dignity as she could muster. "Why do you talk so strangely? What have we got to do with each other? Let me go by. I prefer walking home alone. I should not have disturbed you just now, but I fancied you were some one else."

"Some one else! who, then?"

Amice did not answer. What made Mr. Fenner so strange in his manner?

"I beg your pardon," continued Hoel. "I hardly know what I am saying. Forgive me, I have annoyed you; think no more about it. Do you remember, Miss Amice, that you once asked me a question. Before my uncle died I asked him who was——"

Amice suddenly seemed to wake up, the frigid expression she had put on gave place to a look of intense horror, her face became deadly pale, so that even Hoel, who was more anxious about his own thoughts than hers, noticed it.

She put her hand on his arm as a suppliant might do, and her tone was intensely humble.

"Yes, yes, I know. I asked you who was—John Pellew. Tell me, quickly, and then please leave me. I want to go on to the farm."

"Tell me first why you want to know."

"No, no, I cannot."

"Has he anything to do with you; with your family? Tell me. It is very important to me."

"To you? Then you know?"

Amice's hands sank listlessly by her side, and then she clasped them in order to get some support.

"Know what?" said Hoel, fiercely.

"You know. Yes, I can see it in your face. You know about the curse. Oh, Elva, Elva!"

"What do you mean?" said Hoel, in low, indignant, almost passionate, tones. "Can you speak plainly, openly, and not with this mystery? I know. Yes, yes, I

know; or, I will know. Speak plainly. I insist upon it."

Amice was again frightened. What had she said? Did he, or did he not know that strange mystery that haunted her life? If he did not know, what had she said?

She shook her head.

"Tell me what your uncle said."

"John Pellew was a distant cousin of mine. He was not thought very highly of, and he died young in India."

Hoel said this in a studied, cold manner, and waited, looking intensely at Amice as he did so. On her side, she seemed to take in the simple words with difficulty.

"Is that all?" she said at last.

"What more will you have?"

"I don't know. He died young in India?"

"Yes."

"Did he—did your uncle know if he was poor?"

"The youngest of three is not likely to have been rich; but I will find out the rest."

"No," said Amice, quickly. "No, please, Mr. Fenner, don't find out any more. Leave it alone; leave it to me, for Elva's sake, if you love her."

"Hush; don't mention her, please. You asked me to leave you. Good-bye; I am going. I shall find out the rest; before long I shall know."

He unfolded his arms and picked up his stick, which had fallen on the needle-covered earth.

Amice never uttered another word. She watched Hoel striding away up the path, and, in a terror of uncertainty, she followed slowly behind.

"What does it all mean, and what has papa to do with John Pellew? He died poor; then, surely—but he will find out. He knows, I feel sure; he knows something."

Hoel Fenner walked on as if the Furies were behind him. He had many miles to get over before he could reach Greystone, and his shortest way would have been by the Pools; but taking that path he would have to pass Rushbrook, and this he would not do, so, leaving the wood, he struck across country till he reached the high road leading to the town.

He was late for his dinner, but scarcely minded that, and was not over-pleased when the landlord insisted on talking to him.

"I think, sir, since I've seen your name

on your luggage, you must be the gentleman who was in our railway accident? I hope, sir, you've recovered."

"Yes, quite."

"There's only one poor man that's never got away from here, and they do say his days are numbered. He's at the little public close by. Mr. Kestell of Greystone, sir, has been kindness itself to the man."

"Yes, I remember—Button. I should like to see him. I——" Hoel paused.

"I will go and see him after dinner, and I shall be returning to town to-morrow morning."

Hoel ate his dinner mechanically, he did not even know what he was eating; he never gave a thought to his weariness; there was time enough for that by-and-by.

When he entered the small room where Button lay in bed, he was struck by the look of death on the man's face. Drink had hastened on the end. Had he not been able to get the curse of his life, Joe Button might have pulled through. Strong and hale, he had not resisted his craving; and in his weakness, and with the ample means provided by Mr. Kestell, how was he to deny himself?

At first Button took Hoel for Mr. Kestell, then shaking off his lethargy, he roused himself.

"Ah, sir, so we were in the same accident. It's done for me. And yet I might have been in a better position. If I do get over this cursed illness, I'll go and claim my papers. Mr. Kestell has got them. They're no good to me; but yet I like to show people I might have been as rich as Kestell of Greystone. It's the rich that get all the good things. Yes, sir, we owned Westacre Lands—the place where the mines were found—the mines that have made Mr. Kestell so rich. We ought to have held on longer."

"You sold them to him," said Hoel, indifferently.

"No, sir, not to him, but to another—a young gentleman; it's in the deeds—Mr. John Pellew."

"John Pellew!" gasped Hoel. "What became of him? Speak out, man."

Button looked surprised.

"Did you happen to know him, sir? They say he died, and sold his right to Mr. Kestell. If he had lived he would have took on as much as I've done, I dare say; but, there, he died, and it was Mr. Kestell who had it all. Money goes to money."

"Who said he sold his land to Mr. Kestell?" said Hoel, stooping down toward Button, who was getting thick in his speech.

"Who said it? Who said it? Why—he did, he did—Mr. Kestell. I don't blame him more than others, sir. Mr. Kestell's been liberal, he let me work on there some time; but it was——"

"I remember; the drink, man. You ruined yourself."

"If you didn't mind, sir, just giving me a trifle—lending me, I mean—when Mr. Kestell comes again I'll return it. I haven't a sixpence to bless myself with. It's hard on a man who might have been rich."

"Pshaw, man! A trifle! God forbid I should give you even sixpence. Look here, I am going to Westacre Lands tomorrow, and I shall enquire into your story. Take my advice, give up the drink, and even now you may pull through. Good-night."

CHAPTER XXXIII. MISTAKEN SILENCE.

JESSE VICARY had managed to find a stock of patience—if patience was the word to apply to his state of mind. In a week he would know Mr. Fenner's version of the story; and then, forming his own conclusions, he would act for himself. Jesse was, during this time, in a curious mental condition; a hard crust seemed to be forming over his natural goodness. He walked more firmly, and felt an unusual antagonism to his kind. He could have expressed his state of mind in the words, that his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him. Pride seems but a poor comfort to an aching heart; the salve it gives is like veneer to rotten wood—it cannot make whole, it can only deceive casual glances.

His poor neighbours saw but little of him at this time. He could not feel any pity for them; their lot, miserable as it was, appeared less false than his. They were, most of them, either contented with their surroundings, or else debasing themselves with their eyes open. Why should either of these two classes deserve pity when he, who had striven so hard to rise all his life, was to be crushed by a man who should, at best, offer him protection?

Jesse turned from human beings and opened his books. The dead offered more consolation than the living. Their truth, their falsehood, could be proved; or, if not

proved—well, then doubted without stint. So Jesse spent all his spare hours, and some which had better have been spent in sleep, in poring over old musty volumes. Some of his favourite Latin authors were brought out again; but with them came the remembrance of his old master, so he preferred his mathematics. They took all his brains and left him no more room for thought.

So the week dragged wearily along, and every now and then Jesse tried, very ineffectively, to make out his plan of revenge. Some say revenge is sweet; but the planning is surely harassing work. Will it fail or will it succeed? A plan of revenge that may fail is by no means sweet; and much was against Jesse's grand idea of succeeding.

The world might call him mad, and demand proofs, or even might refuse to believe the proofs he meant to bring. The world is usually inclined to side with the rich and powerful, for it is altogether easier and safer in the long run; and Jesse recognised this, and it made him still more bitter.

It was at this time that he mentally asked the great question "Why?" and would not let the answer reach his heart. It is by no means all questioners who wish to receive answers; they prefer knocking to listening for the permission to enter. The knocking provides the excuse for impatience and the self-pity.

Any other trial might not have found Jesse wanting. He could have mastered poverty, neglect, ill-success; but shame—no, this seemed to raise all his bad feelings, though the change was not visible to the outer world.

Till a man has been tried in his weakest point, let him not cast a stone at one who has reached the decisive turn in his life's journey. As to visions of beauty and goodness, they had faded entirely from Jesse's vision. He worked, read, slept, ate, came in and went out with clock-like regularity; but otherwise he was not himself, and, worst of all punishments, he knew it. Revenge—it was coming slowly, but surely; and it was this giant image he watched so keenly. He liked to see it become more shapely, more defined; he liked to see it advance one step daily nearer to him. It was his Juggernaut, and he was but waiting to throw himself before it in adoration.

But all this time not a word had he

heard from Mr. Fenner. Still he trusted him. Belief in his friends died hard with Jesse; he judged others by himself. So intense were his affections that he could make grand allowances till his faith was shattered; then Jesse was apt to exaggerate the fault.

At last the day dawned. It was Saturday, and he should be home early from work. It was a bright, sunny day, even in London, after the mist and fog had cleared off. Even Golden Sparrow Street could not shut out the sky; indeed, the houses, being low and mean, allowed a greater expanse to be seen. On any other day Jesse might have taken a long trudge, but to-day he dared not go far. What time would Mr. Fenner come? Not before the evening; or, yes, knowing Jesse would be at home, he might look in earlier.

'Liza, when she triumphantly brought up the tea-things, found Mr. Vicary walking up and down like a caged animal, and for once in her life she dared not address him a word.

"'Liza," said Jesse, suddenly, "if Mr. Fenner calls, show him upstairs at once. Don't imagine I am out, because I shall stay in till he comes."

And then he sat down to his solitary meal, whilst to aggravate his feelings still more, thoughts of Symee filled his mind, and would not be driven out.

Symee preferred comfort and plenty with servitude, to liberty and a crust. Symee deserved her fate. She was a woman, weak, easily led, afraid to do right or wrong. Well, she had chosen; it was not he, Jesse, who should now expatriate himself in order to have to bear with a weak girl's reproaches. She had had her choice, let her abide by it.

Six o'clock, seven o'clock, and no Hoel Fenner. He would not come now till late. The dinner-hour of the rich was a feast which could not be moved. What if he, too, were going to fail him, and he would not appear at all? What—Jesse was beginning to lose faith even in Hoel Fenner, when he heard footsteps on the stairs. Was knowledge near at hand; was revenge coming; was Mr. Fenner going to treat the matter lightly again?

The door opened, and Hoel Fenner entered.

The lamp shed its light only on a part of the room. It did not at once disclose Hoel's face plainly; unlike his usual habit, it was Jesse who spoke first, and as he held

out his hand, all his natural diffidence seemed to have forsaken him.

"You are come, Mr. Fenner. I was beginning to think you had forgotten me and my very unimportant affairs; besides, this must be about your dinner-hour. Shut the door, 'Liza, and let no one else come up. Will you sit by the fire? It is chilly now in the evening."

"Thank you," said Hoel, "it does not matter where." The altered tone, the utter change of manner, was so striking that Jesse stopped short and began to wonder what had happened. He did not imagine it had anything to do with him or his business; but, all the same, it was too marked to be overlooked. Jesse's unnatural eloquence received a check. He even wondered if it had displeased Hoel, who, of course, was accustomed to a certain veiled respect, which, before now, Jesse had willingly accorded him. Jesse, even now, could not see Hoel's face clearly. He had seated himself where the shadow fell.

"You have thought me a little exacting," said Jesse.

"I knew you must be expecting me; but I own I put off coming as long as possible; besides, I have been three times out of town, and, perhaps, you are not aware that my uncle—the one I have mentioned as having brought me up—died suddenly. He was buried yesterday."

"Death seems nothing very terrible to a solitary man like me; but I suppose to the rich there may be many regrets at leaving life."

"We are all alike, I suppose, in wishing to live as long as possible," said Hoel; and, strange as it seemed, it was as if the two men had now changed places—now it was Hoel who was blunt and straightforward, and Jesse inclined to show off a cynicism that fitted him but badly.

There was a pause—a pause which tried Jesse intensely, as he was thinking most about himself. Again it was he who broke the silence.

"I am afraid my business must have been an extra worry—a nuisance in fact; but you know I was willing to go my own way. I did not wish to force my affairs upon the shoulders of any one."

"I have had very little to do with my uncle's affairs," said Hoel, in the same strange, unnatural voice, as if he had not heard Jesse's remark. "The family lawyer is a very useful man on these occasions, and is willing to undertake all the fuss

that takes place when a man dies suddenly. Besides, my uncle did not sign his last will, and I count for nothing in the one that stands."

Jesse, thus forced to leave his own thoughts, was ready to give sympathy.

"That seems hard, or would seem so to some men, but I do not think it will influence you much, Mr. Fenner. To me, you know money means very little. A room to sleep in and a crust of bread are all that is necessary to man, and even if one's arms cannot provide these, there is the workhouse, though I own to a slight dislike of that idea." Jesse laughed.

"Still, I cannot altogether say I would prefer to starve than to enter the House, as the poor do. On the whole, it is less selfish to save your fellow creatures the pain of finding you dead on a doorstep, or other such hospitable refuge."

"You are very happy, Vicary, you have only yourself to think of."

"Happy!"

This time the laugh was truly cynical.

"Yes, happy. You can fall back on past experience. You can have nothing to reproach yourself with; but you cannot be stranded suddenly. You cannot find yourself in a relentless storm, where nothing seems able to shelter you, and where there's not even a plank one can grasp. I don't know why I've come here to-night. Well, yes, I was afraid you would think less of me; and I can't afford to lose any one's good opinion just now. I promised I would come. But look here, Vicary, it's no use beating about the bush in this insane manner, let me tell you at once, that, though I've come, I can do you no earthly good."

Hoel rested his elbow on the table, and with his well-shaped hand he shaded his face.

Still Jesse was entirely in the dark.

"Pray, don't let that distress you, Mr. Fenner. I never expected much result, as you know, least of all did I wish to have bothered you with my affairs just at a time when you were having troubles of your own. I have no relations except Symee; but I can understand that losing even one who did not much interest me would touch me in spite of myself. As for my own plans, I am prepared to fight on alone. You might have cleared the way; but what more could you have done? In your position, too, it was most generous, most kind of you to undertake to give me help. and please do not think I am un-

grateful; it would really pain me to believe you thought so."

"You cannot understand my motives, Vicary; but, at least, my inability to help you was not caused by inaction."

Jesse felt the blood mount to his face.

"Then you tried, and failed to discover anything?"

"I tried."

"And failed?"

Hoel did not remove his hand, so that Jesse could still see nothing of the expression. The situation was becoming exasperating.

"No."

Another pause, more awful than the others.

"Then, for Heaven's sake," said Jesse, starting up, and forgetting everything about relative positions, everything but the knowledge that the man before him had succeeded in finding out what he wanted to know, and yet that he would not tell him. "Then, for Heaven's sake, why do you not tell me? Is it worse than I told you? How can it be? Will my vengeance be greater because I am sure? Do you think that ignorance will lessen my bitter feelings? Mr. Fenner, you have been a kind friend to me, till now. I do not forget it, I am not ungrateful; but if you cannot understand it, at least believe me when I tell you that this is no laughing matter to me, that whatever you, or what some people call the world, think, to me it is of the utmost importance; believe, too, that I have been living an insupportable life since I saw you, that you cannot, through any false notions of sparing me, wish to withhold the truth from me, however bad it is."

These words had rushed out like a pent-up torrent. Jesse Vicary never paused to think of anything or any one, his one effort was to prevent himself from shaking the truth out of the man before him. Something in the intense sadness of that immovable figure prevented him.

"Vicary, stop, for pity's sake. Remember that there are more persons than one to be considered in this question. But how can you consider? You have not the power. You cannot know my feelings, my reasonings; but, look here, you say that I have been a friend to you. I don't altogether accept the term; but let that pass. If you consider me a friend, do something for me. If I promised to bring you back an answer, let me off my promise, because — because — unless you hold me to it, Vicary. I cannot tell you."

Jesse sank down on his chair again, and in a kind of amazed stupor he repeated :

"You cannot tell me!"

"No."

"But you cannot prevent my finding out in my own way. You hardly understand my motives, or what I conjecture to be the truth."

"No, I cannot."

"Then, by Heaven, I will find out everything, and without any one's help."

"I feared so; but forgive me, Vicary, if you only knew, if—no, I cannot offer advice; but can I say anything to make you desist? Look here, will you believe me when I tell you that, though I am tongue-tied, this I am sure of, working alone, you will go on the wrong track. Be generous. Leave it alone, Vicary. I am beginning to think that an overruling Providence is not a myth. Wait a few years—be patient."

"So that others may enjoy the fruit of my sufferings? No, I will not; if God is just, then He cannot mind man seeking for that justice. Be it long or short, I will seek for it."

Hoel got up, Jesse's words had stung him like hail.

"Don't judge harshly, Vicary. You have let me off my promise. Thank you. Will you take my hand and forgive me?"

Vicary gave his hand, but there was nothing of the old grasp in it.

"Yes, I let you off, Mr. Fenner, I can do my work alone. I am sorry I ever troubled you with the story."

"Good heavens," said Hoel, as he walked away, "he little guesses the truth, and yet I—no, I could not tell him."

EMIN PASHA.

HIS WORK AND RESCUE.

Two years ago we gave some notes on the life and work of Dr. Edward Schnitzer, known to the world as Emin Pasha, to whose rescue Mr. H. M. Stanley was then fighting his way from the Congo. We promised then to return to the subject when the result of Stanley's expedition was known; and the time now seems opportune.

There is something strangely pathetic in the fact that, while the gallant explorer and reliever returned in triumph, to be fêted and lionised, and universally commended for his unquestionably great and memorable achievement, the heroic being

for whom it was undertaken was lying, in almost mortal sickness, at the Coast from which he had been shut out for so many weary and trying years.

There has been no more heroic figure in African history—save Livingstone and Gordon—than this devoted and modest German doctor. Yet the world seems inclined to lose sight of what he has done in the blaze of what has been done for him. By a curious irony of fate, the rescuer has been exalted to a more brilliant height than the rescued. For a couple of years of costly exploration and hardship, Stanley is receiving a larger meed of praise than Emin for a dozen years of noble endeavour and unselfish devotion to the cause of science and civilisation, of faithful adherence to that which he conceived to be his inherited duty, and of steadfast persistence against innumerable difficulties, and in the face of ever-present dangers.

We do not dispute the splendour of Stanley's achievement, and we do not grudge him the glory he has so gallantly won; but we do deplore that the noble figure of Emin should be overshadowed by the more vigorous individuality of the other.

The newspapers have told us enough of what Stanley has done, and he himself will presently tell us more. Let us go back a little, and see what Emin has done.

He went out, as we have already shown, about 1876, to the Soudan, as medical attaché to Gordon's staff, and, in 1878, became Governor of the Equatorial Province. But the Soudan is a wide and vague territory, and the limits and character of the Equatorial Province seem even yet not to be understood by most people. Let us, therefore, be a little more particular.

The Egyptian Soudan, as it existed in Gordon's time, extended from about twenty-one degrees north latitude—which may be considered the limit of Egypt proper—to near the Equator, and it was divided into five governmental districts. The first extended from the borders of Egypt to Khartoum, and was bounded on the east by the Red Sea, and on the west by the twenty-eighth meridian. The second was the Pashalik of Sennaar; the third that of Kordofan; and the fourth that of Darfur; all sufficiently well marked on the maps, and familiar enough in connection with British exploits and complications in Egypt. The fifth district was that which was called the Equatorial Province, which, north and south,

nominally extended from Khartoum to the Albert Nyanza. This, again, was divided into three commands: the Rohl Province, extending from the ninth to the sixth parallel, and from the Nile to the twenty-fourth meridian; the Bahr-el-Ghazal, now best remembered in connection with the name of its last unhappy Governor, Lupton Bey, who, with his territory, was betrayed, in 1884, into the hands of the Mahdists; and the Equatorial Province proper, now ever to be associated with the name of Emin Pasha. This last joined the Rohl Province in the north at the ninth parallel, and, as far as Lado, was bounded on the west by the Nile; but south of Lado it spread out and was supposed to embrace nearly the whole of the Albert Lake.

The history of this immense territory is a curious and a chequered one. More than fifty years ago, Mehemet Ali went out from Egypt to extend his dominions as Vali or Viceroy—for the title of Khedive was not adopted till 1867—to the south. At the junction of the White and Blue Niles he found a small village, where he built a fort around which gradually became a considerable city, and the centre of the caravan-routes to the interior, and of the river-traffic to Egypt.

This was Khartoum, and from there expeditions were regularly despatched to the south for the produce of the country, which consisted chiefly of slaves and ivory. For twenty years the slave-hunters carried on their atrocities unsuspected of Europeans, until Sir Samuel Baker, after meeting Speke and Grant at Gondokoro—now superseded by Lado, Emin's late capital—and discovering the Albert Nyanza, returned to England through the country which was being devastated by the ruthless dealers in human flesh. It was the reports given by these travellers that caused pressure to be brought to bear upon the Egyptian Government to do something to put an end to the iniquitous trade. Fortunes were being rapidly made in it when Ismail Pasha, the first Khedive, succeeded to the Government in Egypt in 1863. Ismail was both an able and an ambitious man. He conceived the idea of forming a great African empire absolutely independent of his suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey. But he knew that he could not throw off the Ottoman yoke without the assent, and perhaps the assistance, of England, so he shrewdly endeavoured to propitiate British public opinion while also prosecuting a

policy of annexation in the south. The nearer districts of Darfur and Kordofan he subjugated by his own officers, but to carry out the dream of Equatorial Empire he needed other emissaries.

Thus it was that Sir Samuel Baker, who had revealed the iniquities of the Soudanese slave-trade, was placed in command of an expedition to subdue to Egyptian authority the countries around, and to the south of Gondokoro, to suppress the slave-trade, to organise legitimate commerce, and to open up the navigation of the Albert Lake by way of the Nile. The suppression of the slave-trade, it should be noted, was only one of the objects in view, and not the sole object, as is now frequently supposed. In fact, the slave-trade probably occupied a very minor place in Ismail's design, whatever it may have had in Baker's intentions. But the Khedive must have seen quite well that the territories to be annexed could never be properly governed so long as they were at the mercy of the slave-raiders; and, moreover, he was very anxious to figure well in the eyes of Europe. His sincerity in the matter of slavery has sometimes been questioned; but it is long since he passed from power, and we need not stop now to analyse his motives.

Sir Samuel Baker, then, was the first to carry the semblance of Government and authority into what we now know as the Equatorial Province of the Soudan. He took with him the sections of three steamers, to be put together and launched on the lake, and also two or three steel boats. He started from Khartoum with three steamers for river service, and his army of some fifteen hundred followers were towed up the river in boats.

From the first, Baker had to fight against the opposition of the slave and ivory-dealers, who intrigued with the native chiefs against him, and who also sapped the fidelity of his own followers. He also met with a great obstacle in the Nile—the formation of a “sudd”—which so delayed his progress, that one-half of the term of four years for which he had engaged was expired when he reached Gondokoro. This was in 1873, and for the next two years he was actively engaged in that work the story of which has been so graphically recorded in his well-known book, “Ismailia.”

The broad results of Baker's rule were, that the country, nominally annexed to Egypt, extended to the frontier of Uganda

—of which Mtesa was then King—and included the Albert Lake. Three garrison stations were established, besides Gondokoro; the steamers were erected and put in commission; and a great supply of stores had been accumulated. In other words, Baker established a line of steam-navigation from Khartoum to the Lakes, and he annexed the whole valley of the White Nile to Egypt. But although some of the slave-traders were expelled from the country, traffic in slaves had not been stopped, and it had been found that the traders were prepared and determined to use every species of opposition to the new order of things. For the first time it began to be realised how vast, and powerful, and pervading was the iniquitous system which radiated from Khartoum, and which had its zealous supporters and intriguers even in Cairo.

We have spoken of a "sudd" in the river delaying Baker's progress, and as it was the same kind of thing which later cut off Emin from communication with Khartoum, a word of explanation is necessary. A "sudd" is caused by a vast growth of aquatic plants, which develop in the Upper Nile from the bottom so rapidly, that they intercept all the flotsam and jetsam that is being swept downwards with the floods. The growth, at first in the form of vegetable islands, gradually extends across the channel, and forms a practicable bridge, absolutely preventing the passage of boats. These vegetable barriers grow to immense size, and of prodigious density. That which obstructed Baker required the prolonged labours of seven hundred men with sharpened sabres to clear. In 1877, the plants began to form small islands again, and two years later they amalgamated into a fresh "sudd," which closed Emin's door to the north.

But we must go back to 1873, when Sir Samuel Baker left the province in the condition we have sketched, and returned to England. In February of the following year, 1874, Chinese Gordon arrived at Cairo in order to assume the work surrendered by Baker. He was then only a Colonel by rank, but already of world-wide reputation. Preliminaries were soon settled with the Khedive, and one of the arrangements was that the Bahr-el-Ghazal was to be added to his command, so that he might have control over the whole district frequented by the Danagla slave-hunters. By the following April Gordon

was at Gondokoro, exactly a year after Baker had left that place.

He did not find a very satisfactory condition of affairs. Gondokoro itself was surrounded by hostile tribes; and although the garrison numbered some seven hundred men, they could only communicate with the other stations by sending out large armed expeditions. These other stations were just able to hold their own, and no more. Government, in short, was at a standstill; and the Khedive had really no more authority there than he had at Timbuctoo. But there were the steamers, and an abundant supply of stores; and in a very short time Gordon worked a miraculous change.

He formed the station of Lado, to be the capital instead of, but quite near to, Gondokoro; and from there, for a distance of nearly four hundred miles to the south, he established a chain of stations within easy distance of each other. North and west of Lado he also went with the arm of authority and the principles of order. When he left, in 1876, there were twenty-five Governmental Stations in the province, with regular communication between them; there was peace with the native tribes; the soldiers were contented because they were being paid and well cared for; the revenue was improving; and the steamers were plying frequently both on the river and on the Albert Lake. Above all, the native chiefs loved and trusted him, and the slave-traders had been repelled at many points.

Let it not be supposed that Gordon had suppressed the slave-trade entirely. He had not had time to do that; but he had brought peace and order and just government into this immense territory under his sway, and he did it all with no fuss and little fighting. He had brought the country into a condition which, if maintained, would have effectually counteracted the slave-traffic in time.

But it was not maintained. After Gordon left, the command was, for a few months only, with Mason Bey, and then with Baroud Bey—Colonel Prout—but both of these officers had to come away suddenly, stricken with illness. Thereafter the province fell into the management of Egyptian officials—Vakeels—who undid all the good work that Gordon had done, and reduced the province to chaos once more.

One of Gordon's European officers was Emin, who acted as chief of the medical staff. In that capacity he had to travel

about the province a good deal; but Gordon sent him also on special diplomatic missions: notably on journeys to the kingdoms of Uganda and Unyoro—two sections of Central Africa which have bulked much, both in missionary records and in the recent narratives of Stanley's expedition. It was in works of this kind, and in his general capacity for dealing with the natives, that Emin succeeded in impressing Gordon. Still he was not in any administrative position while Gordon was at Lado.

After visiting England, Gordon returned to Egypt in 1878, in a new capacity—that of Governor-General of the whole Soudan. He took up his quarters at Khartoum, and one of his acts was to nominate Emin Governor of the Equatorial Province.

The legacy which Gordon had left for his successors in the province has been thus recorded:

"To keep the frontiers from the encroachment of the Soudan Government; to maintain the discipline and order already established; to improve the routes of communication; to introduce some other means of land transportation than porters; to solidify and extend the position of the provinces to the west; and to bring King Kabarega, of Unyoro, and King Mtesa, of Uganda, into such a position of acknowledged dependence that trade, instead of going to Zanzibar, would be turned down the Nile. It was not proposed to annex these countries, but to convince their rulers that they would be annexed if they did not behave themselves."

Instead of following out this policy, the Egyptian officials in temporary charge let the whole province go to wreck and ruin. When Emin was nominated to the Governorship the stations had become "hotbeds of oppression, vice, tyranny, and underhand slave-dealing." The stations themselves had fallen into disrepair through sheer indolence and neglect; the natives were oppressed with the burdens and irritated by the actions of the officials; revolts were incessant, and the province was over head and ears in debt.

Out of this chaos, and corruption, and demoralisation, Emin wrought a change even more marvellous than that wrought by Gordon. Within two years he had quieted all the native discontent; had brought the whole territory into a condition of law and order; had equalised taxation; had got rid of the corrupt officials, and

had made the people loyal to his Government. He had rebuilt all the stations; established a regular weekly post throughout his dominions; made roads; introduced camels and oxen for transport, instead of porters; re-organised his little army; and cleared out the slave-dealers from the whole province.

In 1878, when he assumed command, the finances showed a deficit of over thirty thousand pounds; by 1882, he had made them show a surplus of eight thousand pounds. Yet, during half of that time, the "sudd" in the Nile had stopped the steamer traffic with Khartoum, and he had to form new outlets for trade.

Then, as we showed in the former article, he introduced new industries to the people—taught them how to cultivate cotton, and indigo, and coffee, and rice, and sugar; how to brighten their villages with gardens, and how to make clothing for themselves and the troops. It was in this time of prosperity that he was visited by Dr. Felkin, who has thus written of Emin: "Getting rid of the leeches which sucked the life-blood from the inhabitants, he had replaced them by natives trained by himself; he had put an end to the wanton abuses of the old Egyptian station chiefs, and had shown to the natives that for honest work just pay must be rendered, and that by docile obedience they could live, not only at peace with themselves, but on terms of friendship with those whom they had previously regarded in the light of cruel taskmasters. A record such as this proves that my friend is what I have always said he was—a man apt to rule, slow to take offence, and capable, if only supplied with the necessary external aids, of becoming the most successful administrator for Central Africa which the world has hitherto dreamt of."

This is the testimony of an eye-witness of his work.

But the "external aids" were not forthcoming. The abdication of Ismail, the resignation of Gordon, the revolts in the Soudan, followed each other in rapid succession. Nobody had any time or thought for the Equatorial Province, and steamers which were being sent out from England for Emin's use got no further than Khartoum. They were still there when Gordon returned, in 1884, on his last and fatal mission, which closed as we all remember too well.

From 1882 Emin was practically cut off from the world, and in 1884 began his

time of peril and of dangerous isolation. The last three years of his sojourn must have been a continuous strain of anxiety, of ceaseless labour against constantly growing forces. The Mahdists were hemming him in on the North, and although he might have escaped himself to the South, he would not forsake the people and the cause entrusted to him by Gordon. Alone, and unaided, he has for years, in the heart of Africa, carried on the work of government, striving to retain his province for civilisation, steadily resisting the slave-dealers, who were surging back upon him under the support of the Mahdist successes, busied with military details, and yet never forgetting his functions of medical man—always hoping against hope for help and relief, but not for a “rescue” which was to sever him from his life-work.

Is it any wonder that he was undecided—torn with conflicting emotions—when Stanley at last reached him? Stanley's arrival was too late to save the province, for the troops had mutinied, and the officers were working either for their own ends, or in the interests of the Mahdi. Six months earlier, and Stanley at Wadelai might have helped Emin to beat back the forces of the False Prophet, whom Emin had so long successfully withstood, and might have retained the Equatorial Province as a bright oasis in the dark desert of Tropical Africa.

But it was not to be. Emin was found broken in power, in health, and in spirit, and he was virtually forced to march away with Stanley, turning his back upon all that had become most dear to him. Strange, and most pathetic incident this—the strangest, and one of the most pathetic in the whole history of Africa!

The task of carrying relief to Emin proved much more arduous than was contemplated; and there are many who hold that if the expedition had gone from the east—starting from the Zanzibar coast and going through Massai-land—it might have reached Emin's territory within six months.

It was the autumn of 1886 before a plan of relief was definitely organised. Sir William Mackinnon, associated with Sir Lewis Pelly, the Hon. Guy Dawnay, Mr. Burdett Coutts, M.P., Sir Francis de Winton, Colonel Grant, C.S.I., Lord Kinaird, Sir John Kirk, and Messrs. Peter Deany, A. L. Bruce, and George S. Mackenzie, formed themselves into the Emin Relief Committee, and subscribed a fund

for expenses, to which the Egyptian Government added ten thousand pounds. Mr. Stanley, then in America, was offered, and accepted, the command by cable, and, at once crossing the Atlantic, arrived in England towards the end of December, 1886. After deliberation and consultation with the King of the Belgians—who, as Sovereign of the Congo Free State, placed at the disposal of the expedition all the resources of the State—it was resolved to adopt the Congo route.

In January, 1887, Mr. Stanley left for Egypt, and took, as European assistants, Major Barttelot, Captain Nelson, Lieutenant Stairs, Dr. Parke, Dr. Bonny, Mr. Jephson, Mr. Jameson, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Rose Troup. Of these, Major Barttelot and Mr. Jameson perished on the Aruwhimi; Messrs. Ward and Troup returned home invalided; and the rest have shared the toils and hardships of the march across Africa. The expedition was made up at Zanzibar, and went round the Cape by steamer to the Congo. That river was reached in March, 1887, and the upward movement at once began. Delays on the river, owing to the insufficiency of the transport, made it June before the Aruwhimi was reached. There, at Yambuya, some distance from the junction of the Aruwhimi with the Congo, a camp and depôt was formed, and left in charge of Major Barttelot. On the twenty-eighth of June, 1887, the march to the Albert Lake began, and Stanley disappeared into the wilderness. He expected to reach Wadelai and be back again by Christmas; but he did not reach the Albert Lake until the end of the year; and it was April, 1888, before he met Emin. They remained together until the end of May, and then Stanley turned back to the Aruwhimi, to bring up his rear-guard and supplies, while Emin was to return to Wadelai and arrange with such of his people as wanted to depart from the province. In August, 1888, Stanley was again at Yambuya, to find that Barttelot had been murdered; but he did not get back to the Albert Lake, for the second time, until the eighteenth of January, 1889, which was just two years after he left London, in the hope of completing the whole work in about a year.

When Stanley got back to the Lake, it was to find that Emin and Mr. Jephson were prisoners at Wadelai; that the troops of the Equatorial Province had revolted; that the Mahdists had invaded the province

in force, and that some of the natives had gone over to the enemy. Emin's work was done, for his authority was overthrown, and the labours of twelve years had been apparently in vain. By-and-by the Pasha was released, and, almost broken-hearted, was carried off by Stanley, who began his march to the East Coast on the tenth of April, 1889, just one year after the explorer and the Pasha had first met. It was the month of December, 1889, before the whole party emerged into daylight once more, at Bagamoyo, a port within the German sphere of influence, opposite Zanzibar.

Thus Stanley's work has covered just about three years, and included, as we have seen, the traversing the whole breadth of the Dark Continent. The full story of this prolonged and most momentous expedition has yet to be told, and we may reserve judgement on its value until it has been told. But more interesting and instructive than the narrative of any adventurous explorer, must be the record of Emin's own experiences, observations, and scientific discoveries during his long and lonely exile. If Emin has preserved his journals, and is able to give them to the world, then we may look for the most important and interesting contribution to the literature of Central Africa that has ever been made. No European living has had such prolonged, continuous, and intimate acquaintance with the places, and peoples, and politics of the Dark Continent.

FOREST GATE SCHOOLS.

THE next station is Forest Gate! The forest itself is not perceptible, unless as a forest of houses, with the long roofs of factories or soap-works, with tall chimneys and stacks of timber, instead of foliage; with openings of wet, marshy wastes, where shining patches of water are indistinctly visible; with a canal gleaming through the mist, and barges darkly shadowed against the wintry glow. Nor are there any more suggestions of the forest when we reach the station; and the village, if it be a village, with its rows of small villas interspersed with shops, which face the sunshine pleasantly enough, and its various back streets freezing in the shade, and all varnished with the yellow mud of the district. Yet there is something like a ravine below, wreathed with the steam of passing trains,

and a fringe of trees in their bare wintry tracery, shows pleasantly beyond; but all so misty and indefinite in the hazy morning light, as to be endowed with a certain mysterious charm that further acquaintance might perhaps dispel.

Yet away from the station there begins something like open country, which may once have formed part of the great forest of Epping, where once the Lord Mayor and citizens of London would follow the wild deer with horn and hound; and this way lies Wanstead, with its flats and its park which was once a famous seat, and which is now a public pleasure-ground. And at some half-mile along the way in that direction stands a handsome range of solid brick buildings, set back at some distance from the road, with grass-plats and shrubs in front, and a tall flagstaff, like the mast of a ship, conspicuous from afar. There is a porter's lodge, too, and a porter visible within, while a deputy porter, in the shape of a bright-looking lad in serge jacket, cords, and a "Glengarry" cocked military fashion on the head, opens the gate for the visitor, and marshals him the way that he should go.

The way leads to a handsome entrance-hall, well warmed and covered with matting, to which hall a monumental aspect is given by an imposing marble tablet on either hand, which record how these, the "Forest Gate District Schools," were founded in 1854, under the management of a long list of district worthies, and transferred, at a later date, to another board of management. Yet, apart from the list of names of people who have mostly joined the great majority, and become merely the shadows of names themselves, these inscriptions convey no explicit information to the inquiring mind. What is a district school, after all, and why should Forest Gate be endowed with these imposing buildings, with this evidently complete and well-organised staff? Whence these boys, the hum of whose voices may be heard from some distant schoolroom, or these girls, of whom a glimpse has been seen, in their neat blue-serge dresses and white aprons?

The answer to all this is to be found in the Superintendent's office — quite an efficient-looking office, with tall desks and rows of official-looking volumes, and a secretary busy over forms and correspondence. The Superintendent himself is here and there and everywhere; but he is caught on the wing, and pleasantly offers all the information in his power. These

are district schools, then, as being formed under an Act of Parliament, passed so long ago as the 7th and 8th Victoria, which empowers Poor Law unions to group themselves into a district for the purpose of providing resident schools with the necessary staff and appliances for the educational and industrial training of children who may become chargeable upon the parish rates. These district schools are not universal throughout the country, for the scheme has not been adopted by perhaps the majority of Boards of Guardians; but London has taken freely and liberally to the system, and these district schools have been established at considerable cost, and generally on a complete and extensive scale, at various parts of the country round about London. The City of London and Saint Saviour's unions have their district schools at Hanwell. The South London unions have a large and complete establishment at Sutton, not far from the Banstead Downs. The West London parishes own a fine and extensive range of buildings at Ashford, near Staines, while Kensington and Chelsea have their own district schools at the pleasant village of Ewell, not far from the great Epsom racecourse. And then at Forest Gate we have the great and populous unions of Whitechapel and Poplar, comprising some of the poorest and most crowded quarters of the east end of London. And the inmates of the schools are many of them the children of the poorest of the poor, who have failed to keep a roof over their heads, and have been compelled to seek the shelter of the workhouse. Not that even these belong to the lowest social station, for to have a claim on the parish for relief implies a previous fixity of abode. And the wandering class who find an uncertain home in common lodging-houses generally contrive to keep clear of the workhouse, both for themselves and their children, who mostly go to recruit the shifting population of waifs and strays about the streets.

Yet in all these district schools there are children deserted and abandoned by one or both parents. Generally it is the father who absconds, tired, or perhaps hopeless of the task of providing for his brood. And in such cases it often happens that the mother will support herself and the more helpful of her children in the outside world, while the Guardians take charge of the rest, and send them to the district schools. Of course, the defaulting parent is looked for, but is rarely found; and even

if found, not much can be made of him, except to send him to prison, a course which does not, after all, increase the chances of his providing for his family.

At the present hour of the morning most of the boys and girls are doing their lessons in school, and our first general glimpse of the children of Forest Gate is in the spacious and airy schoolrooms, where the boys are going through their lessons according to the universal code. Yet are not all the boys here, for such of them as are old enough, and are physically fitted for a certain amount of labour, alternate a day's schooling with a day's work in field or garden, or in the workshops, or in some useful task about the establishment. At their school work the boys present are bright and intelligent. A large class is reading in full swing, and with very good intonation and emphasis, and they respond to the master's examination with great vigour and alacrity. There is something about a sunbeam and a glowworm in their lesson, and though these poor children cannot have had much personal experience of either in the crowded courts of Whitechapel, yet they know all about them, and a forest of hands are eagerly raised at each question put to them. Bright and jolly enough are the schoolboys; they are small, perhaps, for their age—true-born Londoners, with more sharpness than strength—but they look healthy enough, and as clean as new pins, and quite chirpy and cheerful.

There are more boys in the workshops outside. Here is the shoemaker's shop, presided over by a master shoemaker, who exhibits some of the work of his young apprentices with a good deal of honest pride. All the mending and patching required by the five hundred odd pairs of little boots and shoes, which are daily shuffling, and kicking, and rubbing themselves into holes, all the soleing, and heeling, and toe-capping is done in this shoemaker's shop. And there is original work done as well. Each girl who leaves the schools for domestic service is supplied with a complete outfit in the way of necessary clothing, and an essential part of the outfit is two new pairs of boots, in which the stout and useful is supplemented by a certain amount of elegance; and these young ladies' boots are turned out very creditably by the young disciples of Saint Crispin.

Then there is the tailor's shop, where all the boys' clothing is repaired, and a good deal of new work done, in the way of

making trousers and jackets for newcomers. But to-day, instead of sitting cross-legged on their benches, the boys, and their master, the head tailor, are all busy sorting out the débris of clothing, all burnt and scorched, the salvage from the late fire. And it is the same with the young carpenters, at work upon charred beams and shattered presses, with only the chips and shavings in their workshop to testify to the ordinary daily work that is carried on there—the making of cases, shelves, and general fittings required in the establishment.

And hereabouts the odour and flavour of burnt materials still lingers in the air, and the memory of the late disaster, and the loss of life it entailed, casts a certain shade of seriousness and regret over the whole establishment. The burnt wing now presents itself to view, with its charred and shattered windows, and smoke-begrimed walls. Within, there is a sad solitude of blackened timbers, gaping floors, and the desolation of the complete ruin that fire has wrought. Yet, still intact and safe is the staircase leading into the yard—a wide and ample staircase, where all the inmates of the dormitories might have found safety. But the truth seems to be, that the poor children were suffocated in their beds by the smoke that rose from the mass of burning stores beneath; and we may hope that they passed peacefully away without any consciousness of the terrible scenes about them.

And yet there were few establishments, to all appearances, better protected against fire than these schools, with stand-pipes and hose on each floor, a constant water supply, and plenty of fire-buckets handy. But fire found out the weak spot, and that was probably due to faults of construction in the old building—for 1854 represents antiquity in this respect. The notion then was to build something like a barrack, with storehouses and offices below, and rows of dormitories above, and about as safe in case of fire as an Englishman's ordinary dwelling, if he escape from which alive, if once fairly alight, he has great cause for thankfulness.

The modern idea is to have, instead of the one huge barrack, a number of detached dwellings for dormitories, with no complications, in the way of storehouses or furnaces beneath, and with free circulation of air all round. And there is a very good example of such a building, ready to hand, at these very Forest Gate Schools.

This is the infants' block of buildings—a regular nursery establishment—where children are received from the age of two years and upwards. Here there is a free run from one end of the building to the other, with outside stairs of iron at each end, in addition to the staircases within. Within, as well as without, the air is pleasantly fresh and fragrant; the sunshine streams in at the open windows; the little beds, in long rows, are all as clean and neat as can be; if they were meant for little Princesses they could not be nicer. Perhaps real Princes and Princesses are not so carefully tended and looked after as these little children of poverty and misfortune.

Then, in a room below, we find the babes of the establishment—little urchins and little lasses, who can hardly speak plain, but who receive their visitors with loud crowing and gratulatory cries.

Another room contains a colony of children just a step higher on the ladder of life. It is almost dinner-time, and the little folks are seated round in their clean white pinafores, beating a joyous tattoo on the table with their spoons. From them, also, there is a loud shout of welcome. Evidently, the little ones are the pets of the establishment. They want to see pictures! And, by the way, nearly all the rooms are decorated with bright-coloured prints—the pretty children of the Christmas numbers, the friendly dogs, the horses, the lords and ladies gay of holiday impressions from the "Illustrated" or "The Graphic." These things brighten up and interest the children, and give them a glimpse of the world outside the walls of the school, with its infinite variety of weal and woe. But to return to the children, anxiously awaiting the midday meal.

"What is there for dinner, nurse?" asks the Superintendent, of a neat-looking attendant, who is keeping an eye upon the children.

Nurse is not quite sure; but the children know all about it.

"Iris' 'too," is shouted from half-a-dozen eager little throats; and Irish stew it proves to be by the fragrance of it.

But there is a snug little room with a bright fire, where a little dinner-party is assembled of a much quieter character: three or four children sitting up in their night-dresses, with white, wistful faces, and eyes pathetically large and dark, who seem only languidly interested in the

little delicacies provided for feeble appetites. There is a solemn beauty in one or two little faces, upon which consumption has set its fatal seal.

But, as for the sick nursery, where the ordinary invalids are treated, there are not many inmates, and those only suffering from trifling childish ailments. And the sick are quite as eager to see pictures as the well, and they take an equally intelligent interest in the coming dinner.

And the odour of Irish stew becomes still more noticeable, as, crossing a wide courtyard, we enter a dining-hall of good proportions, where the clatter of hundreds of spoons upon hundreds of pewter dishes, and the voices of hundreds of children—who enliven their meal with interjectional remarks—cause a vibratory murmur, that now rises to vehemence, and, again, sinks almost to nothing. The girls, as may be supposed, contribute the greatest vocal clatter; the boys make the most play with the pewter dishes. For the dining-hall is common ground, where girls and boys meet at meal-times, seated in their separate detachments, and at present too much occupied with Irish stew to have any thoughts to bestow on their neighbours. And the stew certainly is appetising, not the fraudulent dish which economical housekeepers sometimes impose upon us, composed of potatoes chiefly, with the tail ends of mutton chops and odd bits of fat sparsely planted therein; but the prizes in the Forest Gate stew are many and varied, and the mess is, therefore, suited to the average capacity of growing boys and girls.

As we leave the dining-hall we come to the source of the banquet, in the great kitchen, with its ovens and furnaces, its great coppers, where the food of five or six hundred children is prepared, its gas cookery apparatus, and other appurtenances of cooking on a grand scale—grand in point of number, that is. And while we are among the domestic offices, here is the laundry in a detached building—and such a laundry!—with all the best apparatus of English and American make. Here is a great steam mangle, that rolls to and fro majestically, or stops instantaneously at the touch of a lever; and further on a great English washing-machine, also driven by steam, with an ingenious reversing motion. And close by is an American invention, a hot cylinder of metal with subsidiary cloth-covered cylinders, which take hold of your bit of a shirt, we will

say, as if they were going to print a newspaper upon it, and deliver it next moment, wrung and smoothed and calendered, so that you might put it on if you were in a hurry without further preparation. And there are wonderful cages that fly round at the rate of who can say how many thousand revolutions a minute, and so that a basket of wet things, turned into one of these cages, comes out in about eight minutes just dry enough, and not too dry, for those other recondite processes. A laundry-maid murmurs something about “starched things,” of which the masculine mind has but an indefinite idea.

And it is always washing-day here, then; and the busy laundry-mistress is continually keeping her eye on things, and the laundry-maids whisk about great baskets of linen easily and noiselessly, in “skips” of American pattern; and the great machines are constantly on the whirl. There must be a power of washing here, certainly.

“Why, yes,” remarks the Superintendent; “take the one item of towels. Each child is washed five times a day, and for each ablution a clean towel is used. Say five times five hundred towels a day!”

That certainly figures out into a pretty big sum, and with other things in proportion! But the mention of towels brings us to the question of personal washing arrangements. Here, across more courts, are the bathing-quarters, with a new swimming-bath of full size which is to be used for bathing and swimming only, while the old one, which is but small, will be devoted to soaping and washing customers. But a complete ablution of all the children, night and morning, is effected in long rows of shallow troughs with perforated bottoms, by means of a rose or spout above the head of each child, which diffuses a fine spray over the whole person, and makes the task of soaping and rinsing an easy one. Here are, also, completely fitted lavatories, where the intermediate ablutions are effected, the principle being that no two children shall be washed in the same water or dried with the same towel. And these precautions are no doubt requisite in dealing with such large assemblages of children, where infectious or cutaneous disorders are so much to be guarded against.

By this time dinner is over, as we are reminded by the loud fanfare of a brass band. It is the boys' brass band, which marches proudly across the playground, playing some national air; and the boys

troop after it in loose formation, and are presently drawn up in line across the ground under the command of the drill-master, who soon dismisses them to their own diversions; for this is the play-hour of the school. All but a column of volunteers who follow him into the drill-hall, where there are dumb-bells, and Indian clubs, and various exercises to be gone through. For the boys of the band there are often openings in the regimental bands of the regular army, and the young musicians generally do well among their military comrades. But as for general enlistment, the boys leave school at fourteen, as a rule, and take their way in the world; and that is too early an age to join the army; so that if any of the boys eventually find their way into the ranks, there is no special record of the fact. But boys of the requisite physique are perhaps drafted on board the "Exmouth," and find their way into the navy or merchant-service. And the boys who have taken seriously to a craft, as shoemakers, tailors, or carpenters, often find employment in their respective vocations. But there is a growing difficulty with the managers of schools, as well as with the paterfamilias of private life—"What to do with the boys?"

With the girls, the matter is more simple: they are trained for domestic service. Before long, perhaps, the managers of our great educational establishments will recognise the fact that there are many other employments in which young women can earn a respectable livelihood; but at present it is difficult to see how the best intentioned efforts in that direction could be brought to any practical result.

Now, the general impression of those who have taken into their households girls from district schools, referring to them generally, without application to any particular school, is that, as a class, they are rather helpless. Accustomed to rely upon others, they lack the fibre of the home-bred girl—where the home is honest and sober—the girl who has had the perennial family baby under her charge as long as she can remember; who has managed the house when mother was out charing or washing; and who has acquired energy and self-reliance from the stress of circumstances.

Well, at Forest Gate they have made a promising attempt to give the girls a real, practical training in the duties of every-

day life. And this is in the form of a six-roomed house, which occupies part of one of the subsidiary blocks of building—a six-roomed house, with just such stoves, and furniture, and belongings as pertain to houses of that class in the world outside. Six girls are here under the training of a housekeeper, two as cooks, two as housemaids, and two as the "poor little generals." For these girls the steam-pipes, the elaborate machinery of the general establishment, have no existence. They cook on the little stove and in the small oven; they wash, and sweep, and keep tidy their own little home. The experiment, too, has been tried of sending the girls to market for the household, to lay in the stores, and keep the accounts; and in this way the girls are brightened up, and made to feel an interest in the movement of things about them.

And now we may take our leave of Forest Gate Schools, quite convinced that what may be called official philanthropy is doing a good work here, just as private philanthropy is doing good work in many a home and institution run on different lines. Certainly, if the cost of these public institutions is heavy, there is a good deal to show for it. Here hundreds of children, who otherwise might swell the ranks of helpless paupers, are carefully trained, taught habits of industry, and put in the way of earning a respectable living, infused, too, with an independent and helpful spirit.

Yet, before leaving the spot, let us take a general view of the scene from that lofty outside staircase, which shows the distant country, where there is still a little country left: the home fields, the extensive gardens, with their rows of winter vegetables; the boys at play in the open with tops and hoops, and a general clamour of voices. The girls also at play, less vociferously and energetically, in a covered courtyard; the hum of infant voices sounding within, as troops of little ones tramp noisily about, for it is their play-hour too.

Well, they are all "our boys" and "our girls," the children of the State, with no fathers or mothers who, in a general way, are worth anything to them, except the general community. And it is pleasant to think that they are so well cared for, and that they are happy, for happy they undoubtedly are; and we may hope that honest and happy lives are yet in store for the little foundlings of Forest Gate.

THE WOULDDES.

WHO and what are the Wouldbes, it will be asked. Are they a species of insect, cousin germane, for example, to the bumble bees; or a cross between a drone and a laborious wasp?

Nothing of the kind. The Wouldbes are of the human race, and of those extremely civilised members of it who are so much in the thrall of discontent, and so convinced of their own worth—potential, if not apparent—that they are for ever sighing to be other than they are. "If only I were like so-and-so, what could I not do! How I wish I were Willoughby Constantine, of Constantine Hall! People should then see what I am good for!"

This, then, is the characteristic of the Wouldbes; the phrase "I wish," or "If only I were," is ever in their mouth. It proclaims them as unerringly as the stentorian bellow: "To be sold by auction, etc.," proclaims to all his audience of the street that the town-crier is abroad.

The Wouldbes are not, as a rule, very iniquitous persons. That is the best that can be said of them. Yet perhaps their very merit in this matter is, at bottom, more of a vice than a virtue, for they would not be Wouldbes if they were not consistent in lethargy rather than in action, aspirants rather than strivers. The wicked man is generally a man of energy. His energy is perverted, of course; yet, in so far as it is energy pure and simple, it is laudable in him. He has a virtue which the Wouldbes lack.

You will find the Wouldbes in every walk of life, and among either sex in every period of life. It is not an immutable state of mind; yet there is a grievous fascination in the culture of it which makes it very hard for the adult Wouldbe to throw off the habit, and put his hand in earnest to the plough which shall furrow the great plain of his desires. The Wouldbe has sacrificed so persistently upon the altar of his creed, that the real has become less real to him than the fanciful. Life, to him, is a mirage. He knows that the sum of its delicious possibilities is quite beyond him; and so he has accustomed himself to viewing them as if they were ideal rather than actual possibilities. If you remonstrate with him upon his disgraceful inertia, he meets you squarely:

"I know," says he, "that I shall never

be what I would like to be. Why, then, should I not, at least, get what satisfaction I can from these pictures of the imagination?"

It were vain in such a case to say:

"Ah, dear Wouldbe, that is just where you go astray so ruinously. You beg the question. Uprise and try to be what you would be, instead of revelling in torpid fancies, howsoever sweet they may be."

Wouldbe shakes his head with an affection of ageness that deceives even himself. No Solomon could better assume the air of one who has tried life, found it wanting, and resolved to dream rather than work in the future.

Among children, the Wouldbes, as opposed to those who are not Wouldbes, are as ten to one. It is right and normal in a child to be a Wouldbe. He wishes he were a man like his father; a soldier like his uncle; as much beloved as his white-haired, benevolent old grandfather; as rich as that consummate spendthrift, his mother's first cousin. This is all as it should be. The youngster is like a greyhound held in leash, and his "wishing" is comparable to the straining of the dog against the leather. If the dog were to stand in calm contentment, with its nose in the air, looking straight before it, the dog's owner might perchance think it a very fine figure of a dog, or even a remarkably philosophic animal; but he would not give much for its chance of slaying the hare. It is in the nature of a greyhound, properly constituted, to be dissatisfied with its fetters, and to pull and struggle for freedom. So also the child—if it be a sane, strong child—must wish this and that; otherwise, the inference is that it has already, though a child, come to such maturity as it will come to, for development and aspiration are the same things. If the child has done with wishing, the odds are that it has finished its career of growth. It may, indeed, become a foot or two taller, or even compress a few more so-called attainments into its brain. But the latter, in its case, are likely to be merely so much intellectual lumber—anything rather than a blessing; and it will matter very little to the spiritual kernel of the child whether the husk grow to six feet or a hundred feet in height. The kernel has done growing; and that, after all, is the main thing.

Indeed, there are no such Wouldbes as children. They are the only Wouldbes to

whom nature and reason, in conjunction, agree to give license. Hence there is no shame upon the child who wishes this or that. And it is not even a fault when its wishes get as extravagant as the romances of the age of chivalry. Such wishes are an intellectual exercise, as beneficial in their way as are swings and gymnastic poles to the body. The City financier who is a millionaire at fifty, may even, though he knows it not, owe his success and his banker's balance to his early, eager wish for a million of money. Such a wish, once conceived, of its own nature compelled him to think of the means of attaining it, and he has become what he is as the legitimate result of untiring industry and concentration, the effect of his childish resolves for the sake of his childish desire.

It is the same with other aims. The poet in a pinafore may, if his wishes be fitly ardent, and his latent abilities sufficiently vast, blossom into a laureate. But, unless he be a Wouldbe, he has no likelihood of such a dignity.

And so, also, with great travellers and men of science, politicians and evangelists. I make bold to say that each and all of them were staunch and fervid Wouldbes in the nursery. The one discovers the source of a river, or adventures upon the North Pole; another invents the phonograph; a third becomes the Premier of a decade; a fourth wins a fateful battle; and the fifth dies what is called an heroic death, Bible in hand, among the cannibals—all because, as children, they were Wouldbes of uncommon energy.

The child is father to the man in nothing more emphatically than in the nature and intensity of its aspirations.

But to recur to the Wouldbes among men and women.

Their condition, though unfortunate, is not uniformly sad and deplorable. It may be that the fault is not wholly their own. Who, for instance, can blame the woman who has passed the line of youth, and who, with full assurance that, as a wife, she could have made some man's life happy, and, therein, her own more happy, now and then sighs, like an inveterate Wouldbe, "Ah, if only my husband had found me"? Of course, she is too sensible a creature to harp long on so dolorous a note of desire. But it will sound at times. And, really, it does her no harm. She is no worse or more lethargic a woman after the wish, than before it.

There are a multitude of kindred cases,

which need no exact illustration. The test is ever the same. If the Wouldbe weakens in character or energy under the influence of the aspiration, it is a pernicious wish, of the kind to be scouted. Otherwise, it is a cordial, a soporific, or a sufficiently agreeable indulgence, harmful only when taken in excess.

It must not, however, be thought that the disappointed Wouldbe is wholly a neutral force in the lives of others, because he is, as a rule, no very strong doer of evil. He is apt to become a very unpleasant person indeed. At the outset, when he had plenty of hope in him, he may have been a genial man enough; one more ready to help than embarrass a fellow man. But, under the strain of frequent failing, due to unmitigated barren wishing, the milk of his human kindness goes sour. He is less to blame for this than the very human nature of which he is an expression. Yet, the preliminary fault is his; and so he is responsible for his own degradation.

Now a soured Wouldbe is a very serious creature to reckon with. He looks upon the success of others with a jaundiced eye. Thus looking, he is sure to think that such success is due to causes which even a better man than he might term improper. And, with such thoughts in his mind, disgusted with his own failure, and envious of his fellow-man's good fortune, he passes cruel judgement upon the prosperous one.

From Wouldbes of this class are recruited the vast body of calumniators and cavillers who so largely season the banquet of life. They discreetly hide behind a rock or a tree, and watch the battle before them. Safe from all stray bullets, and particularly secure from sabre cuts, they are able to observe with a keenness at which the rest of us—who are preciously busy with our guns and swords—are likely to be astounded. But they are also quite out of the way of honour. Promotion is not for those who hide behind rocks instead of fighting. And so the temptation is irresistible to slander the very warriors who, in the battle, have most distinguished and brought attention upon themselves. The unhappy Wouldbe thinks that, by so doing, he exalts himself. Better, he says, to do nothing and sin not, than to be an active agent of wrong towards others. It is the most idiotic sophistry in the world; but it contents the poor perverted and conscience-stricken Wouldbe.

You should visit such a Wouldbe as

this if you want to hear what may be called the seamy side of the character of your and his common acquaintance. None can misinterpret so acutely as he. If you remark upon the happiness of the domestic life of your friend Spes, it will be odd if he do not wrinkle his forehead, to give his eyebrows that peculiar curve of incredulity which says so much at so little cost. "My dear fellow," perhaps he says, with cautious innuendo, "take my word for it, all is not so smooth with Spes, as it appears to be." Really, he knows no more than he declares; but his words sometimes fall on the soil that befits them, and the consequences then may be grievous.

But I am sorry to say that the most calamitous of such Wouldbes are of the gentler sex. The girl who has just made a good match; the woman whose robust health makes her complexion seem perennial, or whose figure wins masculine admiration; these are the conventional butts of the feminine Wouldbe. As a rule, victims of these classes are well able to take care of themselves. A good match brings contentment in its train; and the contented wife can afford to laugh at the lips of slander. And the woman whose constitution favours her personal appearance is not apt to be hypersensitive. It is upon less-favoured victims that the Wouldbe's venom works most disastrously. Upon them, truly, the practised Wouldbe can, like Lady Sneerwell, "do more with a word or a look than many can with the most laboured detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it."

I have said that the Wouldbes are to be found of all ages. In comment upon this, it is curious to mark that, except in individuals who have given their evil dispositions full exercise, the Wouldbe grown old is often a very charming fellow. It is in the middle of the course that he is liable to fall into temptation. Afterwards he bows his head and looks with more charitable eyes upon a world in which he has not played the part he ought to have played. And so, having cried peccavi, the old, innocent enthusiasm of his childhood recurs to him. He is, perhaps, more of a Wouldbe than ever he was; but his aspirations do not now centre in himself. He takes his nephews or his grandchildren by the hand and encourages their ardour by wishing for them instead of himself. "If only I had my life again before me, my dear boy," he

will say to one of them, "as you have yours, this is what I should like to do." And then he builds Spanish castles mountain high, as heedless of foundation-stones as if he were still a child.

Indeed, it may be said that, of two men, the one an old Wouldbe who has failed, and the other a successful citizen of the world, the former is likely to be more useful as a stimulant to the young than the latter, and is much more likely to endear himself to them. The Wouldbe may be anything rather than brilliant, except in his aspirations. He may even be what the citizen of the world calls him—an ass of the first water. All the same, he will win hearts. Time, which has put the snow upon his head, has not abated the sprightliness of his fancy in the line that is peculiarly his. One moment, with a sigh of regret, he will hold himself up to his juniors as a warning; but the next, his eye will brighten again under the influence of a flash of newly-begotten expectation or desire, and the old "I wish," will be heard on his tongue.

It is a pity that the average Wouldbe cannot, at the age of fifteen, go off into a deep sleep of fifty years, or so. Then, at the awakening, he would realise that it were vain to expect the fruition of his various impetuous desires; he would, perforce, be contented; and he would have none of those remorseful pangs which even the best-controlled Wouldbe cannot escape, when circumstances force him to look down the vista of the years from old age towards youth.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "*Count Paolo's Ring*," "*All Hallow's Eve*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

It would be almost impossible to imagine a greater or more unlooked-for change in any one's life than the change which Miss Joan's death brought into Doris's. The girl had always thought that her aunt was not nearly so poor as she made herself out to be, and that the petty economies, in which her soul delighted, were altogether unnecessary; but she had never for a moment imagined that Miss Joan was in reality a rich woman, and her surprise was indeed great when the lawyer, who

rode over to the Red House, as soon as he heard the news, and, much to Doris's relief, volunteered to make all the necessary arrangements for the funeral, told her so.

"I must congratulate you, my dear Miss Cairnes. You have led a wretched life so far; but that will all be altered now, I am glad to say. Poor Miss Mordaunt made her will the day before yesterday, and left all her property, with the exception of a small legacy to Margot, to you unconditionally. You will be a rich woman, my dear. Miss Joan was worth sixty thousand pounds if she was worth a penny. She had a splendid head for business; she ought to have been a man," Mr. Pearson added, regretfully.

Doris gazed, with wide-open, incredulous eyes, at the speaker.

"Sixty thousand pounds! Impossible!" she cried. "Why, sometimes we had scarcely enough to—" She checked herself, suddenly. "I mean she always said she was so poor," she added, rather confusedly.

"I dare say. It runs in the blood," Mr. Pearson—who fully understood the interrupted sentence—answered emphatically. "The Mordaunts were always either spend-thrifts or misers: went either to one extreme or the other. But it is true, Miss Doris, all the same. You will believe it soon enough, and, startling though I dare say the news is to you now, will soon enough get used to it. There is nothing so easy, my dear young lady," added the lawyer with a smile, "as to get accustomed to possessing money; nothing so difficult as to get accustomed to doing without it," he added with a shrug of his shoulders.

Doris soon proved the truth of his words. Once the first surprise over, she accepted the change in her position, and deported herself under it with a quiet dignity and grace which surprised everybody. She was of age, and entirely her own mistress; and, although she was perfectly willing to listen to the suggestions and advice with which Mrs. Ainslie, the Vicar's wife, and Mrs. Pearson overwhelmed her, she quietly arranged her plans and thought out her future for herself.

The Red House was papered and painted, and restored as nearly as possible to its pristine glories. It had been a fine old house once, in its palmy days; and the great art upholsterer, into whose hands Doris committed it, was loud in his admiration of the beautiful oak panelling

and the antique furniture, which was stowed away in the unused bedrooms. There was not a house in the county to equal it, he declared enthusiastically, as he pocketed her cheque and looked round complacently on the changes he had wrought in the long-neglected rooms.

Doris smiled at his enthusiasm; but she, too, was well pleased with her beautiful old house and the gardens, which skilful hands had transformed into a little paradise. There was one little corner of the garden, however, which Doris would not have altered, and that was the sunny corner by the south wall, where the peaches grew, and where she and Laurence had dreamed their dreams together; where Paul Beaumont had pleaded his cause in vain; where the happiest and the bitterest hours of her life had been spent! That corner of the garden seemed bound up in her life; nay, was a very part of it, Doris thought! She could not bear it to be altered. So the lawn was mowed, and the trees pruned, and the tall dahlias and hollyhocks trimmed; but no material changes were made. The moss-covered log under the apple-tree still lay there. Doris used to sit there sometimes and think of the past days.

She did not, however, have any more time for meditation now than in the old days. She had quite as many duties, though of a different kind, and led quite as busy a life as ever. She was sadly conscious of her own deficiencies and ignorance, and had, acting under Mrs. Ainslie's advice, engaged a lady to reside with her as governess and companion; and, what with study and visiting—for all the county people had called on and held out the hand of friendship to Miss Mordaunt's niece and heiress—her time was fully occupied.

Mrs. Robson, her companion, was a distant connection of Laurence Ainslie's, and perhaps this fact was of as much importance to Doris as the fact of all the virtues and accomplishments, which, according to Mrs. Ainslie, she possessed. Doris was a little shy with her at first; but she soon grew much attached to her, and a steady friendship, never afterwards interrupted, sprang up between the two women. Mrs. Robson had great tact, she was an accomplished, well-read woman, had travelled much, and mixed much in society; and Doris, under her care, soon lost the little gaucheries and the awkwardness born of her isolated life, and acquired a perfect

grace of mien and charm of manner which surprised and pleased all with whom she came in contact. There was not a mother in the county who would not have been pleased to welcome Doris as a daughter-in-law; but so far, although she had had several eligible offers, she had quietly but decisively refused all.

"I do not think I shall ever marry," she said, quietly, to Mrs. Robson, "and certainly not for some time. I want to travel and see the world first."

And so as soon as the autumn of the year which followed her aunt's death arrived, Doris carried out a long-cherished dream, which she had never hoped to realise, and with Mrs. Robson went to Italy for the winter.

They returned to England in May, and spent a few weeks in London, and while there, Doris and Laurence Ainslie met again for the first time since his marriage.

They met by chance at an At Home, given by a Lady Clifford, whom Doris had met in Rome, and with whom she had struck up a great friendship. She was standing talking to her hostess, when Laurence entered, and she drew back a little, and waited until he had greeted Lady Clifford, and watched him with a curious mingling of pain and pleasure in her heart.

He was very much altered, she thought; he was as handsome as ever, but he looked worn and haggard, and much older than he had any right to look. The deep lines on his forehead, and under his eyes, ought more properly to have belonged to the face of a man of fifty than of twenty-eight.

A great throb of pity stirred Doris's heart as she looked at him. He was a successful man as the world counts success; but he did not look like a happy man, she thought—oh, not one-half as happy as the old Laurence, her boy-lover of years ago! She waited till some new guest claimed Lady Clifford's attention, then she stepped forward, and touched his arm lightly with her fan.

"Have you quite forgotten me, Laurence?" she said; and then he turned and saw her, and in an instant the lines and wrinkles were gone, and the dark shadow of discontent had vanished from his eyes, and Laurence, young, and smiling, and handsome as of old, was holding her hand in a tight clasp, and pouring out a flood of eager questions.

They came so fast that Doris could hardly find an opportunity of answering them; she could only smile, and nod, and put in a word or two now and then, and looked, meanwhile, so sweet and pretty with her smiling eyes upraised to his, full of a perfect contentment and pleasure, that those standing near turned to look at her, and more than one asked who the beautiful girl talking to Ainslie the artist was.

Laurence noticed the admiring, curious glances, though Doris was blissfully unconscious of them, or, indeed, of anything, save that she was with him again, and his heart beat with an odd pang of jealousy and regret.

Doris stood before him perfectly dressed in a gown of softly-falling silk which was neither green nor blue, but a mixture of both, with rare flowers resting among the lace which veiled her white neck, and a jewelled arrow gleaming among her crown of chestnut plaits. She, too, was changed outwardly, for she was taller, statelier, and more beautiful than he had ever thought it possible for her to be; but he felt instinctively that she was not changed in reality, that she was just as true, and tender, and loyal as the little maiden in the shabby, blue frock with whom he had loved to linger in the old garden years ago.

"What a fool I have been!" Laurence thought, bitterly.

They spoke of those old days by-and-by, when Laurence had found a quiet seat behind some tall palms and foliage plants in the little conservatory. They spoke of them, and of their old friendship, and of the changes that had come with the passing years; but Doris noticed that although Laurence was very ready to talk of his work and of his child, he never mentioned his wife; and that once when Doris asked if Mrs. Ainslie was with him that evening, he had given a rather disagreeable laugh, and had answered curtly that his wife did not care for society, and rarely went out.

"I shall come soon and call on your wife," she said, as, having put her into her carriage, he stood by the window for a moment. "I am so anxious to see her and my little namesake Doris."

Laurence started, and said something hastily, but she did not catch the words, and as he spoke the carriage moved on, and left him standing on the pavement; but she interpreted them as an assent, and

on the following afternoon she ordered her carriage, and went to make her call on Mrs. Ainslie.

Laurence lived in Kensington, in a large, old-fashioned house with bay-windows, and in front a long, narrow lawn, which was divided from the street by tall railings and a thick belt of shrubs. The garden was pretty, but it had a somewhat neglected look, Doris thought, as, leaving her carriage at the gate, she went up the winding path and rang the bell; and the house also had a forlorn air. The steps and little outer hall looked as if they had not felt the touch of a broom for some days, for they were littered with fallen twigs and leaves and scraps of paper. In one of the front windows the Venetian blind was broken; and the untidy servant, who after some delay opened the door with one hand, while she flung on her cap with the other, stared at Doris as if visitors were somewhat of a rarity in that establishment. Her mistress was in, she said in answer to Doris's enquiry for Mrs. Ainslie; but she did not know whether she could see any one. If the lady would walk into the drawing-room she would enquire.

Doris assented, and followed her into a drawing-room, evidently rarely used, and where the dust lay thick on everything; and after an unsuccessful struggle with the broken blind, the girl left her alone while she went to tell Mrs. Ainslie of her arrival.

Doris, left to herself, looked round the room, and inwardly marvelled how Laurence, with his artistic taste and keen perception of the beautiful, could endure to have such a room in his house. There was no fault to be found with the furniture; the piano was pretty; the chairs and couches, of some rare kind of wood, were gracefully shaped and covered with rich velvet tapestry; a few beautiful water-colours hung on the walls, but these were interspersed with gaudy oleographs, coloured photographs of actresses, and cheap Japanese fans; and on the chairs were tricky antimacassars, tied up with bright-coloured ribbons and trimmed with cheap lace. The tables were crowded with all kinds of rubbish in the way of china animals—dogs and cats and elephants, and quite a bewildering assortment of the same covered the mantelpiece, which was of beautifully-carved wood, and looked strangely out of place there.

Doris thought of her own drawing-room at the Red House, the pretty room, with its soft, harmonious colouring, panelled

walls, and polished floor, and the rich drapery which hung by the windows and over the door, and gave just the touch of colour and brightness which the sombre room needed. Laurence would like that room, Doris thought, rightly conjecturing that he rarely set foot in his own drawing-room; that there his wife's tastes reigned supreme.

By-and-by, after she had waited some time, a hurried footsteps and the swish of a silk dress came along the passage; then the door opened rather noisily, and Mrs. Ainslie came in.

Laurence had sent Doris his wife's portrait painted by himself shortly after their marriage; but had she not known that it was Mrs. Ainslie who stood before her, she would certainly have failed to recognise the slim, fair girl of the portrait in this coarse, red-faced woman, who held out her hand and assured her, in a somewhat loud and not particularly refined voice, that she was glad to see her at last; that she had often wished to see the old friend Laurence used to talk so much about.

"Used, I may truly say, for he rarely condescends to talk to me at all now," she said, with a harsh laugh. "Take my advice, Miss Cairnes, don't get married. I can say to you, as an old friend of Laurence's, what I wouldn't say to any one else."

And then to Doris's intense disgust and annoyance, she drew up a chair to her side and launched into an eloquent diatribe against Laurence; his neglect, his fickleness, the way in which, while always gadding about himself, he left his wife at home; his miserliness and bad temper—all were passed in review before Doris's disgusted, astonished eyes. Was the woman sane, she wondered, that she could thus speak of her husband to a stranger? She drew herself up, and, finding that it was no use trying to stem the flood of Mrs. Ainslie's eloquence, sat, growing momentarily more stately and colder in her manner, and listened in silence.

Where had the charms, over which Laurence had so often rhapsodised, vanished, she wondered? True, the golden hair was still bright and abundant, and the eyes, "blue as a bit of the blue sky," were still blue and bright, though not particularly clear just then; but the once-exquisite complexion had grown coarse and muddled; the once-delicate features had also grown coarser, and the whole face

had lost its original refinement, and had become vulgar and common.

Yes, there was no denying the fact, Laurence's wife was vulgar. By-and-by, too, a dreadful suspicion, awakened by Mrs. Ainslie's thick, indistinct voice, and the incoherency of her sentences, and also by a disagreeable odour as if of spirit, imperfectly disguised with Eau-de-Cologne, which hung about her, arose in Doris's mind. Was it possible that Laurence's wife was intemperate; that she had had more to drink than was good for her, she wondered! Oh, poor Laurence! If Doris had felt sorry for him before, she felt ten times more sorry now!

She took advantage of a pause in Mrs. Ainslie's conversation, caused by want of breath, to ask to see the child—her little god-daughter—and Mrs. Ainslie first rang the bell, and, finding that nobody condescended to take any notice of it, went to the door and screamed out directions to some invisible "Maria" to bring Miss Doris down at once. She did not appear, however, for some time, which was spent, as Doris concluded, in a hasty washing of face and hands, and the donning of a muslin pinafore, tied up with gay ribbons and wide sash ribbon, which imperfectly hid her ragged frock from view. She was a pretty, delicate-looking child, more like her father than her mother, but with the latter's golden hair and blue eyes. Doris fancied that she seemed half afraid of her mother, for, although she went readily enough to Doris, and seemed perfectly content as she sat on her knee and played with her watch-chain, she watched Mrs. Ainslie with furtive glances as if not quite sure of what mood she was in, or whether or not she approved of her presence in the drawing-room.

Doris tried to make her talk; but she was too shy to say more than a "yes" or a "no," and even these were uttered in a half-frightened whisper, and accompanied by those furtive glances at her mother which pained Doris keenly.

By-and-by, however, the door opened, and Laurence, who had been told of Doris's visit, came in. The child gave a little shriek of delight, sprang from Doris's knee and flew across the room to meet him with a shrill "Papa, papa!" and Laurence took her in his arms and kissed her, and stroked her tangled curls, with an odd mixture of love, and pride, and pain in his face.

"You have made friends already, I see,"

he said as he took a seat by Doris's side, and the child looked at her and smiled, and babbled something about "pretty, nice lady," into her father's ear, "do you think she is like me?"

"Ah, she's like you in more ways than one, Laurence," Mrs. Ainslie interrupted. "She is just as obstinate as you are, every bit. I was just telling Miss Cairnes so before you came in. We have been having a nice long talk, she and I; and I've been telling her how you neglect me, and how lonely I am," Mrs. Ainslie added.

Laurence shrugged his shoulders.

"Not a very interesting subject for Miss Cairnes's ears," he said, carelessly. "Doris, my pet, this is the lady papa has so often talked to you about, who lives in the beautiful house in the country, where you are to go some day, when you are a little bit bigger, you know."

"I know!"

Little Doris nodded and looked up at the visitor with shining eyes.

"Where the bees is, and the peaches. When may I go?"

"Very soon, dear."

Doris turned to Mrs. Ainslie:

"May I take her back with me, when I leave town? The change will do her good. She does not look very strong," she said.

"Oh, she's strong enough; but there, if you care to be bothered with the brat, I'm quite willing," Mrs. Ainslie cried with a shrill laugh.

It was not a pleasant visit. Laurence was so obviously uncomfortable and ill-at-ease, that more than once Doris found herself wishing she had never come. Two or three times she rose to go; but each time Mrs. Ainslie detained her, and begged her to remain a little longer.

"It is quite a treat to have a visitor," she declared. "I am so much alone, and I see so little of Laurence—oh, you needn't frown like that, Laurence, I am only telling the truth," she went on, with her shrill laugh—"one is at liberty to speak the truth to an old friend like Miss Cairnes, and you can't deny that you do leave me a great deal alone."

"Is that my fault? You know you will never——"

Laurence checked himself hastily. He was, evidently, much ashamed of his wife's bad taste in thus thrusting domestic dissensions upon her visitor, and he tried to lead the conversation into less personal topics. Doris seconded him; but their

efforts were not very successful. Mrs. Ainalie seemed incapable of being interested in, or of talking about, anything but her own affairs; her troubles with servants; her ailments—she looking, meanwhile, the picture of health; and, most fruitful topic of all, her husband's neglect and indifference. Laurence gave up the attempt to stem the tide at last, and leant back in his chair, with little Doris's head on his breast, pale and frowning, with compressed lips and gloomy eyes, and listened in silence to his wife. It was evidently a relief to him when Doris, at last, in spite of Mrs. Ainalie's entreaties, insisted upon taking her leave.

"You will come again, soon? Now do," Mrs. Ainalie said, as she held Doris's hand. "I am generally at home in the afternoons, and you are the only one of Laurence's friends I ever felt I could chum in with—they are all so stiff and pokey. Now, you will come?"

Doris murmured something in reply, and then, as she stood on the steps with Laurence, waiting till her carriage drove up, she said, very quietly:

"Would you like me to call again, Laurence?"

Laurence hesitated, gave her a swift glance, then he sighed.

"If you would not dislike it very much, Doris! Of course, I know——" he hesitated, "there can be no pleasure to you in doing so; but, as she says, you are the only one of my friends whom she likes, and I think—I hope——"

Again he hesitated. Doris glanced up at him, and the look in her eyes was so full of pity and love, that he turned pale and trembled.

"Don't look at me like that, dear," he said, in a quick, pained voice. "I was a fool—I never knew how great a fool, till now! Yes, come sometimes, Doris. Most of my early friends seem to have drifted away from me now; don't let me lose you also, dear!"

"Never, Lauris," Doris answered, earnestly, "and, if she will let me, I will be your wife's friend, as well."

Doris was as good as her word. Somewhat to Mrs. Robson's disapproval, she invited Laurence and his wife to dinner; called for the latter in her carriage, and drove with her in the Park; often returning with her to afternoon tea; or, sometimes, the carriage would be sent back empty, and Doris would remain to dinner with her friends.

For some time it did really seem as if the good results which Laurence had hoped from Doris's friendship were to be realised. Mrs. Ainalie took a great fancy to her, was constantly inviting her to the house, and, when there, pressing her to remain, and was always on her best behaviour when in her presence. And Doris, for Laurence's sake, tried to shut her eyes to his wife's vulgarity and coarseness, and to hope that these were the worst of her faults—that at heart she was true, and genuine, and affectionate.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"
"*A Fatre Damezell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXIV. HAPPY WAITING.

THERE was a drizzling rain, which came in slanting gusts along the valley, and made all the forest country look blurred and mysterious in the falling light. The loneliness seemed complete, for, except where the cottage lights shone like pale ghosts of themselves to those not far off, all human beings that were able to do so had retired indoors. Over the Pools, which looked so desolate and so mournful, the mist settled in a thicker layer than usual, whilst the eddies made by the ruffled surface of the water as the slight wind passed slowly across it, added the last touch of sadness which the picture required.

But in the rich dwelling of Mr. Kestell all this cheerless damp and sadness were at this time invisible, for it was nearly dinner-time, and every room was closely curtained, and the windows were barred.

Outside the pitter-patter of the misty rain was so soft, that only occasionally could it be faintly heard, and the silence was broken now and then by the long howl of Neptune, the stable-dog, who was too ugly and old to have any fellowship with the pampered King Charles which Mrs. Kestell favoured.

It was that happy, lazy time in an English household, when the ladies feel quite absolved from being busy. In half an hour there would be heard the dressing-bell, and it was not worth while to be too industrious. Besides, a little gossip makes

the evening time less dull when all the day has been cheerless.

Mrs. Kestell was wonderfully cheerful, and Elva was all radiant happiness.

"And so the Fitzgeralds asked a great many questions, dear? I am sure they were jealous, they always are, those girls."

"They would be more jealous if they had seen Hoel," laughed Elva. "But, really, I never gave a thought to their opinion; I had no time. I managed to choose most of the important things; they will come down in a day or two, and I know you and Symee will find fault."

"No; you usually have very good taste, dear. I wish Amice had been with you, however, though of course she never does know what is fashionable."

"That does not matter at all, so that Hoel is pleased. He has such a keen eye for a woman's dress; I never met any man with such exquisite taste."

"And about his house. How will he furnish it?"

"I don't suppose he has begun to think of that. You see, his uncle's death put out all his calculations. He has had no time to write, even; I thought I should have had a letter by second post, but I have not. Amice, dear, you are putting out your eyes working in that dark corner. Come here, on the hearthrug."

"No, thank you; I am not working much," said Amice, dreamily; and something in the tone of her voice made Elva look anxiously at her sister. The look was coming into her eyes which Elva dreaded so much.

For two days Amice had been very strange and absent. What did it mean?

Elva got up from her chair and stood on the hearthrug, her beautiful figure and

her bright, happy face were seen with a background of glowing light from the cheerful flames. Without knowing why, she felt uneasy and sad. Perhaps it was the slight pitter-patter, which became audible as she listened.

"Papa generally looks in. Has any one seen him since he came back from Grey-stone?" said Elva, to break the silence. She was twisting her engagement-ring round her finger, and suddenly it fell off and was hidden in the fur rug.

"Oh, dear, where is my ring? Amice, your eyes are good, come and help me to find it."

Amice at once came forward and stooped down.

"That comes of fidgetting, Elva," said her mother. "No, your father never came in to see me. I cannot think why. He must have had some business to finish up for post time. It is a great pity he does not give up going to Greystone altogether. Amice, dear, go and knock at the study door, and tell your father that it's time he left off writing."

Amice at this moment found the ring, and went slowly towards the door, as if very reluctant to obey her mother's command. The dressing-bell rang, and Elva, taking her sister's arm, went out with her.

"Amice, darling, you have been indulging too much in fancies. Won't you let all strange ideas rest a little till after my wedding? When I am living in London you will have to come there very often. I believe Rushbrook is too lonely a place for you."

"No," she said, as her blue eyes looked sadly at Elva; "no, I love the loneliness; but oh, Elva, how can I——"

She broke off, because at this moment the study door opened, and Mr. Kestell came out of it and walked slowly upstairs without noticing his daughters.

"I feel sure papa had another bad night, and how terrible this sleeplessness is," said Elva, when her father's footsteps had died away. "I believe he is suffering; but he is so good and patient that he will not let us see it. He is afraid of making mother worry. Do you know, Amice, that when I think of papa, I pray that Hoel may be as loving and tender to me, when I am old and grey, as he is to mamma. Such love seems to make one realize what faithful-ness means; because, from her long illness, it cannot be said that mamma has been a real companion. I hope I shall never be an invalid. It is a great trial to a man. I

see things so differently now. I want Hoel to find in me a real help, Amice. There is nothing like this love; and I do hope and pray that some day you may have it too. Only, I don't know if there is a man on earth worthy of you."

"There is a higher love," said Amice, softly.

"Yes, I know, theoretically; and in a way one believes it. Thomas-à-Kempis would have one only believe in a spiritual union of the human with the divine; but Thomas-à-Kempis never was engaged to be married."

Such a bright smile illuminated Elva's face that it was reflected on that of her sister.

"I want you to be happy in your own way, dear Elva," said Amice, as they paused on the landing just in front of the old clock whose pictorial representation of the moon's face so much annoyed the master of Rushbrook. "If you are happy, everything else will be easy to bear; but I am very anxious——"

"What about? Really, Amice, you are getting morbid."

"You have not heard from Mr. Fenner, to-day?"

"No; but you know we agreed not to be plunged into despair if something hindered our letters. Hoel is so sensible. I should hate an exacting man."

"Mr. Fenner would not be generous. He does not really understand you, Elva."

Elva was not going to quarrel with her sister; so she only laughed as she entered her room and rang for Symee.

Symee had become very sad-looking, since Jesse's departure. The rift between them seemed so terrible now that he was gone, and she worried herself by thinking it was her fault; and then braced herself up again by deciding that she had followed Mr. Kestell's advice, and had done the best she could for her brother at the expense of her own pleasure. If he misunderstood her, she could not help it.

Elva had been too much engaged with her own affairs to give much thought to Symee; but not so with Amice. And this evening, as she was dressing the youngest Miss Kestell, Symee was once more disturbed by her remarks.

"Have you heard from your brother lately, Symee?"

"Not very lately, Miss Amice; and when he writes now he is so altered. He will not forgive me, and yet I did it for his good."

"We cannot always choose what is for the good of our friends," said Amice, sadly. "Will you mind my saying something, Symee, that has been a long time on my mind?"

"You always are so good to me, Miss Amice. Of course, you may say anything."

"I would not without your leave. I mean that I think you were quite wrong to forsake your brother. Oh, Symee, you cannot know how much he may be wanting you. You may be leaving him when he wants help. I don't know why, but I feel sure this is the case."

"But I should be ungrateful to Mr. Kestell and to you all. That is my first duty."

"No, I don't think so. We are rich, and money can procure anything, almost; but your brother is poor, and he has only you. Oh, Symee, suppose it were my sister who wanted me, nothing would prevent me from going. If you are afraid of papa, I will take all the blame, Symee."

Symee burst into tears.

"Miss Amice, it is cruel of you to make me think it all over again and unsettle me. Besides, Jesse seems so strange now that very likely he would not have me."

"Then you are not afraid of being poor?"

Amice had touched a sore point.

"I should prefer waiting till Jesse was better off, of course; but——"

Amice sighed.

"It is the gold again," she said, under her breath. "It is beginning to be the ruin of other people."

At that moment Mrs. Kestell's bell rang, and Symee had to run off.

Several strange things happened this evening.

Mr. Kestell appeared to forget his usual habit of coming to the drawing-room before dinner; and it was Amice on whose arm Mrs. Kestell leant.

He even kept the ladies waiting a minute before he joined them. Then he seemed brighter and more talkative than he had done for some weeks. There was quite a flow of conversation. He apologised for his unpunctuality by saying he had some letters to finish for the late post; and he even addressed some kind enquiries to Amice about her poor people.

"Didn't I hear you say, my dear, that some of the Moors were going to emigrate?"

"Yes, papa."

"Well, they will want to be rigged out, I suppose. Where are they going?"

"To Queensland."

"And imagine, papa," put in Elva, with the bright, sympathetic smile that was usually the herald of her speech when she addressed her father, "Mrs. Eagle Benson has been to them, as the secretary of the T.A.P.S., to see if they will begin at once to receive instruction. Mrs. Moor declined, saying she was too busy to be bothered with ladies' new-fangled ideas."

"I do think, Josiah, that you ought to speak to Mrs. Eagle Benson about these odd societies. Mr. Heaton is so good-natured, he allows people to go their own way."

"Anyhow the Moors want some substantial help, so, Amice, spend up to twenty pounds for them. Every family that goes out of England is so much gain to the country, as each colonist is worth five to eight pounds to the mother country in exports. We ought to have State-aided colonisation; but the Government prefer wasting the public money over workhouse tramps, to giving this same money for lasting benefit."

Amice did not assent, or even say thank you; and Elva could not help being sorry that her sister responded so little to her father's kind thoughtfulness. Perhaps when she, Elva, was married, these two so dear to her would learn to understand each other better.

At this moment Jones re-entered the room.

"If you please, sir, there's a man come from Greystone, from the landlord of the 'Three Feathers,' to say the man Boston died to-day at five o'clock."

"Poor man!" exclaimed Elva. "Why, papa, in spite of all you have done for him, he has not pulled through."

Mr. Kestell sighed gently. Was it from sympathy or relief? No one there asked this question.

"Poor fellow. Well, he certainly received serious internal injury in that railway accident. Tell the messenger that I will pay his funeral expenses. I expect that is the meaning of the announcement."

Elva was silent for a little time. The thought of that railway accident brought back her anxiety and her great joy, also the remembrance of Walter Akster, which was not pleasant. He was away, now, and she seemed more able to breathe freely when she walked out.

"Has he any relations?" she asked.

"Oh, I suppose, at Westacre Lands, he may have cousins."

Amice looked up, and gazed at her father. At this moment she knew the sigh she had heard was one of relief, and then she hated herself for the thought.

"Now, darling, you are going to bed," said Mr. Kestell to his wife, after dinner. "You look tired, and Dr. Pink said you must be careful."

There was the usual attendance on his wife, the same loving thought for her, which sent a new thrill of happiness into Elva's heart. She thought:

"Hoel will be like that, I hope; there is something so infinitely tender in such love."

And, thus thinking, she sat down to write to her lover, whilst Amice took out some work for the Moors' equipment.

"You might have thanked papa," said Elva, presently, looking away from her writing.

"I did not mean to use the money, so I thought it better to say nothing."

"Not accept twenty pounds, Amice!"

"No. Please, Elva, believe me that the money would do them more harm than good."

Elva laughed.

"Dreadfully à la Thomas-à-Kempis. Anyhow, keep the offer a secret, or the Moors will not endorse your decision."

Then the two relapsed into the silence of perfect sympathy, such a silence as few can give us except those who love us perfectly.

How long after this was it that Mr. Kestell's steps were heard, Elva could not remember afterwards; but she was just writing "Your own loving Elva," when her father said:

"Elva, dearest, come into the study. I want you."

And she rose at once, and walked quickly across the hall.

CHAPTER XXXV. AT AN END.

MR. KESTELL was not seated by the fire or at his table when Elva entered. Everything in the room was as usual; the shaded lamp on the table, the ironwork candelabras near the chimney-piece, which had been brought by a grateful client from Venice, held lighted candles, the fire burned brightly, and the hearth was shining and newly-swept. The old bureau in the corner stood firm and solid in its place, like a trusted friend, the bookcases were also like familiar surroundings, valued without being thought of separately.

Elva, as she entered, seemed to embellish it all, just as a master-touch in a dull picture will make the whole beautiful. Since her engagement much of her impetuosity had disappeared, or rather this sign of unsatisfied longing had been merged into thorough expectant happiness. She was rather moulding herself too much on Hoel. Some of the old Elva had gone out of the picture, but it was there, ready to reassert itself; for character is almost like matter, indestructible; it has more than seven lives, and dies hard, if indeed it can be killed.

"Here I am, papa. Have I come to prescribe? You know I am a much better doctor for you than the ancient Pink."

She shut the door, and came towards her father who remained there so motionless. Suddenly Elva looked up and saw that something was the matter. All the gaiety exhibited at dinner was gone. The grey, ashy look on the face, and the dull lustre in her father's eyes were very visible.

"Papa, papa," she cried, and took both his hands in hers, and drew him towards the fire. "Sit down, darling; sit down. What is the matter?"

He obeyed her, and there came to her mind a former scene when she had told him that she would rather be the daughter of Kestell of Greystone than any lady of title.

Mr. Kestell made an effort to speak. He had not meant to give way. On the contrary, for several hours he had been bracing himself to be very strong.

"Hush, dear; it is nothing. One of my little sudden attacks. Lock the door, Elva, and let no one interrupt us."

Elva rose from her knees, and with a trembling hand obeyed. For the first time, something of the strange mystery came over her without her being aware of it in so many words. When she came back to her father's side she was deadly pale.

"Sit down, dear; there, close to me; but just give me a few drops out of that bottle. Thank you. Your mother is upstairs; she will know nothing of this."

"Of course not, papa; but what is it? Please tell me quickly. I never was very patient. I am not like Amice."

Mr. Kestell looked for one moment into his child's face, and the expression of his eyes was like that of some dumb animal who begs for forgiveness.

"Elva, my dearest child, you have never given me a moment's anxiety, and you can

never know what I would give at this moment to spare you pain; but—but I cannot. Good Heavens! that just when we were happy, when things might have gone on to the end, this should happen. Child! how can I spare you the news?"

"What news?"

Elva grasped a thousand possibilities, and tried to choose. Had they lost money? Was Rushbrook to be sold? Had Jones turned into a thief? or what—what—? Never did one of these ideas connect itself with Hoel.

"I want you to be brave and to spare your mother. I have lived for that all my life."

"You know I will," said Elva, impatiently, so great was the tension of her nerves. "I always have; for your sake, papa, I would do it still more. But tell me at once."

Mr. Kestell rose again and put a trembling hand on his daughter's shoulder.

"I will. But think a little of your father, child. Your pain is doubled in him."

"My pain! What do you mean, papa? Our pain—what touches you touches us all—all except mamma; and I know she must be spared."

"No, Elva, this is yours, child. Will a double portion of my love make up for it? I could do everything but sacrifice your mother. You were so happy; you could not know that Mr. Fenner—"

"Mr. Fenner—Hoel!" Elva sprang up with fierce energy. "Papa, you do not know what you are saying. If it's about Hoel, tell me at once. Is he ill, or—"

She could not say dead; a cold shudder stopped her words on her lips.

"No, no, not ill, not dead. That would be better. But—he refuses to—"

—"he wishes to break off your engagement."

Elva drew back two paces, as if her father's words were an insult to her and her lover. She even laughed, so absurd did the idea appear, and the laugh hurt Mr. Kestell more than tears would have done. Elva would not believe him.

"Papa, please don't say anything so foolish. Hoel and I have had no quarrel, we are perfectly at one in everything. Either you have quite, quite misunderstood some hasty words of his, or else you are dreaming, or ill. Not for a moment do I believe you, and you must be witness that

I say so. I will not do Hoel such a wrong—no, not for an instant."

She was the old Elva now—tall, and straight, and defiant; her cheeks, so pale a moment before, glowed with righteous indignation; she was standing up for Hoel's honour as well as her own.

"No, dear, I am not mistaken. I—I wish I were. His letter is quite plain, quite decisive. I want you to try and hide this from your mother, Elva, we must think of her."

Mr. Kestell repeated the words, as if this idea were the only thing he could feel certain about—to save his wife from all sorrow.

Elva became really impatient.

"Papa, it is cruel of you to try me like this. You know, as well as I do, that the thing is impossible; that Hoel and I have never had a word of difference." She paused, for she remembered those few words about Walter Akister, but that was so silly, that she would not retract. "Why should he suddenly write to you and break off our engagement? I repeat it—I do not believe a word of it. Let me see his letter. You have given me no reason, and you know, he must have said something. Where is it?"

Mr. Kestell made no attempt to give it to her.

"His uncle died, and did not sign his will. Mr. Fenner expected to be his heir."

"Oh, is that all." Elva drew a deep sigh of relief. "Hoel is rather ridiculous about money. He said he was so glad you were only going to give us a little to begin with, as it was nice to be alike in everything. I don't care about money, so it made no difference to me. But even if his uncle has been so mean, you will not follow his example, papa? You have always said Amice and I should share alike; and I suppose we are rich? Or is it—? yes, it must be, papa. You have lost money, and you have told Hoel, and he has some ridiculous idea about my not living as I have been accustomed to do. He has an honourable man's idea of honour just a little exaggerated. Have we lost money? You know I am not afraid of the truth; I am not ill, like mamma."

Elva flung out the words defiantly.

"No; we have had no losses."

"Then Hoel thinks he has too little money to accept all mine? Ridiculous!"

"Yes, that's it," said Mr. Kestell, catching at a straw; "he has false ideas of honour."

"But no, he can't have. We went over all that before, and he quite, quite understood my feeling. Papa, don't be cruel; show me his letter."

"He enclosed a letter for you, my poor child. Will you have it?"

Mr. Kestell drew an envelope out of his pocket, and held it out to Elva. For one moment she hesitated. Was this some new trap laid for her? What was happening? She could not realise it in the least. She was not Elva; she was some one else going through this scene.

Very, very slowly she held out her hand and took it.

"Read it, dear," said her father, sitting down and shading his face with his hand.

Elva did not sit down; she even walked away as far as possible from her father, and very slowly opened the letter. Yes, it was sealed with a little signet ring which Hoel always wore, engraved with his initials. She took care even now not to break the seal. Her eyes became dim, so that, for a few seconds, she remained staring at the words without taking in the least meaning. At last she read these words:

"MY DEAR ELVA,—For the last time I must write it. Your father will tell you what I cannot say; but, believe me, nothing that has gone before this was false. It was true, as you were true. Why were we to love only to end like this? and yet I cannot fight against Fate. I cannot think, I cannot say more than that it is best for both of us. We could not have been happy with the knowledge that I was indebted to your father for support. I would do much and suffer much; but, not this, I cannot see you suffer. I shall suffer, but at least I shall not inflict suffering on you. Better now, than later, Elva, when we know that nothing could undo the past. Yet now, what will you think of me? I dare not dwell on that—I dare not. I have begged for a long leave of absence, and no one shall know my address. Do not write; I could not bear it. Leaving you, I leave all that made life beautiful. What will you think—what can you think? I cannot bear to believe you will blame me; and yet you must do so. There is no blame attached to you. You are innocent of this, entirely; but, Elva, let the world think it is your doing, or no—put the blame where you like; at least believe, if you can, that by doing this, and by asking this, I am sparing you greater misery.

"Good-bye; I dare not say more; I dare

not see you. My resolution would break down, and all my life, at least, I have believed that my purpose was right. Why was I beguiled? Elva, you are good and generous, forgive, and, if you can, forget one who has so unwillingly given you and himself this pain. I am distracted. I can hardly believe in my own identity.

"HOEL FENNER."

From behind his shading hand Mr. Kestell had been intently watching his daughter.

"Elva, what does he say?" he asked, trying to steady his voice.

"Nothing. I don't know. It is all a mystery. Oh, papa, papa, can you explain it?" And with a gasp, as if she were being suddenly suffocated, Elva fell on her knees before her father, and laid her head on his knees.

"Hush, darling! It is some false idea; but it is irrevocable. He was utterly unworthy of you—utterly. You must forget him."

"Forget him, papa!"

"Yes, darling. You see he gives you no explanation, does he?"

"No. Papa, papa, I do not believe it; it is a dreadful plot. Who has done this? No, no, it cannot be true. Hoel, Hoel! I trusted him entirely! I will write, I must write; he will understand that it cannot be a case of money between us. I did not love him at first, he taught me to love him; and now I cannot, cannot believe it."

Mr. Kestell almost groaned; his child's words seemed more than he could bear, and suddenly Elva remembered him.

She raised her head and took hold of his hand.

"Papa, I was forgetting you. You have always been so good, so very good to me. I could not help saying all this; only now even, though, I really don't believe it. It will come right, won't it? God won't let me suffer like this. It is wicked of me to believe it, even against Hoel. There is some explanation I cannot understand. If I could go to him and just hear him talk, I know he would understand what my love is. Papa, you know. You have given it to mamma all your life. You can understand."

"No, no, child. She is my wife. That is very different. You will, in time, forget."

Elva was angry now.

"Forget! If I do, I shall not be different; but please don't let us say any

more. I will write to Hoel. He cannot be gone yet. He will come here. Of course he will. If I only knew what he means I could tell better what to say. It is a bad dream."

She rose up and walked towards the door. She could not sit still. Mr. Kestell said nothing, and something in his silence struck her.

"Papa, you are not thinking hard things of Hoel, are you? I am sorry I spoke out my thoughts. I was taken by surprise. He is quite incapable of being dishonourable, quite. He fancies his own honour is touched—how, I do not know; but I feel sure it is that. He will see reason when I write to him. Poor Hoel! When he comes down, you will not be angry with him, will you? Promise me."

"Elva, can't you see, a man who writes like that means what he says. He will never come. He is utterly unworthy of you. Child, do not make yourself more unhappy by hoping. He is a—a——"

"Hush, papa, don't say the word. Hoel could never be a scoundrel, I am sure of that, quite sure. You will see that I am right, when I get his answer. Now, I promise I will say nothing to mamma; we will keep all this worry from her. Why, of course, true love never runs smooth. I should have believed ours had not been true if——"

"Elva, don't. Listen. Hoel Fenner's mind is made up. He is leaving England. He has treated you badly; I never wish to see him again. He will never re-enter this house. Never."

"But our wedding will be here," said Elva, slowly, as if all the past remarks had been forgotten.

"Good Heavens," said the master of Rushbrook, sinking down into his chair, "if I could have foreseen! Elva, won't you pity me a little; do you think I would deceive you in this? No, child, Mr. Fenner will never return, never; it is not your fault, but, indeed, believe me, it is best so, he is not a man to forgive. Leave me now, I cannot bear any more, he is unworthy of you. In his place, what should I care?"

Elva did not understand these words; but she saw that her father looked terribly ill and crushed. Her love for him was too great to leave him in this condition. She came back and laid her face against his.

"Papa, don't make yourself ill for my sake. Let us say no more till Hoel's answer comes. I will be brave for your

sake." But, alas, at this moment her love crushed him more than her anger.

"Thank you, darling," he said, "I shall get better soon; leave me now, I want nothing."

When the door had shut, Mr. Kestell rose and paced his room very slowly. The slight exercise did him good—it helped him to bear the intense strain which made all his perceptions so acute. He took Hoel's letter from his pocket, and once more read these words—words which he could not have shown to Elva.

"Why I will never touch a penny of your money, you, sir, must know; I cannot tell your daughter, neither can I require you to tell her. I am powerless. I cannot redeem my word to her, and I will not clear myself at the expense of her life-long happiness. I cannot hide anything from my wife. I will not make her hate me by giving my true reasons."

"For the rest, I leave myself in your hands. The enclosed note will sound strange to her; but in saving my honour and hers I shall appear, what I am not—a traitor to myself and others. I can but prove the contrary to you by my absence and my silence."

"What does he know?" groaned Mr. Kestell. "It seemed an impossible chance. Who has put the links together. Button is dead, Jesse could not, and Amice—no, no, it cannot be my own daughter; but, for Elva's sake, I can still bear it. Others love her, must love her, better. In his place, ah! in his place——"

SOME FAMOUS HORSES IN LEGEND AND LITERATURE.

MEN have shown the high estimation in which they hold the horse by preserving the names of certain famous horses with almost as much care as those of their famous riders. Two thousand years have passed since the great Macedonian conqueror carried his victorious armies to the banks of the Indus, and yet we still cherish the memory of Bucephalus, his favourite steed. Who does not recollect that he died at the age of thirty; that his sorrowing master built as his mausoleum the city of Bucephala; that he would allow no one but Alexander to mount him, and that he always dropped on his knees to take up his imperial master? Scarcely inferior in renown is Babieca,

the horse of the great Spanish champion, Ruy Diaz, the Cid. In an old Spanish ballad, the latter, in an excess of loyalty, offers him to his sovereign :

O King, the thing is shameful, that any man beside
The liege lord of Castile himself should Babieca
ride,
For neither Spain nor Araby would another charger
bring
So good as he ; and, certes, the best befits my King.
But that thou may behold him, and know him to
the core,
I'll make him go as he was wont when his nostrils
smelt the Moor.

But when the King and his people see
the Cid, mounted on his high-mettled steed,
and guiding him with his little finger, while
he curvets and caracoles and thunders over
the sward, they agree that the pair must
not be separated :

Ne'er had they looked on horseman might to this
knight come near,
Nor on other charger worthy of such a cavalier.

The chroniclers have duly celebrated the
destrier, or war-horse, of William the
Conqueror, which he rode at the Battle of
Hastings ; but I do not remember that they
have recorded his name. He was a gift
from King Alfonso of Spain ; such a gift as
a Prince might give and a Prince receive.
As William bestrode him on the day that
decided the fate of England, his knights
and nobles broke out in loud murmurs
of admiration. Their feelings were well
expressed by Hamon, Vicomte de Thonars,
who exclaimed :

"Never did knight bear lance more
gracefully, or manage his horse with greater
skill !"

But, in the stress of the fight, a spear-
thrust from Gyrth, King Harold's butcher,
stretched this noble steed upon the ground.

There was another horse, also unnamed,
on that memorable field, which I may notice
in passing. He was ridden by the minstrel-
knight, Taillefer, who spurred him in
advance of the Norman array, as the
"Roman de Rou" tells us :

His battle-horse he spurs amain
That day on Senlac's fatal plain,
With jaws so wide the Saxon coward
Trembled lest he should be devoured !

Keeping to historic horses, I may name
Roan Barbary, the famous horse of Richard
the Second ; "the noble horse as white as
snow," which carried Henry the Fifth on
the great day of Agincourt ; and the horse
ridden by Jeanne D'Arc, which was also
white, as became her virginal purity. Then
there are the gallant steeds which belonged
to the King-maker, the Earl of Warwick.

At Towton, where the White Rose triumphed
mainly through the Earl's generalship and
courage, he rode a horse named Malech ;
and, at the crisis of the battle, when the
Lancastrians were gaining the upper hand,
inspired his men to renewed effort by
killing his horse, to show that he would
rather die than retreat. Here is Mon-
trellet's description of the incident :

"The Earl, hearing that his uncle was
slain, and his men defeated, cried out with
tears, 'I pray to God that He will receive
the souls of all who die in this battle ;'
then exclaimed, 'Dear Lord God, I have
none other succour but Thine in this world
now, Who art my Creator and Redeemer ;
I ask vengeance, therefore, at Thy hands !'
Then, drawing his sword, he kissed the
cross at the handle, and said to his men :
'Whoever chooses to return home may,
for I shall live or die this day with such
as may like to remain with me.' On
saying this he dismounted, and killed his
horse with his sword."

This exploit was frequently performed by
the mediæval heroes ; and Warwick him-
self repeated it at Barnet, his last field,
when he rode his favourite black destrier,
Saladin, an animal of great size and
beauty.

"He kissed the destrier on his frontal,"
says Lord Lytton, in his brilliant historical
romance of "The Last of the Barons,"
"and Saladin, as if conscious of the coming
blow, bent his proud head humbly, and
licked his lord's steel-clad hand. So asso-
ciated together had been horse and horse-
man, that, had it been a human sacrifice,
the bystanders could not have been
more moved. And when, covering the
charger's eyes with one hand, the Earl's
dagger descended, bright and rapid, a
groan went through the ranks. But the
effect was unspeakable ! The men knew
at once that to them, and them alone, their
lord entrusted his fortunes and his life,
and they were moved to more than mortal
daring."

The favourite horse of Richard the Third
was called "White Surrey." There are
other historical horses—if I may so call
them—of which one would gladly have
learned something : as, for instance, the
steed which Hernando Cortez rode on his
great victory over the Aztecs, whom the
Spanish chargers filled with wild dismay ;
that of Gustavus Adolphus, when he re-
ceived his death wound at Lutzen ; that of
Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen ; and of John
Hampden, as he rode away, mortally

wounded, from Chalgrove Field, through the green glades, and under the shadow of the beech-trees; that of Sobieski, when he led his Polish warriors to the deliverance of Vienna; that of Marlborough, when he crushed the armies of France and Bohemia at Blenheim.

William the Third was riding his favourite horse, Sorrel, in the park of Hampton Court, when he met with his fatal accident. "He urged his horse," says Macaulay, "to strike into a gallop just at the spot where a mole had been at work. Sorrel stumbled on the mole-hill, and went down on his knees. The King fell off, and broke his collar-bone." The Jacobites celebrated Sorrel in many a bitter pasquinade, as if the poor horse had been the willing agent of his Royal master's death.

At the battle of the Alma—if Mr. Kinglake may be trusted—Lord Raglan and his horse turned the tide of victory in favour of the Allies, by ascending a knoll right within the midst of the Russian position, and thus impressing the enemy with a sense of defeat. "The knoll stood out bold and plain. It was clear that even from afar the enemy would make out that it was crowned by a group of plumed officers; and, Lord Raglan's imagination being so true, and so swift, as to gift him with the faculty of knowing how, in given circumstances, other men must needs be thinking and feeling, it hardly cost him a moment to infer that this apparition of a few horsemen on the spur of a hill was likely to govern the enemy's fate."

But let us now see what kind of a figure the horse makes in poetry, and fiction, and legendary lore. The field is too wide for any exhaustive survey of it to be made in the narrow space at our disposal, but a glance here and there will convince the reader of its interesting character.

The clatter of horses' hoofs seems to ring throughout the rolling verse of the "Iliad." The poet everywhere treats the horse with conspicuous respect. Too noble an animal to be used as an appendage to the waggon or the plough, we read of him only once as employed for riding. To draw the war-chariot into the clash of spears and swords was the purpose for which he was almost exclusively reared. No vulgar hands were permitted to touch him. In Olympus, even the great goddess Hera disdains not to tend and feed him; on earth the Princes and Nobles of the land make him their charge—or Princesses, like

Andromache. With what wonderful power and variety does Homer draw picture upon picture—so like, and yet so unlike—of the sweep of the chariots across the dusty plain! We see the chief, stalwart and erect, with his shining helm upon his head, and his shield covering his broad breast, prepared to meet his adversary with sword, javelin, or axe, while the charioteer leans over the open rail-work in front, gathering up the reins, and with whip and voice stimulating his "champing steeds" into a wild, fierce gallop, until a well-aimed spear hurls him headlong, and the warrior by his side, dragged down by hostile hands, is slain or taken prisoner, and his horses driven by the victor to his own camp! There are scores of such pictures, yet each so different in detail as to impress the reader with an agreeable idea of novelty and freshness. Let us take one of them—the capture of Adrastus. It will serve as an example:

His horses, scared
And rushing wildly o'er the plain, amid
The tangled tamarisk-scrub his chariot broke,
Snapping the pole; they with the flying crowd
Held cityward their course; he from the car
Hurled headlong, prostrate lay beside the wheel,
Prone on his face in dust.

We read elsewhere of Agamemnon's "brass-mounted car and champing horses;" of Democoön's "high-bred mares," whom he left among the rich pastures of Abydos; of "the eager steeds" of young Æneas, great Anchises' son—

From those descended which all-seeing Jove
On Troas, for Ganymede his son, bestowed,

and also of "the flying steeds with golden frontlets crowned," which drew the chariot of Ares to high Olympus, "seat of the gods immortal."

There are also the sleek-skinned coursers of Atrides—Xanthos, and Balios, fleetest than the winds, and the matchless Pidasos—and the three swift-footed steeds which drew the chariot of Hector—Podorge, the cream-coloured Galathé, and the fiery Ethon.

It must be observed that, in the Old Testament, as in the Iliad, the horse is never mentioned except for military purposes. In that splendid description in the Book of Job—the finest, perhaps to be found in any literature—it is the battle horse which is present to the writer's mind, as he pictures the thunder which clothes his neck, his lofty leaps and bounds, his terrible snorting: "He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and

rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, ha, ha! And he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunders of the captains and the shouting."

In the great Latin epic, the horse does not figure so conspicuously as in the *Iliad*; but the references suffice to testify to the honour in which he was held by the Romans. We read of the son of King Priam as mounted "on Thracian steed with spots of white." Iulus rides "a courser of Tyrian race." The Latin King bestows on Æneas a magnificent chariot and "twin horses of ethereal soul, with nostrils breathing flames of fire."

In the old classic mythology, the horses of Castor and Pollux are the coal-black *Cykaros*—with white legs and tail—and *Harpagos*, the fleet-footed. Pluto's black car is driven by *Abaster* (remote from the stars), and *Allafos* (the inaccessible). Through space the burning wheels of the solar chariot are whirled by the fiery-red *Æthon*, by *Lampes* (the light of day), and by *Amathia* (the swift). By the way, in the Norse fable-world, the horses of the Sun are called *Awakar* (the splendid), and *Alsvitur* (the all-burning); and Odin's grey horse, which, with its eight legs—that is, the eight principal points from which the wind blows—speeds over land and sea, bears the name of *Sleipnir*.

In the myths of Muhammedanism, we come upon the milk-white steed, *Al Borak*, on which Muhammad rose from earth to the seventh heaven. She had a human face, with horse's cheeks and eagle's wings; every pace she took was equal in length to the farthest space man's vision can cover. *Haizum* is given as the name of the Archangel Gabriel's horse.

We read in the old Teutonic fairy stories of *Comrade*, the steed which bears *Fortunio* through all her adventures. Doughty Sir *Bevis* of Southampton bestrides the horse *Hirondel*, or *Arundel*, which, as his name implies, is swift as a swallow; and the four sons of *Aymon* rejoice in the possession of *Bayard*, which accommodates his proportions according as one or more of his young masters want to mount him.

Fairy stories remind me of the great Italian epics, which seem to me conceived and executed in the true spirit of fairy lore. Their characters—heroes and heroines, magicians, cruel Princes, faithful knights—have much of the delightful vagueness, in consequence, and unreality of the fairy *d'amatis* persons; while the scenes

through which they pass—enchanted forests, magic fountains, caves, gardens, and beautiful streams—are as full of marvel and mystery as those associated with Jack the Giant Killer, *Fortunio*, or the Princess with the Golden Locks.

In Boiardo's poem of "*Orlando Innamorato*" (*Orlando in Love*), the horse is very much to the fore. Full of fire and fierceness, and beautiful beyond compare, is *Cornuria*—so called from his horned forehead—which belongs to the Knight of the Sun. The next best in the world is *Roadart*; and of high renown are *Sisifalto*, the steed of *Agramonte*; and *Maltofalloni*, owned by the traitor *Gan*.

Ariosto, in his "*Orlando Furioso*" (*Orlando Mad*), describes the horse with great spirit. *Bayardo*, *Rinaldo's* famous steed,

Who clears the bush and stream with furious force,
And whatsoever else impedes his course;

Astolpho's courser, *Rabicano*, "who prints not grass, prints not the driven snow, so swift and light is his course;" *Brandament's* horse, *Butolda*; and *Orlando's* *Brigliadore* (the golden-bridled). In *Pulci's* burlesque epic of "*Morgante Maggiore*," *Orlando's* horse is named *Rondell*.

Cervantes, in "*Don Quixote*," ridicules, with happy effect, the exaggerated descriptions of the romantic poets. The Knight of *La Mancha*, before he starts on his career of chivalry, pays a visit to his charger, and, although this animal had more blemishes than the horse of *Gonda*, which "*tantum pellis et ossa fuit*" (was only skin and bone), yet, in his eyes, neither the *Bucephalus* of *Alexander*, nor the *Cid's* *Babieca*, could be compared with him. Four days was he deliberating upon what name he should give him, for, as he said to himself, it would be very improper that a horse so excellent, appertaining to a knight so famous, should be without an appropriate name. He, therefore, endeavoured to find out one that should express what he had been before he belonged to a knight-errant, and also what he now was. He finally determined upon *Rozinante*, a name, in his opinion, lofty, sonorous, and full of meaning, imputing that he had been only a "*rozin*," a drudge horse, before his present condition; but that now he was "*before*" all the *rozins* in the world!

In English poetry we first meet with the horse in *Chaucer's* verse. In "*Troilus and Cressida*" he figures under the name of "*Bayard*;" and we hear the clatter of

hoofs, and the jingle of bridle-bells in the prologue to "The Canterbury Tales." Passing on to the Elizabethan writers, we come upon some picturesque sketches in Spenser's "Faery Queen." As, for instance, when the Red Cross Knight pricks across the plain:

His angry steed doth chide his foaming bit,
As much disdainful to the curb to yield.

And there are some spirited allusions in more than one of the elder dramatists, from Beaumont and Fletcher to Ford and Shirley, which I have no space to quote or particularise. Shakespeare, however, is the only one who approaches the subject with exact and sympathetic knowledge. I will not go into the hackneyed passage in "Venus and Adonis," where the "points" of a perfect animal are insisted upon with the accuracy of an expert, and the felicity of a great poet. But I shall ask leave to refresh the reader's recollection of a certain scene in "Henry the Fifth," where the Dauphin enthusiastically recites the fine qualities of his "prince of palfreys." None but a man who knew and loved the horse could have penned this fervent passage: "I will not change my horse," says the Dauphin, "with any that treads but in four pasterns. Ca ha! he bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hairs; le cheval volant, the Pegasus, chez les narines de feu! When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk; he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes. . . . It is a beast for Perseus; he is pure air and fire. . . . The man hath no wit that cannot, from the rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb, vary deserved praise on my palfrey." Like the Neapolitan Prince in the "Merchant of Venice," "he doth nothing but talk of his horse."

In "Troilus and Cressida" occurs an allusion to one of Hector's steeds: "Now he fights on Galathé, his horse." Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in "Twelfth Night," reveals to us that he owns a grey horse, named Capulet. And Lafou, in "All's Well That Ends Well," speaks of his bay, Curtal. The name of Falstaff's steed is nowhere given, nor any description of him, though one could have wished for information respecting the much-enduring animal which bore that "mountain of flesh!" Was he a cart-horse?

Certainly he must have been the very antithesis—so to speak—of the lank and

starveling nag that carried Hudibras in Butler's immortal satire; yet had so doughty a spirit that as Alexander's Bucephalus.

Would kneel and stoop
(Some write) to take his rider up,
So Hudibras his 'tis well known
Would often do to sit him down!

This is highly rhetorical; but, at least, it shows the horse in a light worthy of his strength and swiftness.

In Dryden's version of "The Knight's Tale," he mounts Emetrius, King of Inde,

On a gay courser, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horse embossed with barbarous gold;

and in his description of the preparations for the tournament, he tells us how

The neighing of the generous horse was heard,
The coursers pawed the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foamed, and champed the golden bit.

In "The Flower and the Leaf," the warrior train rode on barbed steeds in proud array, and

So fierce they drove, their coursers were so fleet,
That the turf trembled underneath their feet.

Nine Royal Knights succeeded:

Each warrior mounted on a fiery steed;
In golden armour glorious to behold . . .
Their surcoats of white ermine fur were made;
With cloth of gold between that cast a glittering shade.
The trappings of their steeds were of the same . . .

a bright and martial scene, worthy of Sir John Gilbert's spirited brush and vivid canvas.

The rapid survey which I am attempting in this paper now brings me to James Thomson's glowing picture of a high-bred steed:

Tossing high his head,
And by the well known joy to distant plains
Attracted strong, at once he bursts away;
O'er rocks and woods and craggy mountains flies;
And, neighing, on the aerial summit takes
The exciting gale; then, steep-descending, cleaves
The headlong torrents foaming down the hills.

With a mere allusion to the noble-spirited Ukraine steed, on the back of which Byron's "Mazepa" takes his headlong ride, and the palfrey which forms the name-subject of Leigh Hunt's picturesque poem, I must pass on to the field of modern fiction; and even there my gleanings must be few and far between. Fielding, one of the manliest of men and writers, introduces the horse as one who loved him. But my first reference must rather be to Smollett's sketch of the happy steed which bore Sir Lancelot Greaves, his caricature of

Don Quixote. "Sir Lancelot," he says, "attended by the other knight, proceeded to the stable, from whence, with his own hands, he drew forth one of his best horses, a fine, mettlesome sorrel, who had got blood in him, ornamented with rich trappings. In a trice the two knights were mounted. The trumpets having sounded a charge, the stranger pronounced, with a loud voice, 'God preserve this gallant Knight in all his honourable achievements; and may he long continue to press the sides of his new-adopted steed, which I denominate Bronzomuata, hoping that he will rival in swiftness and spirit Bayardo, Brigliadoro, or any other steed of past or present chivalry.'"

In "Tristram Shandy," Sterne's parson, Yorick, makes himself the country talk by his breach of decorum against himself, his station, and his office; namely, "in never appearing better, or otherwise mounted, than upon a lean, sorry jackass of a horse; value about one pound fifteen shillings. As he never carried one single ounce of flesh on his own bones, being altogether as spare a figure as his beast, he would sometimes insist upon it that the horse was as good as the rider deserved—that they were centaur-like—both of a piece."

I need not dwell upon the excellent, if homely animal which Moses Primrose, in the immortal "Vicar of Wakefield," rides to the fair, and with so much commercial sagacity barter for a gross of green spectacles. He is known to everybody. I think that "Nobbs"—Nobbs, the wonderful horse on which Doctor Dove, in Southey's delightful medley of wisdom and humour, "The Doctor," descants with such an abundance of learning—is less familiar:

"He was of a good tall stature; his head lean and comely; his forehead out-swelling; his eyes clear, large, prominent, and sparkling, with no part of the white visible; his ears short, small, thin, narrow, and pricking. He had the two properties of a man, to wit, a proud heart and a hardy stomach. He had the three parts of a woman, the three parts of a lion, the three parts of a bullock, the three parts of a sheep, the three parts of a mule, the three parts of a deer, the three parts of a wolf, the three parts of a fox, the three parts of a serpent, and the three parts of a cat, which are required in a perfect horse." What these parts are you must read in "The Doctor," where the description occupies a whole chapter!

Sir Walter Scott was immensely partial,

as we know, to all the sports of the field, and was a bold, if not a skilful, rider. When he alludes to the horse in his fiction or poetry, it is with the zest of one who loves and appreciates the noble animal. Its picturesque associations deeply impressed him; and he is never more at home than when describing it in connection with the tourney or the battle—the mighty black charger of Richard of England; the gallant steed of Marmion; Dugald Dalgetty's stalwart war-horse; and Bois-Guilbert's Zamor, "the gallant horse that never failed his rider," which was won "in single fight from the Sultan of Trebizond." In the following passage one distinctly sees that Scott enjoys his theme:

"The worthy Churchman," he says, "rode upon a well-fed, ambling mule. . . In his seat he had nothing of the awkwardness of the convent, but displayed the easy and habitual grace of a well-trained horseman. Indeed, it seemed that so humble a conveyance as a mule, in however good case, and however well broken to a pleasant and accommodating amble, was only used by the gallant monk for travelling on the road. A lay brother had, for his use on other occasions, one of the most handsome Spanish jennets ever bred in Andalusia, which merchants used at that time to import, with great trouble and risk, for the use of persons of wealth and distinction."

His knightly companion, on the other hand, rode not a mule, but a strong hackney for the road, to save his gallant war-horse, which a squire led behind, fully accoutred for battle, with a chamfer or plaited head-piece upon his head, having a short spike projecting from the front.

The knight was followed by two oriental attendants, whose steeds were of Saracen origin, and, consequently, of Arabian descent; and "their fine, slender limbs, small fetlocks, thin manes, and easy, springy motion, formed a marked contrast with the large-jointed, heavy horses, of which the race was cultivated in Flanders and in Normandy, for carrying the men-at-arms of the period in all the panoply of plate and mail."

There are many happy allusions to the horse in Dickens's novels; but they are too well known to need quotation. In Thackeray I do not remember anything which calls for particular notice. I may note, however, that he is trotted out—if I may use the expression—in several of Lord Lytton's novels as part of the "mise en

scène." In "Paul Clifford," he almost rises to the dignity of one of the characters; for what would a highwayman be without his horse? Here is a brief description of the charger that had the honour of carrying Long Ned Pepper:

"His horse, a beautiful dark grey, stood quite motionless, with arched neck, and its short ears moving quickly to and fro, demonstrative of that sagacious and anticipative attention which characterises the noblest of all tamed animals. You would not have perceived the impatience of the steed but for the white foam that gathered round the bit, and for an occasional and impatient toss of the head."

Paul Clifford's horse, Rolin, was "a noble animal of the grand Irish breed, of remarkable strength and bone, and, save only that it was somewhat sharp in the quarters—a fault which they, who look for speed as well as grace, will easily forgive—of almost unequalled beauty in its symmetry and proportions."

Whoever would know all about the merits and exploits of Dick Turpin's famous mare Black Bess, may turn to the picturesque pages of Ainsworth's "Rookwood."

Of late years quite a new departure of fiction has been instituted—the horsey novel—the most successful professors of which I take to be the author of "Soapy Sponge;" the late Whyte Melville; and Captain Hawley Smart. In their vivacious pages we see "the noble animal" under every variety of aspect. Also, every known breed, from the "fiery Arab" to the "sturdy Galloway;" also, every phase of scenery: the park, the chase, the hunting-field, the paddock, the race-course, the parade. Who shall count up all the "permutations and combinations"?

The influence of this "new school" is far-reaching; so that the horse, nowadays, is almost certain to make his appearance in your regular three volume "work of fiction;" just as, some thirty years ago, he was wont to come before the reader in the pleasant fictions of G. P. R. James—so many of which begin with "two cavaliers riding up a hill"—and in the brisk, breezy, rish stories of Charles Lever.

M U D.

FORTY years ago, or thereabouts, when white trousers were fashionable, and when the fashion extended from the Duke of

Wellington down to small boys, "Punch" put a quaint question to his readers, somewhat to this effect: "Why does mud make black spots on white trousers and white spots on black ones?"

Without attempting to solve so recon-dite a mystery, it may be worth the attention of the idly curious to observe the effects produced by the nasty amalgam—whether moral or material—on those various objects, including human beings, which are unlucky enough to get bespattered by it. As regards moral mud, it is flying about us at all hours nowadays; nor in England is there much lack of the article in its material form, whether the season is suitable for the wearing of white ducks or of black trousers.

Winter, however, may, of course, be looked upon as the most favourable period for our observations in the latter direction. Any large and busy town—London is unrivalled—affords the best place for the purpose, and, although a wet day is preferable, it is not indispensable that rain should be actually falling—its results are all-sufficient. Still, when there is a good, thick drizzle, things are at their best—or worst. Then, as has been well said, men go about in mackintoshes, glistening like seals or porpoises; and a street full of umbrella-bearing pedestrians resembles a congregation of black toadstools out on their travels. Overhead is smoke, precipitating itself in soot; under foot is mud, oozing up at every step. The horses go splashing down the miry roads, and man exchanges alush with every one he meets.

The crossing-sweeper's skill is utterly vain; he can do no good on such a day, except it be to show us a fine example of the effects of mud on the unsheltered classes, who, from constant exposure, appear to have become amphibious. The knight of the broom takes no harm, and, oddly enough, takes fewer coppers than when the weather is dry; and one would suppose his services could be quite well dispensed with. People have no time to think of his wants now, and, so it is to be imagined, postpone their doles to a more favourable moment for diving into their pockets. But he is never forgotten, and, as a rule, your crossing-sweeper is a well-to-do personage, and somewhat of an artist in "makes up;" always with an eye to touching the hearts of his patrons. The worse the weather, the worse his habiliments. With cold and wet, he adopts the raggedest and flimsiest garments, that

we may feel for his forlorn condition all the more. In summer when there is "no need for such vanities"—in other words, when we should not pity him for being scantily clothed—he dresses like a well-to-do citizen—highly respectable, if poor and unfortunate. It is therefore in the depth of winter that we see him in his most picturesque guise; and, if the rain be replaced by snow, better still. He is then more "en évidence," and ever ready to "clear your doorstep, mum!" So fascinating an occupation does this seem, by the way, that it attracts a host of amateurs, who in finer seasons would disdain the use of shovel and broom.

Anyway, your crossing-sweeper is a connoisseur in mud, and must not be left out when we are discussing the subject. He is as important an element in it as the scavenger himself as far as town-life is concerned. Moreover, instances exist in which he appears in a laudable light; and if we wanted an illustration of the profitable nature of his calling and the gratitude of his disposition, it might be found in the story of a long-established tenant of a crossing, who for twenty years and upwards received sixpence every Sunday morning from two old ladies who used his cleanly-swept path on their way to church. He grew grey in the service, and, it is to be presumed, acquainted himself with the names and residences of these two of his especial patrons, for when, as a very old man, he died, he left them, it is said, some thirty thousand pounds. After this, who shall complain of mud as a detestable nuisance? Who will not be inclined to echo the words of endearment bestowed on it by little Prince Louis Napoleon when, watching some urchins at play in the street on a wet day, he was asked what would he like for a treat, and he exclaimed: "Laissez-moi jouer dans cette belle boue!" "Beautiful mud," indeed! Well might the two old ladies thenceforth have adopted the expression, for mud, be it remembered, was the final cause of their good fortune, inasmuch as without mud there would be no crossing-sweepers.

That "there is some soul of good in things evil would men observingly distil it out," and that everything has its use, cannot be denied; and after such an illustration of the good of mud, it may seem ungrateful to lay too much stress on the fact that, as you cannot touch pitch without being defiled, so nothing can be splashed with

mud without being soiled. Now especially true is this with regard to moral mud and its effect on human beings. Few of us are lucky enough, in our journey along the miry ways of life, to escape scot-free from a splashing or two, however cautious and blameless our conduct. Nay, perhaps the more blameless we are, the more likelihood is there of our fair robe of reputation being bedrabbled to some extent—particularly if we have been careful to pick our way through the dirty places. The very success with which we have steered clear of these pitfalls—the very success, indeed, with which we have managed to proceed along our course, generally aggravates the danger we are exposed to from the efforts of these malicious moral scavengers whose self-constituted business it is to collect mud, wherever found, and who do not scruple to manufacture it in case none lies handy to their shovels. For, in this distribution of the offensive stuff, such people act always upon the great maxim that, if you only throw enough of it, some is sure to stick. Anything like publicity naturally increases the activity of these worthies, and will be sure to set them on the look out for you at every corner. And if you chance to pass their way—as you cannot avoid doing, sooner or later—and if you chance to do so in triumph, with band playing and colours flying, they are certain to "have at you!" You may not notice their action at the moment, for they are often very cunning, and do not let you see what they are up to. But go home, and wait a while, and the odds are, that you will assuredly discover one or more dark spots sullyng your garment, and which at first you will not be able to account for. Yes, and you will be singularly happy if you are able to wash it out easily. As a rule it will stick persistently, and if you contrive to get it off, most probably it leaves a stain which no time thoroughly effaces.

By a perversity of fate, too, it will often happen to catch the eye of some keen observer, who will not hesitate to ask how it occurred, and you find yourself plunged into explanations which, according to your skill, will leave a more or less clear impress of doubt on the mind of your interrogator. He says to himself something about "no smoke without fire," and probably will remember his little dialogue with you, whenever your name is mentioned. Even a friend will do this, although a true one will keep it strictly to himself. But let him be a gossip, a chatterer about other

people's affairs, and it is quite on the cards that the trifling speck, the mud-stain no bigger than a pin's head, will become public property, and be magnified into a veritable blotch.

Worse remains behind, if this Paul Pry of a person chance to owe you a grudge, or to be an open enemy. Then, indeed, you may look out for squalls, for be sure he will avail himself of what he has discovered, and use it against you on all opportunities.

The fierce light which nowadays beats on rich and poor alike is a tremendous aid to the nineteenth-century scavengers, brings out in a conspicuous glare every flaw in our garments, and renders the old saying, "clear as mud in a wine-glass," not altogether the anomaly it appears. It was ever thus, from the time of Socrates downwards; and the electric light of modern inquisition, whilst aggravating the evil, should at the same time only induce increased circumspection on the part of all travellers along this weary, and, at the best, but ill-scavenged road of life.

CAPRI

CAPRI is one of those delightful places in which the hotel keepers can afford to be fastidious. The island is small. It has not space to spare for many inns. The scenery is as beautiful as its history is famous or infamous. The tourist who comes within a hundred miles of it, feels it his bounden duty to visit it. Of those who enter its charmed limits, most stay longer than they intended to stay; many leave it only upon the express understanding—with themselves or their companions—that they will return to it as soon as possible; not a few take up their abode in it, and are firmly resolved that they will never leave it; and some actually keep this resolution.

The consequence is, that the solitary visitor is not welcomed here with open arms. It is the rule of the houses that their bedrooms shall contain two beds. There are men who object to share their night's repose with a stranger. It is the fashion to visit the island sociably; not in the mode of Childe Harold. And so the manager of the hotel bows and strokes his chin, talks briefly with this or that waiter or chambermaid, and eventually bows again, and, with ten thousand regrets,

explains, that though he may have five or six bedrooms vacant, he does not see his way clear to offer you the entertainment you desire.

In some respects it is a paradise. In others, however, it is by no means so, unless we call it a paradise after the Fall. When the sky is unclouded, and the blue heavens meet the blue water in the entire circle of the horizon—where the mainland does not interfere; when the vines are not yet in grape, and, therefore, the year is not in its summer heats; when you may be sure of clear evenings, bright nights with abundance of stars, warm murmurous breezes to breathe lightly on your cheek after the pleasant dinner-hour, and all the witchery of those soft sounds that musical voices and unobtrusive mandolines combine to make for the joy of romantic men and women; when there is nothing in the mind of a man to mar the beauty of such dark eyes as will here, without timidity, be upraised to his; when, in short, Nature and the human heart are at one, there is no place like Capri. It puts chains of silk round the soul, and everything except Capri is forgotten.

One must choose one's day discreetly for this little island. It will never do to cross the Bay of Naples when the portents are stormy. The Capri boat is not a foul-weather craft. True, the Company that owns her will urge her on her adventurous career unless a real hurricane be blowing. There are always some bold spirits from remote parts of the world who have no time to spare in waiting for kindly skies, and after whose francs the gentle Italians hunger. It is for their sake that the boat tosses and rolls among the waves, when Vesuvius has put on its judgement cap and the glass whispers of dangerous squalls.

But even at the best, the Capri boat may be soundly execrated. Though the water be smooth as the paper upon which I write; the heavens as propitious as possible; and the witchery of the city and the bay, in the morning light, such that it holds the tongue speechless with admiration; though one anticipates nothing but joy from the innocent excursion; there are divers certain thorns to prick the traveller out of his ecstasy.

Look at yonder gentle lady, standing by the side of the vessel, with her eyes fast upon the panorama of green capes and purple mountains, and whose lips move almost imperceptibly as she murmurs to

herself this or that poem in sympathy with the scene. She would be very happy for the next two hours if only she were allowed to dream her day-dreams after her own fashion. It is no such unreasonable desire; and yet it is doomed to be disappointed.

Ere yet the anchor of the boat is upheaved, the twang of a guitar is heard amidships. This is followed by premonitory sounds from other kindred instruments. And thus it happens that, in the midst of her reverie, the poor lady is suddenly startled by a discordant burst of music from these various tormentors who have arranged to contrive their forces that they may be irresistible. And irresistible they truly are. No sooner is one song at an end than another begins—this time without an accompaniment. And so the minutes drag wearily on, the musicians civilly interspersing their performances with demands upon the travellers' purses.

There are, moreover, other demands to prevent the tourist from feeling worried by the monotony of the perseverance of the minstrels. You may not want anything made of tortoiseshell or coral; but the two or three itinerant merchants who daily voyage to Capri for business purposes will not listen to your words. They have a multitude of elegant productions which they insist upon displaying to you, one by one. If you say, "My good fellow, believe me, I have not the least intention of buying any one of your articles, though you waste half-an-hour upon me," the bland huckster responds gaily with a smile:

"Just make me an offer, sir; that is all I ask. I don't want to be hard on you."

It is not without an effort that you tolerate the irrepressible nuisance for a quarter of an hour. You feel that your position is a false one, and trying to your dignity. Woe be to you, however, if you yield one tittle of your assertions, and buy for the sake of peace! By the establishment of such a precedent, you ensure the attentions of each of the other merchants in turn. On the other hand, if you are courageously obstinate, you will be rewarded at length by the merchant's retreat, baffled. He will seek compensation for your obduracy in the gentle lady aforementioned. Her pensive face is wonderfully attractive to him and his tribe.

Thus the time passes, the cliffs of Capri grow momentarily more clear, the houses

of Naples gradually fade away, and ere long we are at the landing-stage, where a number of free-spoken fishermen and their wives and daughters—spoilt by the petting of artists who profess to love them for the sake of their golden skins—stand with arms akimbo to see what profit they can draw from the newcomers.

For my part, I have met no young women anywhere to match the damsels of Capri for unblushing impudence. The guide-books tell them they are beautiful creatures; and the tourist is adjured to observe the symmetry of their forms, and the glory of their dark, velvety eyes. The consequence is, that they rate themselves at a preposterous figure of importance. In most lands it is the stranger man who ventures to address the local maiden in whom he feels an interest, and from whom it is simple to demand to be directed upon his way. That is not the vogue in Capri. If, in your ascent from the Marina to the town, you come face to face with a damsel carrying a jar on her head—she has been painted a hundred times with that very jar on her head—she, mayhap, sets the utensil upon the ground, and, with her swart fist in her side, accosts you coolly, while she looks you over, from your white hat to your black boots. If you try chaff upon her, she will soon show that she is clever at dialectics. And, I am sorry to say, if she has due provocation, she will speak words that would be held unparliamentary even in Billingsgate. It is probable that the girl has received offers of marriage from a number of visitors at one time or another; and perhaps the milk of human kindness in her has been soured by the reflection that it is time she gave up the free, roving life of her youth, and settled down in the villa, which would be part of the spoil of an affluent foreign husband.

Sweet and dainty are these villas of Capri. They are small, to be sure; but where is space so subtly utilised as here? You enter the precincts by an iron gate from one of the lanes which are Capri's high-roads. Before you, at the end of an avenue of rose-bushes or orange-trees, is the open door of the house. The avenue is short, and the house is liliputian. Ten paces bring you to the porch; but every step is a revelation of charm. There are statues of price among the flowers, and seats, and bowers. Upon the one side you look up at the precipices of Mount Solaro, which rises in the middle of the island;

upon the other you look down a few hundred feet at the blue water eddying into white foam, where it throbs against the rocks of the coast. Perhaps you have a private staircase in the cliffs to the sea; and by the shore a tiny cove all to yourself, with soft black or white sand for your bare feet to sink into, and the tradition of an Augustan palace hewn in the rocks, once upon a time, which perseverance and energy will doubtless enable you to discover. The moon shines with mild splendour upon these idyllic little retreats in Capri; and she hears much absurd though passionate sentiment talked in them.

You will find few hotels anywhere so attractive as the Hotel Pagano of Capri. It is generally full. The German of one year tells his northern friends about it, and they in their turn make a point of frequenting it. Of the forty or fifty men and women who sit with loud chatter at its dinner-table, perhaps thirty are talking the language of Goethe. They are excited, as, perhaps, nowhere else. It is odd that the land of "dolce far niente" should have such an effect upon northerners. So it is, however. From the shy little girl in spectacles by your side at one end of the table, to the white-haired professor at the other end of the table, the current of enthusiasm runs with almost uniform strength.

The girl talks to you about the skies and her emotions. The old man eagerly tells you of his reminiscences of the fair isle during the past forty or fifty years—the term of his acquaintance with it. Excellent balm for a depressed mind is it to see him the next morning go from the coffee and eggs of the breakfast-table into the rose-garden adjacent, and smell each rose with a joyous expansion of the nostrils and uplifting of his head. Commend me to this old gentleman as a teacher of the epicurean kind!

I have referred to eggs in connection with the Hotel Pagano breakfast. Thereby hangs a little story. The hotel receives its name from its founder, one Pagano, who did well as an inn-keeper, and duly died in the odour of opulence and respectability. After his death, they read his will. Herein were certain clauses, which may be said to have world-wide interest. The old man, grateful for the patronage he had received from artists of divers lands, ordained, in writing, that, if any poor student of the pencil and

brush should come to the hotel and make known his impecunious state, he was to be boarded and lodged without charge, and during a moderate stay. Also, the testator bade his sons, who were to succeed him, give every guest in the hotel two fresh eggs, in addition to the ordinary coffee and bread and butter of the early meal of the day. The eggs were to be regarded as a gift to the guest. Finally, it was enjoined that no one should pay more than six francs daily for his board and lodging.

This gives an agreeable aroma of eccentricity to life in the Hotel Pagano. One feels that one is, for the time, under no common roof. It may be said that such provisions in a will are sure not to be held as binding by those upon whom they are enjoined. Perhaps not, anywhere except in Capri. Here, however, your two fresh eggs are still a living witness of the honour paid by the sons to the wishes of their sire; and if you question the nature of the will, say a word or two to the waiter, and he will lead you where you may see it for yourself.

Capri is the proud possessor of a maiden who has fame not in the island only, but also on the mainland, as "the beauty of Capri." I believe the phrase has been a byword for a generation or two. The inference is therefore that the honour is a transferable one. Be that as it may, you must not fail to see the pretty damsel who, in the year of grace 1889, carries the title. For my part, I speak of her from hearsay only. She was away when I was in the Hotel Pagano. I dare say she was deafened, poor girl, by the compliments with which the Germans dinned her in their own tongue. Her father is a cobbler, and the honest man doubtless profits by the wear and tear of shoe-leather upon his own threshold. Enquiry for "la bella" must of course be made with some degree of tact. It will not do to discuss the subject with an unmarried lady of mature age, though she be your neighbour at table, and an established resident in the island. Nor is it quite judicious to seek guidance of one or other of the Capri maidens whom you meet in the lanes.

After all, however, the beauties of Capri are a sweeter solace to the soul than the exciting loveliness of the face of a single maiden. There is a certain little cemetery, remote from the town, on a slope with the white precipices of Mount Solaro behind it, and the blue sea at the foot of

the vineyards beneath it. Here lie the bodies of not a few Protestants—foreign sojourners, who have died as well as lived in Capri. The one word, "Rest," is inscribed over the portal, and within the headstones peep from amid a thicket of geranium-bushes in hearty flower. Rest is what one is sure to find in Capri, if one wants it. There is no spot in the world with such delightful possibilities of repose as this little isle. Elsewhere you may find quietude and health, but it is often at the cost of exile. Here you look upon the Neapolitan shore and Vesuvius, and see daily, far down on the water, the little steamer that will, whenever your humour pleases, put you again into communication with the world of Europe, in two or three hours.

It would take the repute of the misdeeds of many Emperors like Tiberius to blight the attractiveness of Capri. Some say, indeed, that Tacitus and Suetonius have drawn the long bow in this matter. It may well be. Every man is a myth; and no man is so good or so bad as his biographer makes him.

Be this as it may, the old monk who lives on the summit of the cliff, from which rumour has it that Tiberius used to amuse himself by throwing his victims into the sea—a drop of seven hundred and forty-five feet—dreams none the worse for the flavour of iniquity that ought to be round about him. His little church is erected over the empty chambers of one of the palaces which the Emperor built for himself in the island. Not all these chambers are explored. Some are hard to attain; and some, which open towards the precipitous face of the terrible cliff, are now inaccessible, from the stoppage of the passages which formerly descended or ascended to them. There is scope enough for the imagination here. Why should not certain of these rooms, which were once occupied by him who was, as the saying goes, master of the world, still exist in the condition they had when he died? An earthquake may have dislocated the Palace before it was dismantled, even as an earthquake has quite recently split the ceiling of the shrine into which the careful monk duly guides you. Fancy finding here an Emperor's treasure-chamber, for example! Capri has, during the last century, given up a vast amount of sculpture and jewel work; but it is probable enough

that all this is as nothing to what lies hid in the labyrinthine caverns of its rocks.

Hard by the chapel on the cliff is a modest restaurant dedicated to Tiberius. The monk has no connection with this. He, naturally, is much more concerned to make you see how hard set he is with financial difficulties, than to direct you to what may even be termed a rival establishment—a place with claims on your pocket stronger than his. However, there is no very keen enmity between the chapel and the restaurant.

It is a breezy, blustering place, this perch over the precipice. The old lady—a genial soul—who exploits the local memory of Tiberius, and welcomes you at the door, knows your errand before you say one word to her. She offers you five or six substantial pebbles, blue and easy to hold, and bids you cast them into the sea. It is a grim sort of object-lesson. Even as your pebble falls—for a while straight and undeviating, but afterwards with bounds from one jagged tooth of red rock to another, and thus, at length, into the sea with a splash, hardly visible to you, seven hundred and forty-five feet above—so, nearly two thousand years ago, fell the bodies of the men who were so unhappy as to anger the Emperor Tiberius. And, at the base of the cliffs, two or three men were ready, in a boat, to beat out the life that might yet, by a miracle, linger in any of the bodies after their stupendous fall.

Ugh! it gives one the heartache, this contemplation in fancy, and with the aid of genuine accessories, of such ghastly tragedies, wrought with so methodical a hand! It is no longer possible to play the part of apologist for so grisly a monarch. Much as one wishes it were otherwise, Tiberius has scarred the beauty and charm of the little island. He has peopled it with spectres of the dead a million times more enduring than his own unrighteous dust. He has made it impossible for all of us to echo the words with which a southern visitor thus memorialises his second sojourn on the brow of this cliff: "After several months, I have returned to this laughing little house, and my heart quite exults with joy in admiration of the beauties of nature. Oh, Capri! Capri! Thou hast my heart!" One is fain rather to strike a graver note: "Here lived a ghoul in the shape of a man!"

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hollow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. ROBSON had, from the first, strongly disapproved of Doris's intimacy with Mrs. Ainslie. She knew more about the latter than she cared to tell Doris; and she did not consider her by any means a desirable acquaintance for her charge. She had compared notes with the Redments, Laurence's old friends, and had heard from them a deplorable account of the Kensington ménage, and of the way in which Mrs. Ainslie neglected her child and her home-duties. She was, according to Mrs. Redmont, not only idle and extravagant, but capricious and flighty and vain in the extreme.

"They say that Captain Milton is far more at the house than Laurence has any idea of," Mrs. Redmont went on, lowering her voice. "He has the worst of reputations, you know; and I was told for a fact that Mrs. Ainslie was seen alone with him at Ascot. Laurence was from home at the time. And they say, too—servants will talk, you know—that often she takes more wine than is good for her, and that at such times she is like a maniac! I am heartily sorry for Laurence," Mrs. Redmont added. "He is a good fellow, but far too gentle and yielding."

Mrs. Robson did not repeat all that she had heard to Doris; but she told her enough to make the girl look very grave, and to sigh over Laurence's disappointed love, but not enough to make her willing to take Mrs. Robson's advice, and give up the intimacy.

"One must speak as one finds," Doris said, in her gentle, decisive way. Doris could be very decisive if she liked. "Mrs. Ainslie has always been very kind and pleasant to me. I have been a great deal at the house, but I have never met any objectionable people, or seen anything wrong. Mrs. Ainslie is—not quite a lady, I admit; but she likes me, and for Laurence's sake I would like to be her friend."

This pleasant state of things had lasted nearly a month—which was a very long time for any of Mrs. Ainslie's friendships to last; but it came suddenly to an end at last. Mrs. Ainslie grew tired of being on her best behaviour; her admiration for

Doris waned, and she suddenly awoke to a knowledge of the fact that her husband, who rarely when they were alone entered the drawing-room, or showed any preference for her society, invariably appeared whenever Doris remained to afternoon-tea, and seemed very well content to linger in the drawing-room talking to her, or playing with his child.

Her jealousy once aroused—for although she did not care for Laurence, she could not bear to think that any other woman was preferred before her; she grew first sulky, and then openly disagreeable and rude, and finally utterly horrified Doris and disgusted Laurence by a passionate outburst, in which she accused Doris of "coming after her husband," and trying to win his affections away from their lawful possessor.

"You wanted him yourself, you know you did; before ever he saw me you wanted him, and now you are trying to take him from me," she raved as Doris, very pale and scared, stared at her in open-eyed amazement and horror. "I know what your talk of friendship for me means. I am not blind, and I can see through you. You may be a piece of perfection in Laurence's eyes, but you are not in mine, and so I tell you!" she cried, defiantly. "Hold my tongue, Laurence!" as Laurence, with a set, stern face, put his hand on her shoulder and commanded silence. "Not till I've said what I mean to say! It does people good sometimes to hear what other people think of them and their goings on; and she shall hear what I think of her."

"She shall not hear."

There was something so terrible in the look of hatred and contempt which Laurence bent upon his wife, and in the gesture with which he warned her to move out of his way as he crossed the room and held out his arm to Doris, that, against her will, the angry words died on her tongue, and she shrank back in angry silence.

"She shall not hear," Laurence repeated, and he took Doris's trembling hand and drew it through his arm. "Dear, come with me. I will not allow you to remain here any longer to listen to her insults," he said, sternly; and he led her, very pale and trembling from head to foot, out of the room, and into a smaller one on the opposite side of the hall, and placed her in a chair, and got, and made her drink, a glass of wine.

"You must not come here again, Doris,"

he said after a while, when Doris had recovered her scattered senses, and, though still very pale, could smile faintly, and wonder how she could have been so foolish. "I ought never to have allowed your visits. I might have known that a friendship between you and—one like her—was impossible; but I did hope that you might have done some good. I thought even she could not help but profit by your society. However, that illusion has passed, like the rest. Henceforth, I am hopeless. I shall struggle no longer," he added in a hopeless, dreary voice, which set Doris's heart throbbing painfully.

Yet what could she say to comfort him? He was right: it was no use. Friends had warned him, and he had been deaf to their warning. Like many another young man, he had fallen in love with his eyes and not with his understanding; and when the lust of the eye was satisfied, and possession had brought with it satiety, and he awoke to the knowledge that he was bound for life to a vulgar, coarse-minded woman, whose beauty had been her only charm, what remained to him but a bitter disappointment and a life-long repentance?

The blinding tears rushed into Doris's eyes at the sight of the despair in his face. She gave a little cry, and clasped her hands impulsively round his arm.

"Laurence, can nothing be done? Is there nothing that can help you?" she cried, passionately.

Laurence gave an odd laugh.

"Nothing but death," he said, curtly. "We are bound to each other—she and I, Doris—till death do us part; and Death is long in coming to those who have a welcome waiting for him! If it were not for the child, I should not care how soon the summons came to me!"

"Ah, but there is your child," Doris cried, eagerly. "You have her to live for, Laurence. If all else fails, you—you have still your child to comfort you."

"How do you know that?" and again the bitter smile curled Laurence's lips. "It might be better for her, too, to die now, when she is stainless and innocent. How can I tell what heritage of shame and misery her mother may not have bequeathed to her? You saw yourself that my wife—my wife!"—and the scorn and loathing in his voice made Doris tremble and grow paler—"was not in her right senses to-day. She inherited her besetting sin from her father. He was as drunken an old scamp as ever lived, and I was

warned that his daughter had inherited his disease; but I would not believe it. I thought, in my folly, to gather grapes off thorns, and figs off thistles; and now, if the nettles sting, and the thorns pierce me, I have no right to complain. But it is hard," he added. "Heaven knows I have done my best to save her. I see, now, that the attempt was useless from the beginning. I shall give it up now."

"Oh, no, Laurence! It is never too late. Reformation is never quite hopeless, as long as life lasts," Doris cried, earnestly. "Be patient, still, with her."

Laurence laughed scornfully.

"Patient? Nay, I have done with her! She may go her own way now, for all I care." And then, with a sudden change of tone, "Here is the cab, Doris; let me take you to it."

He led her down the steps and placed her in the cab, and stood bare-headed on the pavement until it drove away. Doris leant forward and waved her hand to him. She could see his face but dimly for the tears of compassion and pain which filled her eyes, and, when he was quite out of sight, she leant back in the cab and cried bitterly over the ruined life and the bitter pain and disappointment of the man she loved so well!

CHAPTER XI.

DORIS had intended to remain in town until the end of June; but during the fortnight which followed her last painful visit to Laurence's home, she found the days so long, and the round of visiting and gaiety so unbearably dull and weary, that she was by no means sorry when an excuse for leaving town earlier was afforded by Mrs. Robson's ill-health. She had caught a violent cold in the early spring, and although she had recovered in some degree, and was able to go about as usual, the hot weather in June tried her strength sadly, and the doctor recommended country air and quiet, as the best restorative.

Doris was very glad of the excuse. She rarely saw Laurence now. Once they met at a dinner-party, and she was pained to see how ill and careworn he looked; and once she saw him in the Park; but he never came to her house. Doris had not guessed how delightful the renewal of their old friendship had been, or how sorely she should miss it until now. London grew hateful to her, the dances and parties dull and stupid, now that there

was so little chance of meeting Laurence, and she gladly snatched at the excuse which the doctor's advice offered, and left town nearly a fortnight earlier than she had intended.

"I don't feel very well, either. I think our dissipations have been too much for both of us," she declared, when Mrs. Robson protested against dragging her away from town too early. "We shall both be glad of a little rest."

And if Mrs. Robson understood more than Doris imagined of the true reason of her wish for rest and quiet, she was too wise a woman, and had too much tact, to hint at the existence of such a knowledge. She had noticed, and rejoiced over the rupture of Doris's friendship with Mrs. Ainslie, and the abrupt cessation of her visits; but as Doris was quite silent on the subject, she did not remark upon it, and only drew her own conclusions.

Doris wrote to Laurence, informing him of her change of plans, and reminding him of his promise to allow little Doris to return with her to Chesham. He had answered the letter, briefly thanking her for the renewed invitation, and promising to send little Doris to her house on the day named for departure. But when that day arrived, instead of the child, another brief note came, which simply told Doris that Mrs. Ainslie had refused to allow the child to leave home at present, and that, consequently, Laurence was reluctantly obliged to decline the invitation.

So Doris, sadder at heart than ever, and more full of pity for her old friend, went back to Chesham, and took up her old life again. She fed her poultry, and worked in the garden, and studied her music, in which she took a great delight, and for which she had a remarkable talent, more diligently than ever. But the quiet life which had contented her so well, and in which she had been so happy during the two years which followed her aunt's death, failed to satisfy her now. Something seemed to have gone out of it; it lacked something—she could not tell what exactly, but she felt the want keenly, and felt, too, that she had lost her new content, and regained much of the old pain and loneliness.

During the summer and autumn she heard very little news of Laurence, and that little did not tend to make her feel any more satisfied or happier about him. Mrs. Robson corresponded occasionally with Mrs. Redmont, and now and then in

her letters she would mention Laurence, and sigh over his wasted life, and the unfulfilled promise of his youth.

"He was so clever—really, quite a genius—that we all expected he would do great things; but lately he seems to have lost all energy and all pride in his work," she wrote. "My husband says it has fallen off dreadfully lately—and who can wonder, poor fellow! with such an unhappy home, and such a wife? Her name is openly coupled with Captain Milton now; she is flaunting all over London with him alone. I am truly sorry for Laurence; he is such a good fellow, though I know he is a little weak, and just the kind of man whom a woman could influence for good or bad; and if he had married the right kind of wife, he would have been a splendid fellow."

Mrs. Robson was always sorry when these letters came, for Doris always enquired if they contained any news of Laurence, and used to look so grave and sad after perusing them, that Mrs. Robson often repented showing them to her.

The autumn passed, December came with the first fall of snow, and a biting frost which seemed likely to last for weeks, and one morning the post brought dreadful news to Chesham.

Doris came into the breakfast-room rather later than usual, and found Mrs. Robson in tears over a letter which she recognised to be in Mrs. Redmont's handwriting. Her thoughts went at once to Laurence.

"What is the matter?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Oh, Doris, such sad news!"

Mrs. Robson folded the letter with a trembling hand, and looked up at her. "Little Doris Ainslie is dead."

"Dead! Oh, what a trial for Laurence!" Doris cried. "How was it? Has she been ill long?"

"No, it was terribly sudden. It was an accident. It seems that lately Mrs. Ainslie has taken to driving a phaeton and a pair of ponies in the Park. Laurence objected strongly, for she knows nothing about driving; but finding that she was, as usual, determined to have her own way, he expressly ordered that little Doris should never be allowed to accompany her. If his wife persisted in risking her life, she might do so, but he would not have the child's life endangered. Well, one morning last week, during his absence, Mrs. Ainslie took the child with her. As she was entering

the Park by the Marble Arch the ponies shied, became unmanageable, and the child was thrown out and killed. The wheel went over the poor little thing, and she never spoke or breathed after they lifted her up. They say," and Mrs. Robson lowered her voice, "that Mrs. Ainalie was not quite sober at the time. Oh, I am so sorry for Laurence. He was so fond of the child, and to lose her thus is so terrible!"

"Yes," Doris said, absently.

She asked to see the letter; and having read it, folded it up silently, and gave it back to Mrs. Robson. That lady watched her anxiously as she sat and pretended to eat her breakfast, and said a word or two now and then in an absent, far-away voice. Doris's thoughts were far away, with Laurence. Oh, if only she could be with him, she thought, to comfort him in his trouble, or, if comfort was impossible, to sorrow with him.

She wrote to him; but though she waited anxiously for the answer, none came. Then she wrote to Mrs. Redmont, and begged for news of him, and received an answer which only added to her grief.

Things were worse than ever between the husband and wife, Mrs. Redmont wrote. The child had been the only tie between them. Since her death, Laurence had refused to have any communication with his wife. They still lived in the same house; but they rarely saw, and never spoke to, each other. Laurence would not forgive his wife. She had killed his child, and he would have nothing more to do with her. So long as she cared to keep it she might have the protection of his name, and reside in his house; but, for the future, they would be husband and wife only in name.

Doris shed many bitter tears over that letter. She had hoped so much for Laurence. She had planned out such a bright future of fame and happiness for him in the old days; and, even when her first trouble came, and she learned that he had chosen another to share that future instead of herself, and that she must be content to take a second place, her interest had never weakened, her faith never faltered. He would justify it some day, she knew. But now, for the first time, she doubted.

What hope could the future hold for Laurence, bound to a woman whom he hated; who had justly earned that hatred by her wickedness and neglect of child and husband; by her scarcely veiled infidelity

to her marriage vow? Laurence was not like some men, Doris thought sadly. He was not strong enough to play a losing game; he was more likely to give it up and fling down his cards in despair. It had always been so in the old days.

That was a long, sad winter to Doris, waiting sadly in her quiet home for news which so rarely came; which, when it did come, was worse than the silence under which she had chafed and fumed. Mrs. Ainalie's Madison with Captain Milton had been so openly talked about among Laurence's friends, that no one but Laurence himself was at all surprised when, early in March, she left her home with him.

She left a letter behind her, in which she declared that Laurence's unkindness had driven her to take this decisive step, and so rid him for ever of the wife he detested, and whose life he had made one long misery. There was an insulting reference to Doris in the last sentence, which brought an ugly word from Laurence's lips as he tore the letter in two and flung it in the fire.

She might go. He would not lift a finger to bring her back. She might go to the shameful life she had chosen. It would have been well if she had gone long ago, Laurence thought, before he, too, had lost his self respect and become almost as degraded and vile as herself.

He loathed himself for his folly—nay, his worse than folly; but he seemed to have lost any desire to attain to a higher standard, to win his way back to his old place in men's esteem, to that height in his profession from which he had so sadly fallen. Little by little his old friends had drifted away from him. Those who came now to his house, and drank his brandy, and smoked his cigars, were men whom once he would have disdained to know. Alas! they were fit companions for him now. And even when, early in May, there reached him the news that both his wife and Captain Milton had met with a terrible death in a railway-accident in America, and that he was a free man once more, things did not seem to improve. It was too late, he told himself. He had fallen too low to retrieve himself, to win back his good name and fame. And, too, he was conscious that his hand had lost its cunning, and that the work he turned out now was not half as good as before. The rejection of two out of the three pictures he sent to the Academy exhibition, and

the very unflattering criticisms which were lavished on the accepted one, strengthened this conviction in his mind, and made him even more hopeless, and less inclined to exert himself even than before.

"What is the use?" he said, when his old friend Mr. Redmont remonstrated with him, and Paul Beaumont, who had run up to town for a few days, called on him, and urged him to bestir himself, to win back his lost reputation, and to show the world that he was not the failure it thought him. Life had been too hard for him; he would struggle no more; he would let things slide now. It was only when Paul, with one last effort to rouse him from the slough of despond into which he had sunk, spoke of Doris, and said what a terrible trouble it was to her to know of her old friend's degradation, that he seemed moved.

"Poor Doris! She believed in me once," he muttered.

"She believes in you still. Justify her faith, if you have a spark of manliness left in you," Paul said, sternly.

But Laurence only shook his head, and muttered that it was too late; that the past was too dark and terrible ever to be retrieved.

"Is that all the message you can send her? See, I am going to Chesham to-morrow. I promised to take her news of you. Have you only that coward's answer to send back to her, your best friend, whose life has been spoiled by her love for you?" Paul went on still more sternly. "Yes, it is true;" as Laurence looked up with a white, startled face. "She has always loved you. When you were more worthy of her than you are now, she loved you; as women like her rarely love more than once in a lifetime; and you, like a fool, were blind to it! I believe, sunken and degraded as you are," and Paul's keen eyes flashed with a mingled contempt, and anger, and pity, "she loves you still!"

A swift, bright light flashed for an instant into Laurence's sunken eyes; for an instant he raised his head, and looked with an eager enquiry in his face, at Paul. Then the light faded, the old gloom and sullenness spread over his face again, and he turned away.

"Impossible," he muttered. "She and I are far too far apart now for that to be possible. I was never worthy of her, as you say; but light and darkness are not more opposite than she and I now. Tell

her so, Beaumont. Tell her that the greatest kindness she can do to me now is to forget me; to blot me altogether out of her life and memory!"

And then he left Paul abruptly.

This was not a pleasant message for Paul to take back to Doris, who was waiting impatiently at the Red House for the news he had promised to bring her. He arrived at the close of a bright August day, when the old house, basking in the red sunset light, was looking its prettiest. Doris, in her white gown, was sitting on the lawn, reading. She started as he approached, and rose and went hurriedly to meet him, with an eager light of hope and expectation in her eyes.

It was hard to quench it, Paul thought, to bring there, instead, the gloom and sadness which his news would cause. Doris felt instinctively that he had nothing pleasant to tell her. She did not ask for his news at first, only gave a quick look into his face and sighed, then welcomed him graciously, and took him into the house, and into the cool, shady dining-room, where a tea-dinner was waiting for him, and sat by him while he ate it, and told him bits of Chesham news, and asked for tidings of mutual friends; but she did not mention Laurence. But, after the meal was over, and they were sitting together in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Eobson, who was an ardent advocate of Paul's cause, had discreetly retired, she dropped her work upon her knee, and looked up at him, as he stood leaning against the window, with grave, earnest eyes.

"You have no good news to tell me, I know that," she said, very quietly, "else you would have told me before this! You saw him?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"And—are things better, or worse?"

"Worse; ever so much worse," Paul answered, curtly. "They are just about as bad as they can be. If it were not for one thing, I should say they were quite hopeless."

"What did he say? Did he send me no message?"

There were no tears in Doris's eyes; her grief was too deep and too near her heart for that relief; but her eyes, full of a terrible sadness, looked up searchingly into Paul's. He answered very reluctantly:

"Yes, he bade me tell you that the greatest kindness you could do him, now, was to forget him—to blot him altogether out of your life and memory."

A sad and slow, but inexpressibly sweet, smile came over Doris's face.

"Ah, but that is impossible," she said. "Long ago, I told you that he was a part of my life; that I could not imagine an existence separate from his—in which he had no part! It was a child who spoke to you then, Mr. Beaumont; an ignorant, foolish child," and she smiled sadly again. "I am older and wiser now, but I still say the same thing. It is as true now as then."

"It must cease to be true then," Paul said, a little sternly; "the Laurence whom you loved and believed in is dead. Weep over him if you will, but do not try to blind yourself, and to clothe the present Laurence with the past Laurence's virtues. He is—oh, he knows it himself, he said so—unworthy of your interest, unfit even to be in your presence! Forget him, dear. Why will you waste your youth in vain regrets, your love on one so unworthy," Paul cried, passionately, "when there are others who love you as he cannot love; who would give their lives to serve you?"

Doris looked up quickly, her eyes softened, she left her chair and stood by his side, and put her slim, white fingers on his arm.

"I thought, Paul, we had agreed not to speak of that again," she said, very gently. "You know how sorry I am that I cannot give you the love you ask; but I have none left to give. I was prodigal and wasteful once, and I poured it out with a reckless hand, and now, however much I may wish it, I cannot gather it up again!" she sighed.

"Forgive me."

Paul took her hand and kissed it. With an effort, he forced himself to speak in his usual calm tone, and told her of his visit to Laurence, of the sad change he saw in him, and of the way in which his brother artists spoke of him; and, even as she listened, her face grew paler and paler, and her eyes darker and more intense; but she did not speak. Even after he had finished, she was still silent for a long time, then, suddenly raising her eyes to his, she said:

"You said, a little while ago, Paul, that if it were not for one thing, you would

say that things were hopeless. What is that one thing?"

Paul hesitated. He had repented the words as soon as they were uttered, and he had hoped, since Doris did not remark upon them at the time, that she had not noticed them. He frowned and hesitated; but her eyes were fixed so steadily on his face that they drew his answer from his unwilling lips.

"You," he said, reluctantly. "No one can save him, but you! He is going to the devil as fast as he can go, and you are the only person who can save him. I doubt, even, if you could do it now," he added.

The swift, bright radiance which, at his words, leapt into Doris's face, her little, startled ejaculation, as she clasped her hands together, made his heart beat cruelly.

"I! Oh, tell me how! I will bless and thank you all my life!" Doris cried. The red light of the sunset fell on her as she stood before him, it lit up her chestnut head with a kind of glory, and sent a wonderful radiance into her dark eyes. "Oh, tell me; show me the way," she cried.

"There is only one way," Paul said, curtly. "He needs a stronger will than his own to lean against, a stronger hand than his own to lead him back into the paths of honour and happiness, to pluck him back from the abyss of shame and ruin, to which he is hurrying. Mind, I do not advise it; he is not worth the sacrifice, but if you wish to save him it can be done—there is one way."

The colour rushed again into Doris's face, she gave him a swift, shy glance, then her eyes fell, and her face paled again.

"He will never give me the chance—he will never ask me now," she murmured.

"Then ask him, yourself," Paul said, curtly. "He loves you; I know, to my cost, that you love him. If you wish to save him, take the only way; you alone can do it."

And then, for he did not wish her to see how much it cost him to give such advice, he turned from her, and stepping through the open window on to the lawn, left her, abruptly, to her thoughts.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muried's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"
"*A Faivre Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LAW OF A MAN'S OWN MIND.

A WEEK had gone by. A week—what work will it not accomplish, this unrelenting, eternity-like time, this ever-moving yet changeless time? It works, it is never idle. It heals wounds; but, also, it conceals lasting sores; it brings rest and creates restlessness, and calls itself the great healer, and yet many say that it destroys as often as it heals. The knowledge of time forces us to believe in eternity.

To Elva Kestell that week was as a foretaste of purgatory. It uprooted every belief she had seemed to possess; it made her doubt in goodness, in faith, in everything; but it did not crush her. When the forge hammer comes down upon the metal, then its strength is tested. Elva refused to be crushed, and, during that week, she gave Hoel a week to answer as the limit of time. She went about as usual; she stopped none of her preparations, and not one word about the subject escaped her lips.

A week was ample time for Hoel to answer. She had written to his lodgings. He could hardly be gone, or, if gone, he could not have gone far. Her letter would be sent on; he would write and explain everything. It was not possible to keep silent—not possible. But the week went by, and Elva said "ten days."

Then ten days went by, and Elva began

to realise, yes, only began then to realise that something had happened which would alter all her life.

Had she known some reason, she said, "I could have borne it;" but to have none, none; to have this curtain let down, suddenly, which hid all the joy of her life, was maddening. Worse still, her pride—and Elva was naturally proud, though she had hardly realised it before—began to assert itself. A less strong, proud nature would have been crushed—struck down by this sudden storm. Elva, on the contrary, stood up straighter, and called up all her pride to her help.

She must have been utterly mistaken. She had given her best, her sweetest, to a man who, in a moment, could cast it from him. It seemed so strange, so utterly impossible, that no theory could fit into it; no ordinary rules explain it.

Now the days of suspense were over. She was thankful for these ten days of silence, even in her agony, for she thought: "I have now the power to face the world. It must be faced. I will take it on myself—let him go free. I can be generous, if he is incapable of being so."

So, one cold, cheerless November afternoon, Elva entered the study before the lamp had been brought in, and just when the uncertain wintry light blurred the outline of every object, and she said quite firmly:

"Papa, will you do something for me?"

Mr. Kestell had been better since that fatal day. He seemed to have rallied his powers. Still, the sight of Elva was a daily sorrow.

"Yes, darling; anything for you."

"Will you tell mamma and other people that our engagement is broken off, and that I am responsible for it? I am. If he

came now I would say the same. It is ten days since we spoke about it."

"My poor child; he will never come back. You are right."

"Don't pity me, please. Spare me what people will say. But no, they will not dare say anything to me, and I need not think of the rest. I will tell Amice."

Elva had gone through her task, and she walked out of the room. When she reached the hall she paused. Then she noticed that Amice's umbrella was not in its accustomed place. Her sister must be visiting her poor people; but she would soon return. In the sitting-room, Elva heard Symee's gentle voice reading aloud to her mother.

How desolate the place was! Every corner seemed more or less associated with Hoel. "Hoel, Hoel, Hoel," she called out silently; and no answer could come. "You won my love," she said, "and now you have despised it. Was it so worthless. No, no; I know it was not. I would have loved you so truly. I would have helped you in everything; but you despised me and what I could give. Perhaps you always thought little of women, and now find that you made a mistake in fancying I was able to help you. Why should I mind, if he does not? But I do—I do; though no one shall ever know it. Other girls have been forsaken, jilted. Some have died of it; but I will not—no, I will not. Why am I not like Amice? She would not have been bound by the human love, she would have soared higher. I have not done this—I cannot."

She hastily put on a red cloak and a hat that hung in the hall, and went out down the drive and through the gate which led out upon the bridge. Ah, just here she had met Hoel; and here, yes, here, Walter Akister had crossed their path, and had scowled on them. Had his curse borne fruit? Strange, foolish fancies! She walked on and stood on the bridge. All was terribly desolate. It had rained in the morning, and the tree-twigs were still moist and dripping. A grey shade was over the landscape; out yonder on the high lands the winds would be blowing, here it was sheltered. Elva would willingly have gone off at once upon the wild forest-land, and tried, as in the old days, to feel the same freedom as before, to feel that she was one with Nature; but it was too late now, and, besides, all was out of tune. The peace which belongs to Nature, even in her wildest moods, and which Elva had

shared, in spite of strange, unfulfilled longings, was gone—gone. The discord that belongs to the human race, as apart from so-called inanimate nature, had entered her heart.

"I am not the same," she thought, as disregarding the damp air, she leant over the parapet. "I never shall be again, never; I cannot be resigned. I am not good, I cannot understand, I will not see that it is right; it is not right. No, no; but I will try and hide it from the world. That is all I can do."

Future aggravating details presented themselves to her, just as a man might be annoyed by the buzzing of flies when he was lying mortally wounded. The Fitzgeralds would be so curious; Mrs. Eagle Bennison would condole; Miss Heaton would lift her eyebrows; and even George Guthrie, her old friend, would perhaps tease her. How she hated the thought of all this! She could have borne her misery better if she might have retired to a convent, or gone right away; but where could she go alone? Her mother would not hear of such a thing, and Amice and she could not both leave together. Life was hateful, only made up of suffering, only—

She looked up and saw Amice standing close beside her.

"Elva, dear, it is damp; why are you here?"

"I was waiting for you."

"For me. I am coming indoors." Then the hardness of the tone struck Amice. She had guessed something was the matter, but had not dared to think of it. "Elva, something is the matter; tell me!"

"The matter, yes, and no. My engagement with Mr. Fenner is broken off; but you were never very friendly with him—you will not mind much."

Amice remained speechless. The curse had indeed fallen, and Elva was so hard over it—which meant that she was suffering intensely.

"Did you break it off?" she murmured.

"I shall say so."

"To clear him. Oh, I never thought he would be so cruel. I see now he was not worthy, not worthy of you; and yet, when I saw him, I——"

"You saw him," said Elva, passionately. "When? Tell me, did he come here?"

She seized Amice's hand with an energy which she had never used before.

"Yes, he came here."

"And you saw him? Why did he not ask for me?"

"I do not know. Leave it alone; leave it alone. He was not worthy of you."

How strange that Amice should use the same words! But what had Hoel done?

"You must, you shall tell me where you saw him!"

"In the wood. Oh, Elva, don't ask me any more. I do not know; but it is the——"

"The what?"

"The curse of gold. It has fallen on you, too."

"What nonsense, Amice; you have said things like that often. You imagine because we are rich that we must be cursed. It is utterly false. And if Hoel has this idea, too, then he is very wrong. But he knew all about it before—before I loved him."

"Does mamma know? What will papa do?"

"Do? Amice, you madden me. I tell you I take it on myself, entirely."

"But it is not true." And Amice raised her blue eyes to her sister's face, and then clung to her.

"Oh, Elva, Elva, if I could have borne this for you, I would have done so, so willingly. Surely if we are punished, there may be a place found for repentance."

"Repentance, his—then——"

"He is ungenerous, he is not noble. But it is a law, such a pitiless law—the just for the unjust."

Elva did not understand; she was not trying to do so. Suddenly she gave way.

"Amice, Amice, you are so good. You have never loved so entirely, so helplessly, as I have done. What can I do? What shall I do? I loved him so much, so much. I do now, even now, though my heart seems filled with bitterness. It is not I that have given up, he has done it, and without giving me one reason, Amice—do you hear?—not one. I am young and strong; it will not kill me. I am well, quite well, even after these ten days. Ten days—do you believe me?—ten days, and not one line. It is true—true. But you must tell no one. Sometimes I feel I must hate him, and yet I can't. If I could, I should be happy. I have prayed—yes, prayed to think little of him, and I can't—I can't."

Was this Elva? How changed she was! Amice knew now that some great turning-point had come—the curse, whatever it was, in its fulness. Hoel Fenner knew it,

and he had forsaken the doomed house. Why should he join his lot with theirs? And yet Elva knew nothing of it—must know nothing of it—she who so loved her father.

How was she to offer comfort? There was but one way. And there, on the bridge, with the weariness of the damp day spreading itself over the beautiful valley, and over the dank grass by the weird pool, Amice resolved.

"I don't know how, but somehow there must be restitution—somewhere; and then—— Oh, prayer is powerful, and God must hear me. Let it fall on me, but not on her."

Aloud she said:

"Tell me how I can help you."

"How? Never mention his name; let me forget him. I must, I must in time. But, Amice, he may yet come."

"He will never come."

"How do you know? Are you all in league against me?"

"Come in, dear, dear Elva. Is it not best to know the truth?"

"The truth? There is none. Well, let us go in, and keep my counsel. You and papa accept the inevitable easily."

Elva's bitterness was terrible to Amice.

"I and papa. He said Mr. Fenner would not come back?"

"Yes, he said so ten days ago."

"The bitterness of death is manifold," said Amice, half to herself, as the two went back.

As they entered the house, the wind swept up the valley, and seemed to heave one long sigh.

As they passed up the drive, Amice instinctively looked towards her father's study windows. One of them had no shutter up, as Mr. Kestell liked to be able to look out. A red curtain was drawn across; but it was illuminated by a lamp behind it.

Elva noticed the look, and answered it.

"Papa is very good. I will try and spare him. He will tell mamma. I don't think I could do that. She will ask so many questions."

"Yes," said Amice.

Their steps on the gravel were heard plainly in the study. Mr. Kestell was there, and moved the curtain slightly aside to see out. It was only for an instant. One glance seemed to tell him that it was Elva and her sister.

He let the curtain drop and walked back to his knee-hole table, and sat down in his

arm-chair. That interview with Elva had tried him severely; but also it had given him strength. All the time she had been out he had been recovering himself; only now he could put his thoughts together.

"She has left off expecting him now. It is better so. Let me see what can be done. A few weeks more, and it would have been all right—a wife has so much power over her husband, so very much. Still, a little thing may disturb a whole life. I will think that it is best. Only cowards go back on the past. The future is in the hands of everybody. One can do so much for the future. How much or how little does he know? Or is it mere guess work? He saw Button. I have found that out. Button died a week too late. He had great vitality, that man. Had he guessed something? Anyhow, again, I was right. I have those deeds. Had they been in his possession I could not have taken them away. He left them here till he should call for them. They are waste paper to everybody. Quite useless—not worth the paper they are written on. That is all on the safe side."

Mr. Kestell paused, and his hand nervously took up several papers and letters and replaced them under his letter weights.

"Vicary knows nothing; he would have been down here at once. He may guess; but if so, he guesses wrong. He can be made to accept my offer. Card will oblige me in this—he is not a questioning man. Fenner is away. It all came of their making friends. Who could have foreseen and prevented that? No one. Without work, Vicary must turn his thoughts to another country. It is so usual to emigrate now; every one who can't get on here does it. I have done nothing but what was kind and good towards him. Without me, they would have been workhouse children. Another man would have given up or sold that property at once. I waited and lent the money.

"I have robbed them of nothing, nothing—not a penny piece. Here is my account-book. The sums spent during all those years. It comes to over four hundred pounds. The rest I gave them. I don't grudge it in the least."

Mr. Kestell ran his fingers through his white hair.

All these words passed through his mind; they were even pronounced mentally by him with the same distinctness as if he had spoken them aloud; but at the same

time he seemed to possess two clear identities, and his other self scorned the words of justification much as the publican might have scorned the Pharisee's words, had he heard them.

Yes, this other self scarce lifted up his eyes as he listened, and then both were silent as Mr. Kestell, in the flesh, rose again and went to a tiny drawer inside the flap of his old bureau. From the drawer he took with trembling fingers a small bottle. It was labelled and corked down firmly, with a bit of skin carefully fastened over the cork.

Mr. Kestell walked with it to the window, held it up to the light, and examined it closely. He must have done this before, as all his actions seemed mechanical.

"It seems strange not to believe in death when a few drops of this would kill one. Very strange. Other people die—every one must die. This is easy to believe; but that we ourselves die, must die, that is a difficult problem. Sooner or later that veil must be withdrawn. I have done so much for life, so much for their lives and their happiness, so much for hers, why not venture a little more? Some events in life are like a snow-ball; they become so huge as they go on, they accumulate results—strange results, too.

"But why fight on; why not end everything to-night, and to-morrow be—where? That uncertainty is the crux. Religion used to touch me; now it lays a cold hand on me; it chills me; I cannot believe in it. Its influence has been lessening for years, ever since— But these thoughts are useless. I am a fool, and I know it. Man talks of a hundred paths he may choose, when in reality he is forced but to follow one; and that a very narrow one.

"Hoel Fenner has gone away pluming himself on his probity, on his high-flown sentiments. Put into a place of trial, he fails at once. He might have come forward and married her; he has enough to live on, and he has a good profession; he need not have touched a penny of my money. If the righteous are blind, then some hypocrites can see plainly. Judged by a higher law, Fenner is a scoundrel, who congratulates himself on his honourable motives. He loves himself first, best. He would never have understood my child. Elva, Elva, why should the sins of the fathers be visited on the innocent? Who says that is right? No; no, a thousand times no."

Mr. Kestell walked back to his bureau and replaced the bottle.

"Not this one—no; not now, not yet. But I must get Pink to give me some stronger draught for sleeping. I must sleep. Surely something can give me sleep. To-night, especially, I want it, for to-morrow I must tell my dear wife. That will be hard; she will feel it. At least let her rest now—one more night.

"How many men are there who have nothing to hide—nothing? Not one, if they were put in the witness-box, not one. Witness-box—what do I mean? Only for great crimes, glaring crimes, men get there. But for the others—the judges would have enough to do. And who would judge the judges?

"Poor Elva! poor child! Is it her words, her expression, that has made me like this? For one moment to feel free—free, how would it be? But to face the world, to face my wife— No, no. A man has but one path to choose, the same that he entered long ago. There is no such thing as choice and free-will—no such thing. There is but one law, self-made; yes, that is it—the law of a man's own mind."

COAL IN KENT.

IT was a startling announcement to meet the eye, on the contents bills of the daily papers, "Coal in Kent." More startling than pleasant for those who know and love the pleasant fields and shores of Kent, and who have had experience of coal-fields and of the blank desolation that attends their development. One pictures the bright sea—never more bright than when seen between some gap in the rolling downs of the south coast, the white cliffs shining forth from the haze—that "white-faced shore" that seems to smile a welcome to those returning after long absence. Or perhaps it is the seaward range that is more familiar; the heights crowned with the battlements and towers of Dover Castle; the steamers stealing out or in under the guns of the frowning fortress; the fishing-boats with their flapping sails; the yachts and pleasure-boats dressed in their white canvas and gay bunting; and the whole scene alive with gentle stir and motion, as the waves rattle over the shingle and a bugle sounds from the heights, or you hear the beat of the drum and the tramp of marching men.

And then imagine all this turned into another Newcastle or Sunderland, obscured by thick wreaths of smoke, with tall chimneys rising everywhere, and grime and coal-dust covering the whole country round! Such possibilities are hidden in the lump of black coal that has been scooped out of the bowels of the earth, some eleven hundred feet below high-water mark, and just under the nose of Shakespeare's Cliff, where the trains come shrieking into daylight after their run through the long tunnel that pierces the great chalk buttress.

It was that chalk that seemed to give a kind of security that nothing very industrial should ever interfere with the pleasant dolce far niente of the Kentish coast. Nothing much can be made out of chalk. A little of it goes a long way for general purposes, and, as for the flints that come out of it, now that we no longer chip them into weapons or keep them in tinder-boxes for lighting fires, or even make gunflints out of them, their use, too, is restricted. Some church tower you may find, perhaps, built of dressed flints, or a villa or lodging house fronted in that way; but, then, people don't sink mines for them or build furnaces to burn them in, and any traffic there may be in them goes on in a gentle, unobtrusive way.

There is a story of a house built of flint, by the way, in this same chalky region, the materials for which were collected, according to accounts current in the neighbourhood, in a peculiarly simple way. The architect and builder was a schoolmaster who took in a large number of boys on economical terms, and who was liberal in holidays, if not in diet; and taking his boys for long, breezy walks on the Downs, encouraged them to pick up flints and fill their pockets, pocket-handkerchiefs, and the insides of their caps, with the interesting, if sharp-edged objects. On their return, the boys discharged their loads into a general heap; and in this way, with patience and perseverance, the ingenious dominie acquired sufficient building materials to erect a house. A very ugly, three-cornered affair it was—and is, for the house exists to this day to prove the truth of the story—but still good enough to show the advantages to be gained by turning unconsidered trifles to account.

But whatever may be the advantages of chalk and flints, their presence seems incompatible, somehow, with any great industrial development. For though we

find the cotton manufacture going on busily in the chalk valleys on the other side of the Channel, with factories and tall chimneys planted here and there among swelling downs, yet its prosperity is intermittent, and of rather an artificial character, sustained by high customs duties, which practically exclude our Lancashire cottons from the market. And in the manufacturing districts of England, the scenery appears, somehow, to correspond with its accessories in a certain grimness and gloom. Here are moors and wastes, ironbound hills and rugged valleys, that have impressed something of their stern, uncompromising character on the inhabitants of the adjoining regions; and when you come upon a coal-pit—with its gaunt, black superstructure, perched upon a hill of grimy coal-dust; its machinery working night and day with dreary clank and rattle; the whole affair—like a gibbet on a heath, or a wreck upon a desert shore—seems to be dimly appropriate to the scene. But when the talk is of coal-mines in Kent, one shudders to think of the havoc that would be wrought among the pretty, smiling hills and valleys, among the hop-gardens and orchards, the fruit farms and cherry gardens of the “civilised spot in all these isles.”

Yet, if the world in general has been startled, and not a little dismayed, perhaps, by the announcement of the discovery, it may be said that the geologists have not been taken by surprise. It has long been conjectured that the southern coal-field of Britain—which attains its greatest development in the basin of South Wales, and, passing under the Bristol Channel, reappears in modified form in Somersetshire, to the north of the Mendip Hills—is continued under the chalk formations of Wiltshire and Hampshire, and so passes under the north Downs of Surrey and Kent, and beneath the Straits of Dover; and then reappears within measurable distance of the surface in the coal-fields of the north of France and Belgium, and even penetrates to the Valley of the Rhine, where it makes the banks of that mighty river hideous with the smoke and grime of busy manufacturing towns.

Yes, the coal was there probably enough, the question was—at what depth below the surface? And this was an affair which could only be roughly guessed at. The chalk formations, indeed, offer no great difficulties; their depth and range are

pretty well ascertained. But, beneath the chalk lies a great mass of clayey beds, which, at some places, may thin out to a mere film, while, at others, they reach a depth of many thousands of feet. And where these beds exist in any force, we may say farewell to any hope, or fear, of winning coal.

When first the possibility was mooted of finding coal in Kent, it was the general opinion of geologists that the Weald afforded the most likely field for trial. For there the chalk is altogether wanting, and we seem to be so much nearer that rich bottom crust of coal, which, if found, might bring back to the district some of its ancient industry in the way of iron furnaces and foundries.

Standing upon one of those heights that overlook the great basin of the Weald—say, from Knockholt Beeches or the hills about Sevenoaks—it is difficult to realise that the peaceful and intensely rural landscape was once the scene of a busy industry, a valley of a thousand fires, where ore was smelted, and iron melted and wrought, and whence came the country's chief supplies of iron ware both great and small; of big guns for the navy, and the iron railings that still adorn many an old-fashioned town and country house. The ploughed fields of the Weald are often thickly strewn with the scoræ of ancient foundries, and its clayey beds are still stored with abundance of ironstone. But the forests are gone that once supplied the charcoal for the furnaces, and iron-masters and iron-men have long ago vanished from the scene. Yet, if coal were actually—as seemed not improbable—to be found within workable distance from the surface, then might not the district be once more transformed into the scene of active busy life, diffusing wealth and prosperity on the whole country round?

And so, some twenty years ago, there was commenced an experimental boring in the Weald, which excited some interest among geologists, but which was not destined to throw much light upon the question. For the Weald turned out on the evidence of this deep boring to be a regular clay-hole. Down went the cutting-tool by slow degrees, but it was always clay, varied by shales and sandstone, till at last a depth of one thousand nine hundred and five feet was reached, the last sixty-five feet of which had consisted of Oxford clay, which promised to go on ad infinitum. And with that the attempt was abandoned

—perhaps half-way down to the coal measures, if they exist at all just in these parts.

But there were not wanting indications that showed a more hopeful state of things in a different direction. A boring for water at Chatham, for instance, reached what was pronounced to be Oxford clay within eight or nine hundred feet from the surface; and other borings suggested the hopeful inference that the huge beds of clay which had confounded the Wealden attempt, thinned out to very reasonable dimensions between that district and the London basin. Colonel Godwin Austen, who is a good authority on the geology of the southern counties, had actually indicated the general track of the north Downs as the probable route of the coal measures. And a map of the country, showing the coal measures, in Mr. Hull's excellent treatise on the British coal-fields, shows in dotted lines—which end on the coast by Dover—the “probable course of the southern coal-field.” Dover itself was pointed out as a promising field for boring operations. For, as a savant in session unfeelingly remarked: “Dover is a long way down from the top of the chalk,” a fact which a glance upwards at the summit of Shakespeare's Cliff,

Whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep,

renders self-evident.

And now we are told that a taste of coal has been brought up from a depth of no more than eleven hundred feet, from the experimental boring instituted by the authorities of the South-Eastern Railway Company. And, assuming that there is no mistake about the matter, the fact is highly interesting and important, although, from a practical point of view, everything depends on whether the seams of coal are of sufficient depth and extent to be worth the winning.

It is not to be expected, indeed, that the coal-beds of the south, if ever they are worked and brought to the surface, can compete in richness and importance with the coal-fields of the north. We must not look for coal to rival the Wallsend and the Silkstone, and the other famous brands that Northumbria offers for our burning. For the two systems of north and south are essentially different. A broad band of primitive rock stretches across England from the Wash on the Lincolnshire coast to the extreme point of Carnarvonshire;

and this band of rock, which geologists call the Silurian Bank, was in existence as a dividing reef in the distant ages, when the coal measures were originally formed. And in some way or other this Silurian rib of the old world has greatly modified the arrangement of the coal measures on either side of it.

The southern range of the coal strata seems to be the most extensively disturbed by faults and fissures, and altogether to have suffered from cosmic changes far more than the coal-fields of the north. In Somersetshire, where coal is worked to some extent, the whole series of coal-beds seem to be squeezed into a comparatively narrow trough; the seams are of no great thickness, nor of very excellent quality, and are often separated by great depths of barren, profitless sand and shale. Deep shafts are required to reach the coal, varying from five hundred to two thousand feet in depth below the surface; and altogether the expenses of winning and getting the coal carry off the lion's share of the produce. Anyhow, Somersetshire is not getting fabulously rich with coal-mining. If we pass to the other end of the same system, as developed in the Netherlands, we shall find the same conditions prevailing, extensive faults and contortions in the coal-beds, involving shafts of great depth, and offering many difficulties in working, while the coal owners are hardly able to compete in their own ground with the seaborne coals from the north of England.

Now it is quite possible that the borings for coal in Kent may light upon a coal-field in which all these conditions are favourably modified; such another basin, perhaps, as that of South Wales. In that case the consequence foreshadowed in the opening of this paper will inevitably follow. Dover and Folkestone will become like Cardiff and Swansea, the seaports of an industrial region, smothered in smoke and mephitic vapours. But the probabilities are that, even if the coal trough is eventually reached and explored, the coal-beds will be of the same character as those already worked in Somersetshire and the north of France, affording, that is, a useful supply of fuel for local and domestic purposes, but hardly likely to prove a source of wealth to any who may undertake to exploit them, or even to cause any extensive changes in the social conditions of the surrounding country.

THE BORDER CITY.

CARLISLE, of course; for Berwick, besides lacking the conventional dignity given by a cathedral, has never, from early times, when war drew away its Hanse merchants, been anything more than a border stronghold.

Carlisle, too, has very often been a place of arms, and has generally drooped, when, in times of comparative peace, the garrison was reduced. However, it has always retained, as became the original capital of Strathclyde, the instincts of a city; and two, at least, of its Bishops—Adelulf, the first of them (Henry the First's nominee), and Nicolson, in Queen Anne's time—did a good deal towards making it deserve the title.

Chester, the great Roman military station, and Shrewsbury, the town among the "scrub" by the upper Severn, were, for a short time, Border-towns; but the contest with "gallant little Wales," though severe, was short. On the Scotch frontier it lasted long enough to stamp the character of the people on both sides.

Carlisle began betimes. The Roman Agricola, marking out his chain of forts from Newcastle, westward, found a British hill town (oppidum) where Carlisle Castle now stands, on the sandstone bluff above the Eden. This he left as it was, fixing his camp on Staunix—the higher hill across the river, northward. Agricola's forts were, by Hadrian (A.D. 120), linked together by a mighty wall, which remained almost perfect till Marshal Wade, after Culloden, used a great deal of it for metalting his military road between Carlisle and Newcastle.

It was a grand work, worthy of Hadrian—the builder par excellence among Roman Emperors. He also repaired the second wall, between the Clyde and Forth; but that was of minor importance. "The Wall" ran for seventy-three miles, up hill and down dale, eight feet thick and eighteen feet high, with a ditch in front fifteen feet deep and thirty-five feet wide. South of the Wall, and at a variable distance, was the valluma—double, in some places triple earthwork—and between the two the road, stone-paved, with castles at every mile, and six watch-towers between each castle. So perfect is it still in parts, that, above the little river Gelt, close to Carlisle, an inscription tells how, when Flavius Aper and Albinus Maximus were consuls (207

A.D.) "a vexillatio (regiment) of the Second Legion hewed these stones."

Carlisle then was called Llywelydd, Latinised into Lugubalia. The Caer is castrum (fort), the same as the chester, caster, cetter, xeter, in many English towns. Only, in Carlisle, as in the Welsh towns, it begins; in the English names it ends the word.*

So, Caer-Llywelydd throve under the shadow of the Roman wall, which, almost a century after Hadrian (A.D. 208), Severus strengthened, driving back the Caledonians and repairing the Forth and Clyde line, and joining the two by cross lines of fortification. This lasted just two centuries, and then the Romans suddenly left, and the Arthur legends, of which Carlisle has its full share—his Seat, his Chair, his Round Table, and many places named after Queen Vanver (Guinivere)—mark a struggle that left the Britons of Cumbria as unconquered as those of Wales. Internal quarrels harmed them more than Saxon arms.

The Britons of Clydesdale and Annandale would not be ruled from Caerluel—as it was now called. A battle was fought on the Esk; the Carlisle men were beaten; and, thenceforth, Alclud, now Dumbarton (Dun breton), became the capital of the so-called "kingdom of Strathclyde." All the Saxons did, was to push along the valley of the Irthing, and occupy the plain country, called Inglewood (the wood of the English), a wedge which threatened to split in two the British Kingdom. Cuthbert, sainted Bishop of Lindisfarne (684), was at Caerluel, waiting for news of the raid, which, against his advice, King Edgrith had made upon the Pictish freebooters. While the townsmen were proudly showing the Saint the Roman walls, and the cunningly-carved Roman fountain, the English were being cut to pieces in the glens of the Grampians; and scarce one was left to carry back the news of the disaster. Two centuries more, and the Danes had got across to Caerluel, which of course they burned.

By-and-by Danish settlers came—the "thwaites" are due to them; and by 924, Wessex, gradually absorbing all the Hoptarchy, absorbed Strathclyde also. Then

* They say it the same with "castle." In purely English names it stands last, as in Bewcastle. Among the "Welsh kind" it is first, for example, Castle Caryfort; Castle Rising and Castle Acre, are not among Welsh kind, but in the north folk of the Angles.

Cumberland half-rebelled, and Edmund had to fight, and kill, its King, Dunmail (Donnell), at Dunmail Raise, which you will see close to the coach-road above Grassmere. Edmund prudently gave the Strathclyde to the Scottish Malcolm, on condition that he should help him against the Danes, instead of aiding with them. For a century and a half, Caerluel, nominally Scottish, was so neglected by its new masters that when William Rufus went there it was little better than a heap of ruins. Rufus rebuilt and garrisoned the castle, and sent up a colony of those whom he had evicted when he made the New Forest. Henry the First set about governing the land which Rufus had annexed. The Eastern Border he had placed under the Bishop of Durham. This accounts for the puzzling little bit "To Dur"—like the bit of Warwickshire enclosed in Stafford—in the very north of Northumberland. A churchman in those days was a safer Border ruler than a lazy Earl. He only had a life interest, and was less likely to try to get independent.

There was no Bishop on the Western Border. Whithern and Glasgow both had claims on Cumbria. It was within the former see; but the Bishop of Glasgow had a sort of primate's power over the whole. In defiance of this, Archbishop Thurston of York consecrated Adelulf, prior of Nostell, to the new see of Carlisle; and he and the Pope's legate together so wrought on the feelings of the Scots—after three days' "reasoning"—as to persuade them to let the Bishop live in peace, and, wonderful to relate, to bring all their English prisoners to Carlisle on St. Martin's Day, and set them at liberty. A compact was also made that henceforth war should be made according to certain rules—the beginning of the "Border Laws." Then, for a short time, Carlisle, taken by David, had a Scottish King and an English Bishop, till Henry FitzEmpress, unmindful that David had greatly helped him to the throne, forced his son, the boy Malcolm, to give up Cumbria and take the earldom of Huntingdon instead.

In John's reign Alexander revived the Scottish claim, and joined the Barons of young Louis, sharing in the excommunication which John bought from the legate. The Scots cared no more for the excommunication than they did for that which Clement thundered against Robert Bruce; but, as they could not take Carlisle, they accepted in lieu of it six manors, for which

—the English always maintained, and the Scots denied—the Scotch King agreed to do homage. When Edward the First set himself to conquer Scotland, Carlisle was half in ruins from one of those fires which were almost as disastrous in a mediæval as, nowadays, in a Japanese town. The Annandale men besieged it in 1296, and had already set the gates on fire when some townsmen lowered a strong hook and deftly fished up the Scottish leader, the suddenness of whose fate put the rest to flight. Next year Wallace, after winning the battle of Stirling, sent a force against Carlisle. His envoy was peremptory:

"My lord, William the Conqueror will have you surrender to him without bloodshed. Then he will spare your lives, and lands, and goods. If you resist, he will slay you all."

"Who is this conqueror?"

"William, whom ye call Wallace."

"But our King gave us custody of this town and castle on his behalf; wherefore, if your lord wills to have it, he must come and take it."

The Scots could not take it, though they harassed it sore then; and, afterwards, so much did the country suffer, that the first Edward, with cheap generosity, gave the Cathedral the tithes of a few livings, while his grandson's Queen, Philippa, founded Queen's College especially for Cumberland men.

At Patterdale they will show you the narrow pass along the hill-side, along which the Scots used to "prick along," and where one Morencey, thence called King of Patterdale, once stood and flung one after another, "galloway" and man, both into the lake. As brave a man as he, was Sir Andrew of Harclay, who, after Bannockburn, when Bruce thought to carry all before him, beat him off after ten days of vain attempts against the place. Harclay afterwards upheld Edward against the Barons, and captured Thomas of Lancaster, Edward's uncle, at Boroughbridge. But the Despencers and Harclay hated one another; and as the former were all-powerful, the latter went to the wall. Sir A. Lacey, of Cockermouth, the sheriff, went to Carlisle as if on a friendly visit. Harclay, nothing doubting, received the party graciously. But when they got him alone, they threw off their cloaks, and, drawing their swords, arrested him as a traitor, giving the signal to their men outside, who fell on the guards, and held the Castle. Harclay was drawn and quartered,

Carlisle, Newcastle, York, and Shrewsbury each receiving a part of him, while his head was set up on London Bridge.

It was the trick of a weak King—just such as young James the Fifth, two hundred years after, played, at the bidding of Henry the Eighth, on the Armstrongs, most faithful of Scottish Borderers. He actually summoned "Johnny Armstrong," head of the clan, into his presence; and when the chief came, expecting to be rewarded, or at least praised, for his last raid into England, he ordered him to be put to death at once.

During all the Scottish wars, the Carlisle Canons never ceased the long work of building their Cathedral. They had the Norman nave, which they wisely gave up to the townsmen as a parish, so that there might be one big building instead of two small ones; and, as fast as their poverty admitted, they added an unusually long choir, showing no signs of penury, save that it had a wooden instead of a stone roof, and whose east window is, perhaps, the finest bit of "decorated" in England. Despite its fine Cathedral, the city bore the stamp of Border savagery. On fair days—which were days of truce—it was thronged with wild moss-troopers from the Scottish dales, whom the Grahams—the chief English Border-clan—watched sullenly, hoping for a chance at them when the truce was over. Sometimes they could not resist breaking truce; thus the presence of "Kinmont Willie," in 1596, so angered the English, that, as he and his Armstrongs were quietly going home, they stealthily crossed the Liddel, fell on him, and lodged him in Carlisle Castle. Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh, keeper of Lidderdale, however, was not one of the Tudor's "new men," to whom the best way of getting rid of a troublesome enemy was to poison him, or to treacherously seize him—as Elizabeth's "deputies" did so many of the Irish chiefs.

"Fair play's bonnie play," he cried, "and that's no fair play at a'."

So, after appealing in vain to Lord Scope, the Warden, and to the English Ambassador, he took the law into his own hands, like a brave, honest gentleman as he was; found by spies in what part of the Castle Willie was; breached the wall with pickaxes; and rescued Willie, and him only, his little party—as soon as the alarm was given—shouting and blowing trumpets, as noisily as did Gideon's troop, and as effectually. Elizabeth was very

angry, and forced James to send Scott to her.

"How dared you," she asked, "take in hand a matter so desperate and presumptuous?"

"What is there that a man dare not do?" replied Scott.

Whereat, the Queen forgave him—all women love boldness—and said:

"With ten thousand such men our brother of Scotland might shake any throne in Europe."

But I am anticipating. Border laws, in force on "the debateable land," administered by the English and Scottish wardens, with a jury of six of each nation, the Scots trying the Englishmen, and vice versa, were, of course, in abeyance in war time; and, under Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, it was usually war time, and war, too, of the cruellest kind. Henry punished the Scots for preferring a French alliance to his, by so ravaging as to leave in all Carlisle no living creature. For a parallel we must look to his daughter's dealings with Ireland. Her "desolations of Munster" were conducted in the same style, on a larger scale.

Edward the Sixth—or, rather, the Earl of Northumberland—was worse. He had a plan for setting up a middle kingdom, of which he should be head. The bishopric of Durham had been suppressed, and its palatine dignity added to his other honours. Had Edward lived, Dudley might reasonably have expected to make himself independent; and he began by cruelly repeating the methods of Lord Wharton, who, in 1544, was able to report to his master the burning of one hundred and ninety-two houses and churches, towns, stedes and castle houses, and the carrying off ten thousand four hundred cattle, twelve thousand five hundred sheep, one thousand three hundred horses, and other plunder, including "much insight," that is, household stuff.

One of Dudley's rules was that none might speak to a Scot near by the Warden's house—a sad grievance for both sides; for the Armstrongs and other Borderers had regularly come in to Carlisle markets, "business being business," no matter what matters of State might be in dispute between the two nations.

All this time Carlisle had its share not only in the wild Border life—the life of Sir Walter Scott's moss-troopers—but in the Border ballada. Johnnie Armstrong and Kinmont Willie have both their

ballads ; so has the third harper of Lochmaben, who did, what more than aught else delighted a Scots Borderer's heart—out-witted the Warden of Carlisle.

"Wherever men are not ashamed of their forefathers they sing of them," says Mr. Ruakin. Perhaps, since we have no corresponding English ballads, save those about Robin Hood, we should say it is a matter of race. Whatever ethnologists may say, there is a stronger Celtic leaven along the Border than in Sussex, for instance.

Carlisle, being a southern colony, covered with Flemish castle-builders, was markedly different from the Border. It took no part in the Pilgrimage of Grace ; nay, it beat off instead of welcoming Nicholas Musgrave and the Westmoreland men, who foolishly rose, after the Yorkshiremen had been put down. The charms of Mary Stuart—"she has sugared speech in store, and spares not to deal it," said Dowry—moved them not, though they raised such enthusiasm among the Borderers, that Mary, in defiance of the law of nations, as well as of the law of hospitality, was hurried away southward. Had Norfolk, instead of weakly obeying when Elizabeth summoned him to her presence, gone north, and joined Westmoreland and Northumberland, it is quite possible that Mary might have been set on the throne of the two kingdoms, Elizabeth being transferred to the irksome captivity in which she kept her "sister and cousin."

From the Jacobite cause, too, Carlisle stood cannily aloof. There had been, indeed, a strange scene when James the Second's son was born.

"They made a bonfire in the market, and drank wine till they were exceeding distracted, throwing their hats into the fire at one health, their coats the next, their waistcoats at a third, and so on to their shoes. Yea, some threw in their shirts, and ran about naked, like madmen, which was no joyful sight to the thinking and concerned part of the Protestants who beheld it."

But these were the officers of the garrison. Not one Carlisle man—nay, not one Cumbrian joined the rising of 1715, "that rabble of Highlanders and parcel of north-country jockeys and fox-hunters." Both Lord Derwentwater and Foster of Bam-borough came from Northumberland. The Carlisle men did signalise themselves by running away, four thousand of them, the

whole "posse comitatus" under Lords Carlisle and Lonsdale, and the very loyal Bishop Nicholson, the moment they got in sight of Derwentwater's fifteen hundred. In the '45 they were equally unwarlike. Colonel Durand, with his eighty invalids, and four gunners, got together some seven hundred militia, and four hundred townsmen, who waited to see if Marshal Wade would come from Newcastle to relieve them, and, finding he did not, they slipped out, and so forced Durand to surrender. The Mayor and Corporation had to go on their knees and give their keys to Prince Charlie. After Culloden, the garrison which Charles Edward had foolishly left in the Castle, defended the crumbling walls till they were battered down, and then surrendered, the Duke of Cumberland allowing no terms, save "the King's pleasure." Better had they fought till every one was shot or cut down, than to be handed over to George's tender mercies. The militia escaped even censure ; the clergy, who had been vehement on the Hanoverian side, had the mortification of seeing their Cathedral used as a prison—"made so filthy, that six weeks' work, and the burning of much tar and sulphur, scarce made it fit for service."

Of the prisoners, the chief men were sent to London to be executed ; the rank and file, mixed with those who had surrendered at Culloden, were divided into batches of twenty, of whom one was chosen by lot for trial—all such being convicted—the remaining nineteen being transported to America. Of course, Father Rappock—the priest whom Charles Edward had made Bishop of Carlisle—was among the condemned. As he was led out to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, he noticed one of his companions looked downcast.

"What the deil are ye afeared of, mon?" he cried, gleefully. "We'll not have a Cumberland jury to try us in the next world."

After this Carlisle settled down into the ways of peace and prosperity. Its sole quarrels were at elections, when it was Lowther against Howard, and both against Musgrave. Sir James Lowther actually got control of ten seats, and for a time made Carlisle itself a pocket-borough. He was rewarded (1784) with the Earldom of Lonsdale.

The place owes something to foreigners—in 1747, Hamburg merchants started a woollen mill—but more to a Newcastle firm, which set up calico weaving and

printing. When the great change of the seventeenth century began, it owed a good deal to Lord Howard of Nawarh—Scott's "balted Will," but by his peaceful ways little deserving that warlike title. He pacified the Border, so that of the old customs, few are in vogue save "hand-fasting," which dates from the days when churches were in ruins, and priests only came round once a year.

Carlisle's only literary man is Isaac Tullic, who described, as he saw it, the siege, by Lesley and the Scots (1644), which became a blockade, lasting till horseflesh was a luxury, and thenceforward dogs and rats were the usual food. When the townswomen had become so mutinous that they begged the governor to fire on them, he asked for terms. But, hoping to better these, the officers made Lesley's envoy drunk, with a barrel of strong beer, "that had been secreted by a cautious divine," they themselves drinking only water. Next day, Lesley sent a graver person, "but he also fell a victim; the notion being to show the Scots' general that they were abounding in all things." They did get very good terms; but the Cathedral suffered, the Scots, contrary to express agreement, pulling down cloisters, chapter-house, Canons' houses, and half the nave, to get materials for repairing the Castle.

As to the Cathedral, no "restoration" can bring back its original dignity; but the city looks so trim and thriving that it is hard to believe that grass grew, not so long ago, in the chief streets, the bye-streets were unpaved, the houses unpainted, and the gutters full of filth. At that time, a southern visitor says of the Cathedral:

"It is more like a great old country church, ne'er beautified nor adorned one whit. The organ and voices did well agree, the one being like a shrill bagpipe, the other like a Scottish tune. The sermon, in the like accent, such as we could hardly bring away. The communion also was administered and received in a wild, un-reverent manner."

Allowance being made for southern prejudice, this is doubtless a true picture; but Carlisle may say both of city and Cathedral: "We have altered all that." It has grown in population; thirty-six thousand in 1881, against six thousand a century earlier (in 1720, only two thousand); and it has grown much more conspicuously in cleanliness and the outward signs of wealth.

THE TRUE STORY OF THE BRADA MINING COMPANY, LIMITED.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"It won't do, Zeb; it won't do."

And the miller rose from his seat, took down his long clay pipe from the rafters, and lighted it in front of the big fireplace.

Zebediah Quirk felt it was all over with him then. He gave a little gasp, but still kept his chair, and, with eyes bent upon the flags, sat there fumbling with his cap. He was a pleasant-looking young fellow, short and slender in figure, with smaller hands and feet than is usual with those who have to live by manual labour; neat in his dress, and very quiet in his tone and manner. He was about to speak, when the miller, turning again to him, went on:

"It's not that I've got anything against thee, lad. Don't run away with that notion in thy head, Zeb. If thee wast more of a man—more like John Senogles, now, who can mow his acre and a half in a day easily—I shouldn't like thee any the worse for it; an' if thee sometimes took a mug of ale, or, maybe, a drop of whisky for thy stomach's sake, instead of goin' about with them Rechabite chaps, who seem to think that cold water'll float them to heaven, there'd be some chance for thee, lad. But, settin' all that aside"—the miller stopped and blew out a great cloud of smoke—"there's the money."

"I've got the shop and the stock," urged Zeb, raising his eyes for one moment to look at the miller, a sturdy, square-shouldered man, so grey that it seemed as if flour had been sprinkled freely over face, hair, beard, and clothes.

"The shop and stock!" exclaimed the miller, with scorn. "An' what does it come to? Put it in land. There's nothing like land, Zeb. When thee's just lookin' at it the corn is growin'. Well, what's the value of thy shop an' stock in land? Five acres, eh? Four, more likely. There's John Senogles with twenty, all his own, an' a house——"

Zeb rose rather impatiently.

"You've no call, Master Radcliffe," said he, "to be always throwing John Senogles at my head."

"Nay, nay, lad," said the miller, soothingly; "that wasn't my intention at all. It was only of my daughter I was thinkin'. If I let her marry a man who can't afford to

keep a wife I shouldn't be doin' my duty."

"But I shall be making money," said Zeb.

"I don't deny it's possible, Zeb, though I don't see much prospect of it myself. What with the fishin' going from bad to worse, an' the men livin' on credit, the grocery business is the worst in the whole lale of Man. But, anyway, can thee keep a wife on what thee will make? Next year's harvest won't keep the mill goin' this year, will it?"

"No; but we are both young, and can wait."

"Thee can wait, lad. A man can marry at sixty—if he's a fool. But can a gel wait? Her chances come when she is young and has good looks. If she don't take them then, she loses them altogether. Is it fair, do thee think, Zeb, to spoil a gel's life for a whim?"

The lines about Zeb's mouth had been hardening as he listened, and the look of pain had deepened in his soft brown eyes.

"Whim or no whim," said he, "it shan't be said that Brada's life was spoilt by me, Master Radcliffe. She shall be free to marry whom she will; she shall not be bound to me at all. But here, before you, her father, I solemnly bind myself to her."

"That's not fair to thyself now," said the miller.

"Then there's none can grumble at it," returned Zeb. "I swear to be true to her, come what may. But let her do as she will; marry, if she sees somebody to suit her; stay single if she don't. I will wait for her, though she needn't wait for me."

The miller, taking the pipe from his mouth, looked silently at Zeb beneath his shaggy grey brows.

"Shake hands, lad," he said at length. "We'll remain friends, anyway."

So the two shook hands, and then Zeb wished the miller good evening, and went his way. As he passed through the garden he plucked a rose from a bush which grew beside the wicket gate; but when he reached the little bridge, he leaned against the rail, and, not thinking of what he was doing, pulled the flower to pieces. The red leaves fell into the water, and went racing towards the wheel. But Zeb did not know they were there, for his eyes were dim with tears.

Down the steep side of the glen came a

girl, swinging her straw hat to and fro as she moved swiftly through the golden gorse and purple heather. There was a ruddy glow of health in her pretty, sun-burnt face; her dark hair tumbled about her shoulders in picturesque disorder. As she walked, she carolled like a lark. But, presently, at the entrance to the village, she noticed the solitary figure standing on the bridge, and her song ceased.

"What has the rose done to you, poor thing, Zeb?" she asked, mischievously, coming upon him unawares.

At the sound of her voice all the colour left his face. He crossed the bridge to make room for her to pass over.

"Good evening, Brada," he said, awkwardly, without looking at her.

"What's amiss with you, Zeb? Have you and she fallen out between yourselves?"

"What she is that?"

"Why, the she that gave you the rose, to be sure," answered Brada, saucily. "Oh, yes, come now, don't be denying it, Zeb. There's a deal more going on among the Primitives than praying and preaching."

In spite of his youth, Zebediah Quirk was a shining light among the little band of Primitive Methodists in the glen. But the miller was a staunch Churchman, and his daughter followed in his footsteps, affecting to make merry at Zeb and the Primitives, yet pleased enough when they spoke of him as having "the gift of tongues."

But Zeb was vexed now that her heart should be so light, when his was so heavy; and he answered her more roughly than was his wont:

"It's well for you to be able to laugh. I can't laugh, I can tell you; but then, perhaps I care more for you than you for me. I always said so, didn't I? Anyway, it's all over between us now. You are free to marry——" he was about to say "John Senogles or anybody else," but checked himself and substituted, "any person you please."

"What's this, Zeb?" she asked, more gravely now. "Who has been speaking against me? What have they been saying?"

"Nobody has been speaking against you. That would be impossible. But your father says I'm not man enough, and have not money enough to marry you. Twenty acres is your value," said Zeb, rather bitterly. "I'm only valued at four—too

much, by your price. Do you know anybody with twenty acres, Brada — any marrying man, I mean?"

"That's just your nasty way of putting it," said Brada, with an indignant toss of the head. "If you think to better yourself with me by speaking in that way of father, you'll find yourself mighty mistaken. John Senogles wouldn't have done it, whatever you may say of him. So there, my man!"

And she stepped on to the bridge.

She was slowly crossing the bridge now. Zeb waited a few moments, then walked a little way, stopped, and looked back. Brada had stopped, too, pretending to be unable to open the gate. Both were yearning to speak, to make friends again; to part, if part they must, as lovers should. One word would have brought them together; but neither could utter it. It was not pride, but sheer awkwardness that held them silent. And so they drifted apart, just as the red sun was sinking over the sea at the mouth of the glen, Brada entering the pretty little mill, while Zeb went slowly through the village towards the beach.

And now who should be standing at the door of the inn but John Senogles himself, a big, yellow-bearded man, with enormous limbs, and the strength of an ox. By his side was another man, fat and podgy; with a round red face, smart clothes, a diamond pin, and an ostentatious watch chain. He was a stranger to the district. Zeb had never seen him before, and would hardly have noticed him now had he not heard that Senogles had lately been about a good deal with a Mr. Johnson, who was lodging at the inn.

"Hullo, Zeb!" cried Senogles, "going to the beach, eh? It's no use, for the tide's high, and there's no sand to be got."

This was meant as an allusion to the practice—alleged against some grocers—of adulterating sugar with sand; and Senogles bellowed with laughter at his own wit.

"When you've got a new joke, Senogles," returned Zeb, coldly, "come and tell me; and then, maybe, after you've explained it to me, I'll laugh at it for you."

"It seems you've got your preaching coat on, Zeb," said Senogles, shaking with laughter. "Give us a bit out of your next sermon. I'll stand you a glass of ale if you will."

Zeb was in no humour to be turned to ridicule; least of all by John Senogles. He crossed the road, and, with clenched fists, confronted the big farmer grinning down at him from the doorstep.

"Look here, Senogles," said he; "you mind your business, and I'll mind mine. Don't you interfere with me, and I'll not interfere with you. If you go meddling with me——"

"Well, what?" enquired Senogles, seeing that Zeb hesitated.

"Why, I'll teach you better manners," said Zeb, defiantly.

Senogles laughed again; but this time a little awkwardly, and with an uneasy glance at his companion. Not that he was frightened of Zeb. He was too big and too powerful to fear getting the worst of a scrimmage; but he had no wish to enter upon anything of the sort. So he said:

"Why, Zeb, what has come over you this evening? It was only my fun, man. I wasn't meaning you any harm."

"Well, keep your fun to yourself another time," returned Zeb. "I want none of it."

And he walked off.

He carried his head rather higher than usual, for he felt that he had lowered the colours of the big, bullying farmer—his rival. In the midst of his pain, this thought gave him a certain grim satisfaction. But afterwards, when he reviewed the events of the evening, there came the reaction. He had always been on the best terms with his neighbours, and now, in one day, he had spoken disrespectfully of the old miller, parted in anger from Brada, and quarrelled with John Senogles. Surely there must be something wrong here—something for which he was to blame, and for which he could make amends. After what had occurred he could not very well go to Brada or her father; but he could go to Senogles. And, before Sunday, Zeb decided that he would.

John Senogles owned a small farm away up on the mountain side; part of it being so steep that the crops, when cut, had to be brought down on a sort of rough sleigh. Zeb started to walk to the farm on Saturday afternoon. He had no parents; only a sister whom he supported; and she took care of the shop during his absence. He felt, in some strange way, that he was doing what Brada would have liked him to do; and the feeling seemed to lighten his burden. For it was a long, tough road that lay before him—not this one, up

the mountain side; but that other, which led to all that he had set his heart upon. To win Brada—that was his sole ambition; and how to make enough money to please her father was more than he could imagine.

Presently, he left the path, and—crossing a stretch of moorland slanting sharply upwards, so that he seemed to look almost straight down into the little glen below, with its mill, and stream, and cottages straggling towards the sea—he arrived at the shaft of an old mine, or, rather, the commencement of one. There are scores of these abortive borings scattered about the island; the success of one or two mines having led to attempts at many.

Zeb sat down on the rubble mound for a few moments to take breath, and, as he did so, a glint of sunlight from the quarried rock caught his eye. At first, he paid no heed to it. He was too much engaged in thinking of some way to make money. But of a sudden, this bright spot in the rock seized upon his attention. He sprang up excitedly, and scrambled forward to examine it.

It was lead ore mixed with spar. Zeb had no doubt about that, for he had seen the ore many a time down at the mine on the other side of the mountain. There was a good deal of it lying about, some of the pieces on the ground being very rich in metal. Zeb picked up one of them—the best he could find—and, with tottering legs, staggered out again into the bright sunlight.

He was overwhelmed by his discovery, for it promised him all that his heart desired—union with the girl he loved above the whole world. Here, ready to his hand, was untold wealth. True, it was upon land belonging to John Senogles; but that was of no consequence. For the Manx law differs from the English law in this—that, while the landlord in England is supposed to own a solid wedge of the earth, right through to its centre, in the Isle of Man he owns only the surface, all below belonging to the Crown, from whom mining leases may be acquired by anybody who wishes to do so, and is prepared to compensate the landlord for “surface damage.” Zeb, therefore, thought he saw his way plain before him.

But, first of all, being a cautious young man, he carried his specimen of ore down to Nat Teare, a friend of his, who was employed in the mine on the other side of the mountain.

“Hist, Nat!” said he, when he had dragged off his friend to a quiet corner.

“What’s this?”

“Lead ore,” answered Nat.

“You are sure, boy?”

Zeb’s questions were so peculiar, and his manner was so excited, that Nat looked at him with amazement.

“What joke is this, Zeb?” he asked. “Do you think I’m such a fool as not to know our own ore?” And he pointed at the ground around, which was strewn with pieces of similar ore.

“But it’s not your ore,” cried Zeb. “It’s mine. It comes out of my mine. And you shall be the captain of it, and we shall both make our fortunes, and marry the girls of our choice, and be happy ever after, Nat. What do you say to that, my boy?”

Nat took off his hat and scratched his head. He had begun to think that Zeb, in spite of his Rechabite notions, had taken to drinking. But, after a time, the whole thing was made clear to him. He examined the ore again, and pronounced it to be equal to the best they had got. Finally, though he was not told the exact position where it had been found, he expressed the opinion that it probably came from another part of the same lode as they were now working. Zeb had risen in his estimation immensely.

“I’m your friend, Zeb,” said he, warmly. “Don’t you forget that. Stick to me, and I’ll make a fortune for you.”

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that Zeb went with a very pre-occupied mind next day to the little Primitive Methodist Chapel. Indeed, his utterances were so confused and so disjointed as to disturb the faith of those who looked up to him for light and guidance. As bad luck would have it, he had announced the subject of his sermon on the previous Sunday. It was “The Blessings of Poverty;” and every argument that he had to enforce was in direct conflict with his present opinions. Nor was this the sole cause of his uneasiness. For, although the quarrel with John Senogles had ceased to worry him, and had almost entirely passed from his mind, he was distracted by fears lest somebody else should make the same discovery as himself, and should anticipate him. He felt that until he had the lease safe in his possession, he should have no rest.

So, early on Monday morning, he took with him all the spare cash in the house,

and going first to the local bank, obtained an advance upon the security of his shop. With this money in his possession he hurried off to Douglas, called at the office of the "Crown Receiver," and applied for a mining lease to cover the whole of the north side of the mountain. To meet any claim for surface damage, he deposited the money he had brought with him. His disappointment was intense when he learned that the business could not be completed there and then as he had expected. It was torture to him to have to wait, dreading some accident, some horrible mischance, which might destroy all his hopes of happiness. But the period of suspense came to an end at last. Zeb got his lease, and with it in his pocket, felt himself to be the happiest and luckiest fellow in the world.

The news soon got abroad, and caused much commotion in the glen. Zeb became quite a hero. His arm was nearly shaken off, so hearty were the greetings he got; if he had not been a Rechabite, all the resources of the inn would have been freely placed at his disposal; there was observable a very general disposition to be seen in his company, to laugh at his jokes, and to quote his sayings; he was run after, not only by Primitives and Wesleyans, but also by Church people, and it would be hard to say which had the keenest eye to the main chance. Only the old miller held aloof, shaking his head rather doubtfully, and watching to see how Zeb would take his good fortune.

"The lad doesn't come near us now," said he to his daughter. "Is he puffed up with pride, do thee think, gel? Maybe it's only offended with my plain language he is; but I've no faith in them Primitives, though I will allow that Zeb's the best of the lot."

Brada defended Zeb stoutly; but her task grew harder as time went on. He was so occupied with his new business that he and she never happened to meet, and she could not understand his continued absence from the mill. Surely it could not be that little tiff they had, when last they met. That would be too ridiculous, for they had had many a tiff before, and Zeb had always come round in the end.

The fact of the matter was, Zeb was keeping away until he had something tangible to offer. The mining lease, in itself, was valueless; he had first to turn it into money. And, having no experience in

such matters and no capital to work the mine himself, he was a good deal bothered.

He had other difficulties to contend against, too; among them being the animosity of John Senogles, who was perfectly furious. Meeting Zeb in the village, one afternoon, he swore at him in a voice that echoed away up the glen, and called him the lowest, meanest sneak that ever walked on shoe-leather.

"What did you say to me?" he shouted. "'Don't you interfere with me, and I won't interfere with you,' that was what you said, Zebediah Quirk. And then what did you do? Went straight up to my farm and got a mining lease, to turn the place upside down, so that no decent man will be able to live in it. That's what you done—robbed me, you preaching little hypocrite. Went behind my back and robbed me of my rights—that's what you done, you who said you wouldn't interfere with me. Curse you, I've a mind to break every bone in your body." And the big fist was clenched and raised threateningly.

But Zeb, so defiant when all things had been going against him, was meek enough now in the hour of his good fortune. He answered gently:

"Don't be angry with me, Senogles. I have done nothing a man need be ashamed of. I have acted strictly within my rights—any other would have done the same; but I will go beyond my rights, if you will let me. If the mine turns out a success, you shall have a share in it, I promise you that."

"If the mine turns out a success!" sneered Senogles. "A likely tale. There is not a ha'porth of lead on the whole of my farm, and you know it."

"There is," said Zeb, quietly. "There are heaps and heaps of splendid ore."

"That's a lie," roared Senogles. "Look here, lads," added he to the fishermen, whom the noise had drawn around, "don't one of you put a farthing in this swindle. Don't I know my own land? The whole thing is just to spite me. He wants to drive me out of my farm. I tell you there is not a ha'porth of lead upon it."

"Then what is this?" demanded Zeb, producing one of his specimens.

"Ore from the other side of the mountain. The whole thing is a plant, lads," said Senogles, again appealing to the spectators. "If this ore was found on this side of the mountain, it was brought from the other. There's none of it upon my farm, at all. Now, do you see what

“The hypocritical little rascal has been at it?”

The fishermen looked at one another out of the corners of their eyes. They could not bring themselves to believe this charge against Zeb; and yet Senogles spoke so positively. But one of them, more outspoken than the rest, said:

“Aisy, man, aisy. Thy tongue’s goin’ too fast. Zeb’s not the sort to do this thing, at all.”

By the stream, which ran by the roadside, Mr. Johnson—the smart stranger staying at the inn—had been standing, watching the bees in a cottage garden. Although he had shown no interest in what was being said, not a word had escaped him. And now he approached the party rather hurriedly.

“Come, Mr. Senogles,” said he, taking the big farmer by the arm, “you have gone too far. You own the surface of your land, and know all about it, I am sure. But you don’t know—you can’t know—what lies beneath. If Mr. Quirk says he has found lead there, you must believe him.”

“Must I!” exclaimed Senogles, with something like amazement.

“Why, yes, of course,” declared Mr. Johnson, in his offhand manner. And the fishermen all stared with open mouths, wondering who this stranger could be, for they had never before seen the big farmer look so small. “Come, my good fellow, you can’t deny the evidence of your own eyes.”

“Well, I’ll be shot!” stammered Senogles, with the same air of complete bewilderment.

“I’ll guarantee the genuineness of this ore,” proceeded Mr. Johnson, in a tone which could be heard by all around. “If there is a good lode of the same quality where it came from, it will be worth twenty-five pounds a fathom, at the very least. You may take my word for that, Mr. Quirk. I am a mining engineer”—he glanced round with importance—“I have had great experience in many parts of the world, and I know what I am talking about.”

This speech created an evident sensation. Senogles, who had moved off and was waiting about for Mr. Johnson to follow, did not hear the latter part of it; but the fishermen were profoundly impressed. As for Zeb, now that his hopes had been confirmed by so eminent an authority, he could scarcely contain himself. He thought

of Brada, and tears came into his eyes; he grasped Mr. Johnson’s hand, but could not speak.

“Will you be at home at seven this evening, Mr. Quirk?” enquired Mr. Johnson, in an undertone. “I have something particular to say to you. At seven sharp, remember.” And he went after John Senogles.

ON PROFESSIONAL IRRESPONSIBILITY.

THERE is a great deal of irresponsibility abroad in the world which were better out of the way. The poor man who marries a wife upon fifteen shillings a week, and ten years afterwards has seven children and an income the same as at first; the manufacturer of wall-papers of a cheap kind, the ingredients of which may or may not poison the person upon whose walls the papers are pasted; the inventor or retailer of very gross slanders, which are as likely at least to blast the character of their object as are the wall-papers to disturb the health of those who come under their influence; the man or woman who, though afflicted by a dolorous, or even horrible malady, yet considers this as no obstacle to his or her marriage, and who is by-and-by the parent of a child or succession of children in whom the hereditary evil straightway declares itself—these are a few chance specimens of the commonest kinds of irresponsibility. Each and all ought to be fettered. But who is to do the work? It is difficult to say, indeed; for each of these irresponsibilities—save perhaps the wall-paper one—is of a kind to be obviated only by such restraint upon the action of individuals as would to many of us seem the mark of a tyranny of the most obsolete and culpable kind.

“What!” the hard-working youth in the receipt of but fifteen shillings a week might indignantly exclaim to the State official who forbade his banners for State reasons, “because I am poor, am I not to have a wife? Well, if that’s Monarchy, give me a Republic!” or “If that’s your Republican way of doing things, one may go to Turkey for a free life.”

And of course the girl would second her angry sweetheart in his outcry. With handkerchief to her bright, fond eyes, she would proffer the worth of her affection as adequate plea for the disregard of all those

rules of prudence which a properly paternal Government would fain enforce upon, if it could not instil them into, its subjects.

The manufacturer who, to the injury of the public, puts strychnine or arsenic into his manufactures, may indeed be more easily deterred from a continuance of such disastrously irresponsible conduct. But, first of all, such action on his part must be made a penal offence. Until then, it may be feared that he will have more regard for his banker's balance than for the men and women—strangers to him—who buy his papers, even though they may be doomed, with mathematical sureness, to suffer thereby a great deal of pain, and perhaps death itself. However, this is a kind of irresponsibility that will, sooner or later, be checked. We must have inspectors of wall-papers, even as we have inspectors of factories and schools; and then it will, so far, be well with us.

The third instance of irresponsibility—that of scurrilous and slanderous conversation—is much more difficult, nay, perhaps impossible to bridle. The only way will be to regenerate the human race “*ab ovo*,” and that were a task to tax the wit of the cleverest of us. Perhaps, however, here also, a very considerate Government—maternal, or even grandmaternal, rather than paternal—might be able to do something. If the scope of the law on libels were extended to include tea-table backbiting, or even market-place gossip of a kind that tends to detract from the good character of any individual, perhaps the result would be beneficial. But the “perhaps” is rather a ricketty one; so that even the most hopeful believer in the perfectibility of the human race—towards the attainment of which such an extension of this law might be supposed to help—ought not to build much on it. And, upon the whole, it would make social intercourse such complex fencing, and, to the timid, such a stupefying terror, that the disease itself, unpleasant though it may be, would probably soon be universally preferred to the remedy.

We English have already been vilified sufficiently, for our want of conversation, by the more glib nations of Europe. If such a law as this came into force, there would be nothing for it but to subside into complete taciturnity. And even then it is to be feared that, ere long, Mr. Edison would come to the aid of the lawyers with some dire invention which

should convict us of actionable conduct if we had but the mere germ of a scandalous thought within us.

As for the fourth instance in our selection of typical cases of irresponsibility, that really ought to be upon the same footing as the projected marriage of an impecunious man and woman, who have no assured hopes of anything except offspring.

If the State does not take up this question, let Convocation think about it.

Why should it not be made a valid reason for refusing to consecrate a matrimonial alliance? To my mind, and surely in the esteem of all thinking people, it is as improper for a scrofulous man to marry a woman under the taint of lunacy as for an ordinary man to marry his grandmother.

The Church would forbid the banns in the latter case. It were well if it would do the same in the former case also.

There is something specious, indeed, about the claim that a man may make to go “the way to parish church” as he pleases, with “liberty withal, as large a charter as the wind” and the tables of affinity allow.

But one look at, or thought about, the children who are the result of a scamper over this broad champaign of liberty, severs the plea to the very root.

In fact, this is one of the examples which prove that unmitigated liberty is, at times, worse than an iron restraint.

The man who acts persistently for his own pleasure, without regard for the consequences, and with, of course, no care for the good of others, is not much better than one of those Oriental fanatics who, now and then, runs amuck with the deliberate design of slaying or wounding all who come in his path.

The tendency of the times is to misinterpret strangely that noble word “liberty;” or to view but half its meaning as the whole.

We have done with despots; but not with the despotism of philosophic phrases.

There is really no saying what the cycle of events will shortly bring us to; but it is not a little curious that our professors of evolution—the teachers who assume to be head and shoulders above common priests and schoolmasters—remind us that

we should do the best thing possible for our race, if we were to recur to that old Greek custom whereby the magistrates of a city—with appalling tyranny and frigid disregard for sentimental attachments—mated by law the most muscular of its youth to its most beautiful maidens, and summarily put an end to children manifestly unfitted for the battle of life.

But, besides these common cases of irresponsibility, there are many others, not less grave, by which we are all liable to be affected.

There is judicial irresponsibility—a very serious thing, even with us; but trebly serious in lands where men of law are not, as they certainly are, as a rule, with us, men of honour.

There are also medical irresponsibility and educational irresponsibility.

Not that the list is yet exhausted; but these will be enough for our turn.

In State affairs—upon which the eyes of the public are nowadays keenly concentrated—the statesman, who acts to the detriment of his country, may, indeed, escape being impeached, but he cannot by any means avoid the obloquy which falls heavily upon him from a million or two of his fellow-men.

The assumption is, that his position is an unpleasant one. So it is; but not so disagreeable as to deter him from putting himself again at hazard just as soon as his political discretion will allow. Hard words do not break his head. Indeed, the harder they are, the better for the victim; inasmuch as the reaction will, by-and-by, be strong in proportion to their severity. And so he errs and errs until he dies, or until the country is tired of anathematising and forgiving him, turn by turn, and decides at length to consign him to the oblivion which accompanies retirement from public life.

Now, upon grounds of common sense, such a man ought not to have the measure of irresponsibility that he has.

It is all very well to say that it is his constituents' business; that, if they agree to be reconciled to him, or to condone his misdeeds, no one has any farther right to interfere; and that such interference, if it took place, would be a wrong done upon the liberty of the subject.

These are venerable arguments that do not satisfy. It were more reasonable, far, to argue upon plainer bases; to say outright, that, since human nature is what it is, it is inevitable; that, in any repre-

sentative assembly of human beings, there must be a proportion of good men and bad men, whether their goodness or badness be of morals or capability; and that, granting this, it would be as just to expel one man from the assembly because of his virtue, as to expel another because of his inefficiency or corrupt life.

There may be something of sophistry in this. There is certainly much of paradox. And yet, unless it appear emphatically in the charter of his representation that the deputy is the representative of none but those of his constituents who are morally or intellectually like himself, it is difficult to see who has the right to cast the stone at him for his misconduct.

In judicial matters it is otherwise. The Judge is not a representative of the people. In a sense, indeed, they are his subjects, though he has not the same aspect towards them all.

He is chosen or nominated for his office as a man superior to other men in training and abilities—and presumably in morals also—and the sword and the scales are the very significant symbols of the power he exercises.

Of old the King was the Judge as well as the Sovereign of his people; even as at the present time the King of Montenegro plays the part in his public square at Cetinje. But civilisation has now generally divorced the two conditions.

And inasmuch as a modern constitutional Sovereign is King or Queen rather by courtesy than aught else, while the modern Judge is as much an arbiter of life and death as the Sovereign of former days himself, the Judge is the most respectable individual in a modern State.

With us, indeed, who put the power of a death sentence in the hands of our Judges, and exercise no material censorship over their work, the office of Judge is peculiarly solemn and autocratic.

It may be doubted whether it is good for them and good for us that they should have the irresponsibility they have.

True, there are Courts of Appeal. But if one set of Judges contradict another set of Judges, and there the matter ends, the Judges whose judgement is set aside by their superiors are not likely to be much or long distressed. The irritation passes.

In Norway, however, and perhaps elsewhere, it is very different. The Judge who is convicted of an erroneous judgement has to pay for his mistake. He is fined as if he were a criminal. The con-

sequences are obvious. He takes a very profound interest in his work; and so his own ends and those of the State are served simultaneously. He cannot afford to forget the responsibility of his position more than once or twice in his career. He could, perhaps, tolerate with equanimity a certain amount of censure. But a fine of a thousand crowns is worse than much censure. The sting of it lingers long.

Now we are not called upon to determine which course is the better, that of Norway, or our own. But it is permissible to observe that, whereas a fine may be an excellent stimulus for a Judge in office, it seems somewhat an inequitable and undignified kind of stimulus.

If the Judge had done wrong with his eyes open, of course he is much to blame. But the public is ever ready and able to call him to account in such an eventuality; and the slight itself will be a fair incentive to him for the future.

If, on the other hand, he is charged with defective balancing of evidence, it is a misfortune rather than a fault in him, and fining will not make him a more capable Judge. The words of the copy-book may be tendered on his behalf—"humanum est errare," though they hardly seem to justify the irresponsibility that will still largely remain to him while he sits upon the judicial bench.

Medical irresponsibility is not less serious in its effects upon individuals than judicial irresponsibility upon the community. Here, also, we may congratulate ourselves upon the honourable spirit among our doctors, as among our lawyers. If it were otherwise, the career of the average medical man might be a succession of tragedies, more or less veiled.

To be sure, there are many cases in which a doctor's error of action brings trouble, and even disgrace, upon him. But, for the most part, his patients give themselves up to him, like a resigned criminal to his executioner. He has power of life or death over them even more emphatically than the Judges of the land. For the Judges cannot touch those who are not criminal, whereas the good and the bad alike have recourse to the doctor.

If the doctor puts all his conscience as well as all his humanity and skill into his work, well and good. If not, some one is likely to suffer. But whoever suffers, it will rarely be the doctor, though he may have agreed to regard his profession with less reverence and awe than is becoming. The

victim will assume that the suffering he undergoes is an inevitable part of the malady itself, or of the remedy for the malady. Only when he cannot doubt that the doctor is to blame for it, will he say a word against him. But it may then be too late.

It would be interesting and immensely instructive to know the psychological history of an average medical man. As a young practitioner, until his "nerve" had become hardened, did he not feel as anxious about an operation as the subject to be operated upon? How many times in the first year of his public practice, does he suppose that he treated patients as they ought not to have been treated? Does he, perchance, in the innermost recesses of his conscience, find himself guilty—through unskilful or thoughtless treatment—of the death of a patient or patients? And, if so, was the secret entirely his own; or was it shared by the patient or patients who died to give him experience? Finally, does he now, in the maturity of his skill and practice, ever consider a patient rather as a piquant enigma, than as a human being as sensible of pain as himself? It were quite impossible to make doctors adequately responsible to the community for their professional conduct. They must reckon their responsibility a personal charge.

Once again. What of educational irresponsibility? I do not, of course, mean that the gentlemen who teach "hic—hæc—hoc" to little boys are engaged in a task of such immediate importance as the professional tasks of doctors or Judges. "Hic—hæc—hoc" is but the prologue. It is when the mind, rather than the memory, has to be impressed, that the schoolmaster's chief responsibility begins. He has so much very plastic material before him, and which will probably retain through life the impression he gives it. If this impression be a worthy and graceful one, so much the better for schoolmaster and scholar. Otherwise, so much the worse for them both.

Let us advance a step, and consider how University Professors stand towards their students. They are really in almost as responsible a position as, according to the old myth, was Prometheus himself, as the originator of human beings. Prometheus set his creations adrift in the world to act as they were able; and a pretty pile of misdeeds he has since had

the grief to witness. So also with the Professors. They know that their students are asking of them such information as shall enable them to go through life with credit to themselves, and to the profit of their fellow-men. Perhaps they are able to help their petitioners as a brother helps his brother. Perhaps, however, they are themselves in need of help; and then their aid is not worth more than a snap of the finger. And perhaps, also, from personal pride, rather than confess themselves indebted to their predecessors for the common rules of safe progress in life, they teach new doctrines, which are, in fact, pernicious, in spite of the attraction which novelty gives them.

It is the last of these three orders of Professors that ought to bear the consequences of the misuse of their responsibility. And yet, how stands the case? No one indicts them, though this or that one of their students acts infamously or iniquitously in direct accordance with their teaching.

It was for them to make or mar the man. They have marred him, and it does not trouble them.

Akin to this is the influence of literature. It is, of course, common knowledge that a book often does more for a man's spiritual development than aught else.

The converse is not less true.

None, except writers themselves, know the potency of their work. A reader may be ruined in soul by the insidious turn of a phrase. Half a suggestion may do more for him than fifty Sunday sermons. But, though the writer be as emphatic an agent of moral destruction as the keeper of a Whitechapel Thieves' Academy, who is to bring him to account?

The reader may multiply cases of such irresponsibility. Perhaps, some day, when Utopia is established, we shall be able to get rid of them all. But it will need delicate legislation, and a signal purification of the human conscience.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

"PAUL, will you take me up to London with you, to-day?"

All through the short summer night,

Doris had lain awake, thinking over her conversation with Paul, with the picture he had drawn of Laurence's desolate home and ruined life ever before her eyes. She saw him degraded, despairing, lost to self-respect, and the respect of his fellow-men, sinking lower and lower till he reached that lowest depth of all, from which it was well-nigh impossible to rise again. And ever as she pictured it, there rang in her ears Paul's last sentence: "If you wish to save him, take the only way; you alone can do it."

The hot blushes burnt in her cheeks as she thought of what the words implied; of the only way by which Laurence's salvation might be won. And again and again she told herself that she could not take it. That womanly pride and modesty revolted from it, told her that it was impossible, that she could stoop so low as to sue for what he had never offered; to be the wooer instead of the wooed! But, as her agitation subsided, as the night grew, first older, and then faded into the grey dawn of morning, which, in its turn, brightened into the rosy sunrise, the calm which the stillness of night rarely fails to bring to troubled minds came to her. Love clasped hands with womanly modesty, and they stood before her, and looked at her with reproachful eyes.

"We are twin sisters," they seemed to say, "how could we be at enmity with each other?" and pride hid her face, and stepped aside, silenced by love's earnest voice; and the way, so impossible at first, grew straight and clear before her. Her face was pale, and her eyes heavy with their long vigil; but there was no irresolution there when she entered the breakfast-room, where Paul was standing by the window, looking moodily out into the garden. She went up to him, and looked straight into his face.

"I have been thinking over what you said last night, Paul," she said, in her quiet voice, "and I know that you are right; that the way you pointed out to me is the only way; so I am going to take it. Will you take me up to London with you, to-day?"

"If you wish it, Doris."

Paul said no more. He gave one long, searching look into her eyes, then turned away from her; and when, after a short silence, he spoke again, it was only to ask if the train by which he intended to travel would be too early for her.

Mrs. Robson looked very much surprised,

when told of the sudden visit to town; but she did not ask any questions, or offer to accompany Doris. Perhaps it was not altogether the correct thing for Doris to go up to town alone with Paul Beaumont; but she was different to most girls. She was so self-reliant, and so well able to take care of herself, that it was impossible for the most careful chaperon to feel anxious about her. Besides this, Mrs. Robson knew that if Doris had desired her company, she would have asked for it, and she was too wise to offer it unasked.

It was nearly five o'clock when Paul and Doris reached London. The journey had been very silent; Paul leant back in his corner with his face hidden behind his newspaper, and Doris sat in hers, and turned over the pages of her book now and then, but gave but very scant attention to what she was reading. Paul took her to an hotel, where she had occasionally stayed with Mrs. Robson during their short visits to town, and, after a hasty dinner—to which Doris was too excited, and Paul too preoccupied, to do justice—Paul put Doris into a brougham, which he had ordered to be at the door at half-past six, and having given the driver the address, said quietly to her:

"Would you like me to go with you, Doris? I will, if you wish it."

"No, thank you."

Doris looked back at him with a quiet smile. She was very pale, but quite calm and composed, only her clear voice had a little nervous thrill in it, which Paul had never heard there before.

"I think I would rather go alone! I am playing my last card now, Paul, and whether I win or lose, I think I would rather play it alone."

"You will not lose," Paul said, confidently.

But, in spite of this assurance, Doris felt her heart beating fast and furiously, when, having reached Laurence's house, she went up the steps and rang the bell. She had to ring three times before any one answered it, and then a slatternly woman opened the door a few inches and stared rudely at the visitor, before she condescended to answer.

"Yes, Mr. Ainslie is in—he is in his studio; but he never sees any visitors," she said. "Are you one of them models?"

She looked Doris up and down with an insolent curiosity which brought the hot colour to the girl's cheeks; but she had

learned how to deal with people like this woman, and how easily civility is purchased by gold. And so she took half-a-sovereign from her purse and put it in the eagerly-outstretched hand.

"He will see me. I am an old friend. No, you need not trouble. I know the way," she said, quietly, as the woman eagerly begged her pardon, and offered to show her upstairs; and she stepped past her, and ran lightly up the staircase, where the dust lay thick on the carpets and balustrade, to the door of the studio.

The drawing-room door was open, and as she passed, she paused, and gave a hasty glance within at the neglected, dust-covered room. Ghostly figures seemed to rise before her as she looked: Laurence's beautiful, vulgar wife in her gay dress; little Doris's white-robed figure; Laurence with the frown upon his face, which she had so often seen there, as he listened to his wife's loud laugh. They seemed to look at her with threatening faces, to ask what she did there; and she turned with a pale, scared face, and flew up the staircase, to the studio, and without giving herself any time for deliberation, gave a timid knock at the door.

"Come in!" Laurence's voice answered, and she opened the door and entered the well-remembered room.

Laurence did not look round. He was standing before an easel, palette and paint-brushes in his hand, putting a few touches to the already nearly-finished picture. It was a large picture, well conceived and boldly drawn, but, so Doris saw at a glance, crude, and hard, and much inferior in execution and finish to his former works. Laurence himself did not seem satisfied with it, and, as Doris entered, with a muttered oath he flung the brush from him.

"Well, what do you want?" he said, sharply.

"It is I, Laurence."

Doris went forward and held out her hand to him. He did not take it at first; after one startled exclamation of "Doris! You here!" he drew back, and stared at her with surprised, troubled eyes. All at once, as he met her clear, steady gaze, a sudden consciousness of the degradation and shame into which he had allowed himself to sink, came to him, and his life, seen by the gaze of those serene eyes, became so black and loathsome a thing, that he shuddered and trembled, and knew he was not worthy even to touch that outstretched hand. He gave a sharp cry of pain.

"Oh, Doris, why have you come? This is no place for you," he cried.

And Doris answered very quietly:

"I have come because you need me, Laurence. Oh, yes; I know all. I know you have been weak and wicked; that life's battle has been too hard for you; and that you have turned coward and flung your weapons away, and turned your back on the strife. I know—there were plenty to tell me—that you have degraded yourself and your art; that you were drifting away hopeless and despairing to a depth from which my love could not rescue you." Oh, the pity, the ineffable love and pity in her clear eyes, in her sweet voice! Laurence could not bear to meet those eyes, to listen to the words which filled his heart with pangs of shame and bitterness. "And so, since you would not answer my letters, I came myself."

"You ought not to be here, Doris. Did Paul Beaumont tell you?" and Laurence turned a shamed, fierce look upon her. "I sent a message to you, by him."

"It is because of that message I am here," Doris answered, still in her sweet, clear voice. "Yes, he told me all; oh, he hid nothing from me! He did not gloss over matters, I assure you. He told me all, and then he said—he was always our truest and best friend, Laurence—'There is only one way to save him, and only one person who can do it. If you want to save him, take that way.'"

"What way?"

Laurence raised his haggard face from the hands where he had hidden it, and looked up at her eagerly at first, then with a great awe and reverence in his eyes. Doris stood before him. She had flung her hat aside, and the light fell on her chestnut hair and on her pale, earnest face, and flashed a strange brightness into the eyes she raised to his. She held out her hand to him.

"Laurence, it is yours, if you will take it," she said, simply. "It looks a weak and feeble thing to trust to, I know; but I feel sure that it is strong enough to save you, for love will strengthen it, dear—the love which has always been yours, which always will be yours. Will you not take it? It is the only way," Doris cried.

But Laurence, after one long, startled look into her face, turned away from her.

"Too late—too late, Doris," he said.

"It is not too late. It will be soon; but it is not too late now," Doris cried,

passionately. "I can save you, if no one else can. Oh, Laurence, let your thoughts go back to the past, when we were boy and girl together; when we swore to ourselves that nothing should ever come between us, that you would belong to me, and I to you, always! You broke that vow once, dear—I am not saying it to reproach you—but I have kept it; I have loved you always. I rejoiced at your success, and sorrowed at your fall as keenly as if it had been my own success and my own fall, and not another's. And now I come to you, and I ask you, for the sake of those old days when we were all in all to each other, to let me help you; to let my love strengthen you, and raise you to a greater height than even that from which you have fallen. It can do it, Laurence; I know it can."

But still Laurence kept his face turned away.

"I cannot; I am not worthy!" he muttered. "Oh, Doris, you don't know all the vileness of the life I have led lately. If you did you would shrink from me instead of— Oh, my dear, my dear;" and now he threw himself at her feet, and hid his face among the folds of her dress, and kissed them. "I am not fit, even, to touch the hem of your garment. Oh, leave me, Doris. It is too late to help me now," he sobbed.

There came a strange, tender light over Doris's face, as she bent and twined the thick curls, in which there was many a white hair now, round her fingers. Ah, he had not altered after all; he was still the old Laurence she remembered so well; the passionate, impulsive Laurence, who was so ready to err; so ready, too, to repent, and ask forgiveness for the pain his folly had caused her. She smiled and stroked his curls with her caressing fingers.

"I have shown you the way; won't you take it, Laurence?" she said. "Won't you take the hand and the love I offer you? Must I go away ashamed, knowing that I have crushed down my pride, and offered myself in vain? That you will have nothing to do with me? Oh, I can't believe that, Laurence." And now her voice shook a little, and grew less clear and sweet. "You could not be so cruel when I—love you?"

"Do you really, Doris?"

Laurence raised his head and looked up at her. She did not speak; but something in her face answered him, and long-sleeping hope awoke in his heart, and conquered the

despair that had well-nigh killed it, with all other good things there. Since Doris loved him—loved him in spite of all—nothing was impossible. If she could forget and forgive the past, others could forget and forgive too. The future, lately so dark and hopeless, grew bright and clear, illuminated by the light of that perfect love which could endure all, and forgive all; which nothing could alter or change. He drew a deep breath and rose to his feet, and took her hands and kissed them.

"I won't make any rash vows, Doris," he said; "but—I will never forget this. And I won't thank you, now, dear. My life—the life which you have saved from despair and ruin, which you alone could save," he cried, passionately—"shall show you how I thank you; how I bless you for this."

"Paul said it was the only way," Doris said, quietly; and then, for now that the battle was over and the victory gained, she felt faint and weary, she went on in a most matter-of-fact tone: "I wish you would give me a glass of wine and a biscuit, or some tea, Laurence. I did not eat much at dinner, and I feel quite faint."

It seemed so sweet and strange to Laurence, when, by-and-by, after some delay, the surprised servant brought the tea, to sit opposite to Doris at the little table, which he had brought out of one of the sitting-rooms into the studio, for Doris would not go into the drawing-room, and watch the little white hands flitting among the tea-things, and the sweet face that blushed and glowed, and grew quite beautiful under his adoring eyes, as she—resolutely avoiding all painful topics—told him the home news. So sweet and strange, and so much more like a dream than a reality, that more than once he put out his hand and took hold of her dress, to make sure that he was not dreaming—that it was Doris who was sitting opposite to him; that she had condoned the past, and forgiven him, and that life—only a better and happier life than he had ever

known before—was beginning afresh for him.

It was nearly eight o'clock before Doris remembered that the brougham was still waiting for her, and, with a shrug of her shoulders, and a merry "See how you make me err against Mrs. Grundy's decrees, Laurence," rose to go. As she did so, one of the yellow roses she wore in her belt fell to the ground. Laurence picked it up, but when she held out her hand for it, he smiled, and shook his head.

"Leave me some little trace of your visit, Doris, otherwise, when you have gone, I shall think it has all been a dream," he said.

Doris smiled and took the fellow rose also from her belt.

"See, you shall have them both," she said. "They are all in bloom now, and the Red House is covered with them. I am going back to-morrow, Laurence, and you will come with me!"

"If I may," Laurence answered.

He looked round the dusty, untidy room, when, having put Doris into her carriage, he ran upstairs again, still with that odd feeling of unreality. Was it really true? Could he be the same man who, only that morning, had declared to himself that the burden of life was growing too insupportable to be borne any longer, and that the sooner it fell from him the better? He, whose every nerve was throbbing with delight and passionate exultation, in whose breast life's pulse was beating so strong? And then his eyes fell on the roses which Doris had placed on the dusty mantel-piece, and they told him that it was no dream, but a blessed reality. That love had held out a strong hand and raised him from the bondage of sin, and that he was a free man once more. And the first use he made of his recovered freedom, was to take a penknife and cut the canvas on the easel into strips.

"I can do better than that now," he said.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Faïre Damesell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVII. SELF-EXILED.

BOULOGNE has charms of its own, though the long quay and the constant new works which one sees going on in its harbour remind one too much of short and unpleasant journeys across the Channel. However, one feels that, in spite of having much in common with every seaport town, Boulogne is on foreign soil. The picturesque dresses of the fishwives; the patient, plodding labours of the seafaring folk and their children; and the imperfect drainage, are un-English.

Leaving the quay, we plunge into still more quaint thoroughfares and narrow streets. The old people are brown, and bewrinkled, and picturesque, and the coloured handkerchiefs are twisted in a manner unknown to our Portsmouth or Southampton poor.

The difference of race and creed, or of thought and manner of living, impresses itself at every step on the stranger; and for some time Hoel Fenner had been quite contented to vegetate here in a comfortable hotel, believing he was amassing valuable notes on the life of a foreign seaport town which would be most acceptable to his paper when served up as brilliant articles.

One reason of his stopping so soon in his Continental journey, was his belief that here he would meet with few English. Any of his friends would as soon have gone up in a balloon as stopped at

Boulogne in the winter. The Riviera was the thing, or else Rome or Naples; but Boulogne! No, certainly. Here Hoel could breathe, and if he kept away from the harbour at the time of the arrival of the steamers, he felt safe from intrusion.

He was not himself; and yet every characteristic seemed even more than ever crystallised in him. Sometimes he felt that it would be better to take his passage in the next steamer and go at once to Rushbrook House. Elva would be there—Elva, the embodiment of a perfect woman.

Now and then her face flashed across a dark disk of his imagination, and then was gone; but this was the Elva of his first dream. Having once seen a beautiful pearl in an exquisite and appropriate setting, you do not necessarily recognise it as the same when it has been ruthlessly torn from its perfect surroundings.

That Elva—although the same in every way—was gone, gone from him, and for ever. So he said and thought, over and over again, whilst he walked wearily round the quay.

When this painful time was over, he thought, when the vision of Elva had vanished—as of course it would vanish with time—he would never again stop at Boulogne! He should hate the place; he sickened at the bare idea of going through such another period as this, and yet he would go through it. Time was the healer. Every man or woman who retains a certain amount of common sense—and Hoel had much of this commodity—knows perfectly well that Time does heal, or, at all events, closes every wound. So argued Hoel, forcing this common sense down his own throat till he was sick to death of it, and yet he clung to it as

his one safeguard against becoming like the raving lover or the weak fool.

And yet he was much aggrieved that everything had gone wrong. Before now everything had turned up trumps for him; and now craven Fortune had forsaken him, just when he was most capable of co-operating with her. Pshaw! Was he going to be made miserable by all this? Certainly not. Others might rave or plunge into excitement, but he should do no such weak things. He would live down every feeling of disappointment and love, and, what was more, he would live it down at Boulogne.

One firm resolve he mentally uttered many times. He should never again set foot in Rushbrook House—never.

He had two private rooms in the "Hotel Tamise." The coming and going was nothing to him. He had given no address, and he cared nothing if his letters accumulated. Let them accumulate. What human soul did he care for now? None. His uncle's business was looked after by the new heir; he had washed his hands of everything.

One day he passed an English lady on the stairs. He took no special notice of her till just as he came close to her. He raised his head, and then he felt a sharp stab at his heart. How was this? Had not Time done better than that? Merely because there was some very slight resemblance to Elva in this stranger, was he to be thrown into such a state? He flung himself into an arm-chair in his private sitting-room, determined once for all not to be the plaything of feelings of passion in this way. How could he, Hoel Fenner, who had been master of himself for years, turn into this weak wretch? He hated fate and the world, and the strange circumstance which could never have been foretold; and he hated every one who was happier than himself at this moment, and yet he had strength to make a vow that this sort of thing was never to happen again. Never.

How could he help on the work of Time? Here progress seemed still very slow indeed. Something else must be tried.

He had a pile of books on his table, for books had always been dear friends to him; and he hardly dared own to himself that now, sometimes, it had been an effort to stretch out his hand for some of his favourite classics.

It was a very mild winter, and he

managed to get the proprietor of the hotel to keep him warm, and give him almost English-like coal. Creature comforts would surely help Time to do her work! It was no good scourging your body to heal your heart; that was much too mediæval in this prosaic age. It belonged too much to the raving-lover type; far be it from Hoel Fenner!

Life was a mistake, perhaps; yes, it was a failure. Looking round it dispassionately, Hoel found nothing wherewith to supply what he had lost. Politics might succeed; but politics had never been in his line. They savoured too much of the one-sided enthusiast. A politician was bound to be one-sided, and Hoel was accustomed to pride himself on his fairness, and on seeing all round a subject.

One day he became aware that it was Christmas Eve. There was a fluttering of peasants' garments up towards the church on the hill.

The priests looked full of importance; and, by way of something to do, Hoel sauntered into the big church, and saw that a crèche was being made. It was poetical, and he languidly took notes for his articles. He tried to put down a few ideas which had not already been thoroughly written up. Hoel was so well-read that he was sometimes hampered in his writing. It was tiresome to repeat old ideas, knowing them to be old, even though pretty certain that no one would find it out. Looking at the crèche, he could mentally sketch out a whole paper on the growth of myths; he could remember examples from the religious history of most of the European countries; he could trace out Christmas legends that had travelled and changed garments in one place, and added this or that overcoat of fiction in another.

He settled at last that, really, there was very little that was new and interesting to be said on the subject; so he sauntered out of the church more discontented than before, and, what was worse, he knew that Christmas Day would bring him more hateful thoughts about Elva, and what would have been his wedding-day.

Maddening all this was; but then that period once passed, say in three weeks, Time would have more chance of doing her work. So he returned to the hotel and plunged into some Odes of Horace. Horace had a sly, sensible way of looking at things; and one can at times catch the spirit of an author, or one can try to do so.

Christmas Eve was all very well for children ; it should be abolished for grown-up folk. That fooling about a happy Christmas was becoming unendurable even to the rational being. Had Hoel been staying in a country house, or, say, with the Heatons, he would of course have gone to church, and stood out the service with gentlemanly decorum ; but here, alone, at Boulogne, there was no need to hunt out an English church with most likely a dreary congregation and a dreary ritual, or the want of one ; no, that was quite unnecessary, and Hoel did not attempt it.

But somehow the day seemed to shroud itself in ghastly, dreary grave-clothes. Something was missing. Something ? Good gracious ! everything ! Ah, Jesse Vicary, with his well-fortified faith, would have made a better business of this.

So the day wore away, and, towards evening, when the darkness had come out, and only the many lamp-lights, like fallen stars, joined earth and the starry sky, Hoel sauntered down to the quay for something to do, and to get away from his own thoughts.

On and on he walked, then back again. It was not cold ; and he hated going in to his loneliness. From mere curiosity he paused at last, and saw a few sailors finishing the lading of a small steamer. It was the "service de nuit," somebody said. But the water was low ; and the boat looked a miserable specimen of its class, as Hoel stooped over and looked at it.

Suddenly an English voice struck on his ear. He seemed to know it, and turned round quickly, hidden by the shadow of a custom-house. In front of him stood Walter Akister, angrily accosting a sailor in broken French.

"The boat doesn't go till two in the morning. The tide won't be right till then."

"Why does the Company not warn one of this ? It's abominable !"

"The boat will go all right," said the Frenchman, reassuringly.

"What, that little nutshell ! What on earth——"

"Monsieur should have gone on to Calais ; the night-service there meets the train."

Forgetting their last meeting, Hoel stepped forward to help the Englishman out of his difficulty.

"Won't you come back with me to my hotel, Mr. Akister ?" said the courteous

Hoel ; and Walter Akister turned sharply round to behold the man he hated.

"You here !" he said, in a low tone, and almost savagely, as the Frenchman, delighted to get away from the bad-tempered Englishman, walked away, and left them alone.

The sailors had finished their work, and departed ; the night-patrol was some way off ; and the two, once rivals, if unconsciously so, stood face to face in the gathering darkness, for the shops were shut, and some of the cafés were closing.

"Yes, I am here, but I should be much obliged if you will not mention having seen me," said Hoel, suddenly, feeling he had done a foolish thing in coming forward.

What was Walter Akister to him but a mere chance acquaintance ?

"Mention it—to whom ?" said young Akister ; and few as the words were, Hoel heard plainly the anger that prompted them.

"To any one who may know me."

"Do you fancy I should mention your name to any one at Rushbrook ? I do not wonder you are afraid ; that your dastardly conduct——"

"You are forgetting——" began Hoel, whose rising colour was not visible, but who suddenly felt the blood boil in his veins.

What did this fool mean ? Hoel was older, and was not going to put up with any nonsense.

"Forgetting. I have only just heard that you have behaved in a way no gentleman——"

"Stop," said Hoel, in a voice of suppressed anger. "You have no right to express an opinion on my private affairs ; neither have you any knowledge of——"

"Of the fact that you have behaved in a way no gentleman——"

At this moment something very unforeseen happened. Hoel could bear much ; but not this. He had raised his stick, intending to chastise the impertinence of this arrogant youth ; but Walter Akister saw the movement. He was stronger than Hoel, and of a bigger frame. The arm he raised, not caring how it fell, was a powerful one, and, unfortunately, the two men were standing on the edge of the unprotected quay.

But, as it happened, Hoel stepped back before the blow fell, and he found himself, the next instant, falling, falling into a dark, hideous depth. Then he struck the

water, sank, struggled to free himself from something; struggled to keep his self-possession and to strike out; but something held him down, or, what was it?

The water was bitterly cold. He was sinking again. Why had he not been able to swim? Good Heaven! was this the end? Nonsense—the end. Elva, Elva! What did all that matter, compared to her; what—?

More struggling. Was he sinking? How the water choked him! He must rise again. Was it his overcoat that was weighing him down? Elva—that young idiot—strange mistiness of mind—shouting. Was he going to remain eternally below water? He had been twice down, down. Then a desire for help—man's help. He was rising again, gasping painfully.

He was conscious of intense desire to live and not to be engulfed in this hideous blackness. He was conscious again of hearing eternal shouting, and of a light cast on the water; conscious again of help coming; of a strong arm grasping him; of—but things looked hazy now, as if seen in a mist quite apart from the darkness or the bright light upon the water. He made a last effort to strike out, and a feeling of utter despair and exhaustion overwhelmed him; and then he remembered no more till he awoke up in the bedroom of his hotel, and, still in the same hazy way, noticed that several men were near him; one of them, a face he had seen in the darkness.

Akister, that young fool! But even this effort seemed too much for him, and he felt himself sinking again into a black, hideous pit. He fancied that some one was chaining him down—some one; yes, Walter Akister. He was lost—lost! Was this—was this—

The word never was even thought out, for there followed another blank.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. HOEL'S TEACHER.

It seemed a long time again after this before Hoel recovered further consciousness; but this time it was of a more satisfactory kind. He felt very weak and very helpless, but he no longer imagined himself to be anywhere but in this rational world of ours. There was a Sister of Charity in the room, and Hoel was soon able to put the facts together in a lucid manner. He remembered falling into the water. Thinking of it, it was strange he

should ever have been got out of that black pit. Naturally, he had been ill, and had been nursed in the hotel, and they had got a Sister to come and attend upon him. What capital institutions they were, these Sisterhoods; and, with his usual aptitude, Hoel considered how foolish it would be to put down religious communities. He turned his eyes towards the quiet figure, and felt rested by the look.

The Sister was very nice-looking, and she was working at something, so that she seemed like some delightful idea of repose. Presently, instinct told the Sister that her patient had moved, and she came towards him and spoke in French.

Hoel thought it was a good thing he was a French scholar.

"Monsieur would like something to drink?"

Hoel smiled an assent, and he found out he was too weak to lift his hand to the glass, and that, in fact, he was being treated like a baby—strange!

"I have been ill!" he said, after a time.

"Yes, monsieur; a long time—a very long time. But now you are going to be well."

"A long time!" said Hoel, slowly, for he was surprised.

"Yes, indeed. Monsieur has had fever. It was the chill in the water; but the doctor is sure you will get well. Only we must not be in a hurry."

"The doctor?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Docteur Chaumas. He is very clever. He came first to you, and he has been so good."

"Thank you," said Hoel; these being the only words he felt equal to saying. Then he felt tired, and dropped off to sleep. He could not arrange his thoughts very easily, and he seemed to have too many to settle.

The Sister shaded the light from her patient's face, and waited patiently. As she sat there, she seemed to be the embodiment of patience, beautiful patience, which has nothing to do with the fever of the world or its restlessness. How had she got it?

Presently there was a knock at the door, and the doctor entered. He was a short, stout man, with a most benevolent face and twinkling eyes.

"Ah, Sister, and how is your patient?"

"But such a change! He is himself again, but weak. Ah, so weak; like a child."

"Good; we shall pull him round. No letters or anything to show that his friends know?"

"Nothing."

"Well, really these English people are most extraordinary. I have said it before, and this one is no exception. He falls over the quay; is over-weighted by his clothes; he has been talking to a friend, as we suppose, who, with heroic courage, jumps into the water after him, saves him, and comes back with him here; sees he has everything; and then goes off, leaving neither name nor address, in order that we may tell him how his friend is getting on! Extraordinary!"

"Yes, indeed! And how nearly he died! And none would have known."

"It was a mere chance he lived. And all that raving in English. If one must have delirium, let it be in French, for it sounds twice as horrible in that barbarous English, doesn't it?"

The doctor and the Sister laughed softly; it was the only bit of national pride they could indulge in, for in no other way had they shown it in respect to their cure of the patient.

"Strange that such a handsome and rich gentleman has not a relation," said the Sister again, turning towards Hoel, who, in spite of his altered appearance, was still good-looking.

"No address! The proprietor said he had only 'Boulogne' on his luggage; but that he paid well; and that there was money in his possession."

"Monsieur Durand was not afraid of not getting his money. Besides, he is a good man. And had the gentleman been poor, he would not have turned him out," said the Sister, gently.

Monsieur Chaumas went up to the bed and felt his patient's pulse, and looked attentively at him.

"He is very weak; that was a sharp attack of fever he has had. It will be some weeks yet before he can do anything. He will have you to thank for his life."

"He will have to thank Heaven," said the Sister, softly.

Monsieur Chaumas shrugged his shoulders, and twinkled his eyes.

"You put it that way, I put it the other. Imagine this sick man without a devoted nurse like yourself, and then tell me, would he have lived?"

"A man's life is in Heaven's hands."

"Well, I'm going. I'll look in to-morrow. There's nothing now we can do but to watch him carefully, and feed him constantly. There are a few symptoms I don't like, but if we are to cheer him up after all this, we must get at his relations. Ask him, as soon as he is able to write, where you can send for his friends."

In a few days Hoel began to show a slight degree of curiosity, and Sister Marie was delighted, for she also had her questions to ask.

"Have I been here long? You said so the other day."

"Yes, monsieur; very long. Ah! what good French monsieur speaks. Are you really an Englishman?"

"Yes, a true-born son of perfidious Albion."

"And you have friends who must be longing to hear how you are. If you will tell me the address, I will write to them."

Hoel's face became troubled; the beginning of consciousness was painful. He had seemed to emerge out of a land of darkness, and he could remember nothing about it. Now the memory of Elva came back meteor-like with a flash, painfully and clearly.

"I have friends, my Sister; but none who would care to hear of me. No, I am content; let it be just as it was before. I want nothing. I was out on a holiday, and I have time to spare."

"That's strange. No friends who care! But there are some who will want to pray for you?"

A real smile of amusement came into Hoel's face.

"Pray for me! I am sure—— No, only one woman could pray for me; and she is thinking I have wronged her. No, she is trying to forget me."

"We cannot forget our friends or our enemies, for we must pray for both."

Hoel answered nothing. A canting nurse seemed to him too much of a good thing. He was slightly put out for a short time, and then smiled at his own foolishness. It was not cant; to her it was religion, some deep motive-power, which made her the self-denying, admirable nurse he had found her. Was it quite fair to complain of the machinery which turned out such a useful specimen of human nature? Literature had toned down, indeed, taken away the living soul out of the body of religion. The body remained a lifeless figure, now and then galvanised

into a show of life by the enthusiasm of some devoted disciple who mistook his own energy for the energy of religion. Was it not the same with that wonderful man, Jesse Vicary? But once tested, once brought to bear on the weak part of a man's character, was it sure to prove the prop a fundamental truth ought naturally to be?

Hoel answered himself with a shade of triumph. No. Jesse Vicary had found himself touched to the quick, and, instead of the meekness supposed to be a characteristic of true Christianity, the young man had revolted and had sworn to be revenged.

That was a test case certainly. Beautiful as were religious ethics, grand and simple as was unadulterated Christianity, it was yet nothing more than the poetic residue of man's finer parts.

Religion was a great convenience.

He contented himself by thinking these thoughts, and then, putting them away, he gave himself up to rest. Rest seemed the greatest good on earth just now. What had become of his plans and his ambition? Gone? That was strange. He could never have imagined that his ambition would crumble like this, that he would ever feel as if power, fame, knowledge, would all pass before him and be rejected as worthless.

Hoel turned restlessly on his bed, and once more gazed at his nurse.

"Are you contented with your dull life, my Sister?" he said, suddenly. "If so, you must need very little to make you happy."

"Very little! Nay, I need very much."

"Then you must be always wanting more than you have."

"Yes; always more of God's love."

Hoel smiled superciliously.

"That is a language—a form of words. Every class has its unreal language. We men are not exempt from it. I do not despise women. I think most highly of them; but I blame them for accepting these cut and dried sentences more easily than we do. Suppose I could demonstrate to you that there was nothing but this world in this wonderful human mechanism, where would all your phrases go?"

"I should know that I had not yet learnt what God's love means. With God in our hearts, no demonstration would prove Him false."

"Phrases again," said Hoel.

She was not angry with him, as he expected her to be; for she, too, smiled as she answered:

"You cannot tell; you have always had yourself in your heart. No wonder you exalt poor humanity."

The unruffled Hoel, for the first time in his life, was injured. The calm assertion was not easy to refute. This meek-eyed Sister could tell him, without faltering, that he was selfish.

"No;" he said, decidedly. "I have had, for weeks past, a woman in my heart, and I am trying to dislodge her."

"She proved faithless?"

"No; you are wrong."

"She died?"

"No; she lives. And is thinking much the same of me as you say."

"Then why dislodge her?"

"Because her father—I mean there would always be a secret between us. Woman is nothing unless she is perfect in every way—unless her surroundings are as suitable as herself. You can't understand; but I tell you this to show you that I am not always taken up by myself."

It was almost pathetic to hear Hoel say this.

"Did she love you?"

"Yes, of course; but Fate—Heaven you call it—interferes strangely with one's plans."

"Yes; that is true. It prevented St. Francis Xavier from being a great preacher in Paris, and made him a poor missionary. Heaven does interfere with our plans; but it cannot change its own."

"Pshaw! I was to have married a beautiful and good woman; but, through no fault of mine, or hers, I discovered a hindrance; and, instead of being happy, here I am, in a foreign hotel."

"If the hindrance had nothing to do with the lady herself, why did you not marry her?"

"Because it touched my honour. No, there was nothing more to be said; but can you imagine a worse interference of Fate?"

"I do not understand, of course; but it seems to me that it was you who interfered with Heaven's ways. And the poor girl—is she sorrowing?"

"Who knows?" said Hoel, angrily. "I tell you it is all a useless interference."

"You must not talk any more. I see now why you will not get well. It is the mind that is ill; and for that there is but one cure."

"What?" asked Hoel, slowly.

"The touch of Christ. He will heal it."

"No more phrases, Sister. I insist it is all pure, pure nonsense or delusion, or——"

"It is the world that is a delusion. But come, here is your medicine. We must not talk any more. The Angelus is ringing."

"Well, we will not talk any more, then; but tell me—you say I worship myself; I give you leave, Sister Marie, to teach me how to worship something else. Lying here so long, I am sick of myself and of my own thoughts."

Sister Marie shook her head.

"No, you would not learn of me. You must wait till you wish to put some one into the place of your weary thoughts. The time will come."

"That's how it is with these saintly people. They know not how to impart their poor comforts," said Hoel to himself.

Perhaps the thought of anything was too much for him, for that night he had a relapse, and again came a long, long period of illness and new symptoms, which the doctor called very unfavourable.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

ABOUT THE SAVOY.

EVERYBODY feels at home in the Strand; it is the pleasantest and most familiar of London streets; the variety of its shop-windows and shows is matched by the variety of the foot-passengers, who throng its causeways. When the countryman is in town, be sure you will meet him in the Strand—broad-shouldered and ruddy, with wife, or perhaps sisters, whose bright, healthy faces shine radiantly from the crowd. Bronzed Colonials, dark-visaged foreigners, burly ship-captains, and bluff sailors jostle against the regular habitués of the quarter—the pale journalists, the closely-shaven actors, the bustling business men making for the City. Now and then perhaps gleams forth some well-known face, stereotyped in many a caricature or comic cartoon—of statesman, author, traveller, or explorer; or perhaps of some renowned commander, fresh from tented fields. But however famous the passing unit may be, in no way is he distinguished in the Strand, for none may create a sensation in this great rushing stream of human beings,

And in the Strand you feel the pulse, as it were, of the greatest city in the world. And it is strange to observe the intermittent beats of the throbbing pulse; how, for a measurable space of time, often enough the roadway will be absolutely clear of vehicles, and the causeway of passengers. And especially strange is this momentary stillness to the observer from any of the quiet courts out of the Strand, coming up by some steep passage, perhaps, from the old Savoy, where a few old houses still remain, peering out among the general renovation, or an old gateway frames a picture of the bustling street beyond, the roar of whose myriad vehicles recalls the deep voice of the great sea.

And the Strand, although changing continually, and presenting constantly some new feature, still retains a characteristic aspect of its own. Nor does one take much account of individual houses or buildings. It is the Strand, and that says everything—one of the great streets of the world, as high as any other in antiquity and ancient fame. We hear of ancient edicts of the days of King John and the Plantagenets, for the paving of the Strand. And along the Strand at one time or another, the great pageants of history have passed upon their way. We may picture the Black Prince upon his palfrey, riding beside his Royal captive, John of France, towards the Royal Palace-prison of the Savoy, the street all gay with silken hangings, and the people half-wild with joy and exultation. Or it is Bolingbroke, who rides this way with captive Richard,

While all tongues cried—"God save thee, Bolingbroke!"

Or we may see Elizabeth surrounded by her favourites in ruff and doublet,

And gorgeous dames; and statesmen old
In bearded majesty appear!

Or we may have Charles returning from exile, while shows and playhouses open their doors, and half-starved actors rejoice after the long Cromwellian frost. Or, perhaps, we have good Queen Anne, surrounded by wigs and lawn sleeves, with dark Marlborough in attendance, laurel-crowned, or good old George in patriarchal State. And in our own time we have seen pageants, too. Victoria and Albert driving in State to the City. A Royal Princess departing to her mingled destiny of weal and woe—how thickly drove the sleet and mingled with the fast-falling tears of the bride! Or again there was that thanksgiving at St. Paul's, which all the nation

joined in so heartily, for the recovery of England's heir.

All this and much more the old Strand has seen, although it has been so often renewed, and subjected to so many clearings and improvements, that it is difficult to find a building of even moderate antiquity within its limits. Yet something of old London still hangs about that somewhat dingy pile that breaks the long line of glittering shops, with its frosted windows and cellar gratings, suggesting vaults of gold and treasures beneath the pavement; a building known for a hundred years or more as Coutts's Bank. And this bank occupies the site of old Durham House—there is Durham Street on the other side as a memento, beyond which rise the fine, new buildings of the Tivoli Music Hall, which began life quietly enough long years ago as the Adelphi Restaurant.

But when Durham House went to decay, this part of the site next the Strand was rebuilt by that famous statesman and builder, Robert Cecil, the first Earl of Salisbury, who, from his house adjoining, directed the operations here as well as at Hatfield House, where that famous pile was then rising from its foundations. The building was designed as a general mart, and was called the New Exchange. On the ground floor was a public walk, with cellars beneath for the storage of merchandise; above was a long arcade, lined with shops and stalls devoted chiefly to merceries and millineries. King James and his Queen honoured Lord Salisbury by coming to open the Exchange; and the former bestowed upon the building the pompous title of Britain's Bourse. But the name did not stick; and as the New Exchange the place is known in the memoirs and plays of the seventeenth century.

It was the scene of a great riot in 1654, during the Commonwealth, beginning with the rencontre, in the public walk, of two gentlemen, who ran against each other and indulged in uncourteous language. One was a Colonel Gerhard, deeply engrossed in some Royalist conspiracy, and the other a hot-headed young foreigner, Don Pantaleon, the brother of the Portuguese Ambassador. The whole suite of the Embassy hurried to the Exchange to avenge the insult, and swept the galleries, sword in hand; while women shrieked and swords clashed, and a furious mêlée ensued, in which the Don killed a young gentleman of Lincoln's Inn, hap-hazard, in the scrimmage.

The Parliament Horse, at the Meuse, turned out, and apprehended some of the rioters; but Don Pantaleon took refuge at the Embassy, and his brother refused to surrender him. The house was invested with horse and foot, for Oliver would stand no nonsense from anybody; and, finally, the Don was given up, tried at the Old Bailey, and cast for murder. Great efforts were made to obtain a pardon; but the Lord Protector was inexorable; and the Don was driven one morning from Newgate, in a coach-and-six, all deeply draped in mourning, to the scaffold on Tower Hill. There, by a strange coincidence, he met his former antagonist, Colonel Gerhard, who, in the meantime, had been condemned to death for conspiracy against the established Government; and the heads of the two antagonists rolled together on the scaffold.

The New Exchange, indeed, had something to do with the Restoration. For there Bess Clarges kept a stall—the daughter of a farrier, who had his forge hard by. And, from making shirts for the gayer of Cromwell's officers, who frequented the place, she came to marry one of them—no other than General Monk. And it is said that the wife's tongue was so urgent for the Stuarts, that the General had no choice but to bring them back again. And so the farrier's daughter became Duchess of Albemarle, and one of the great ladies of the Court, although she had never had much in the way of beauty or wit to recommend her.

With the Restoration the New Exchange became a favoured resort of the great world, and continued in repute after the subsequent Revolution of 1688. And then its walls beheld a reverse of fortune, to match the rise of Her Grace of Albemarle. For there occupied a stall in the building a mysterious female in a white mask, and dressed all in white, who was known as the "White Milliner." And she was subsequently proved to have been the Duchess of Tyrconnel, the widow of that "lying Dick Talbot" who had governed Ireland as Vice-Regent under the Stuarts.

There was also a Middle Exchange a little further along the Strand, built in the grounds of Salisbury House by the great Robert Cecil's son and successor. And this was a long arcade, opening at one end upon the river, where now we see the sombre opening of Salisbury Street, its vista crowned by the obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle. But the Middle

Exchange became of ill-repute, and was pulled down with the rest of Salisbury House in 1696, when Cecil Street and Salisbury Street took the place of the great house of the Elizabethan statesman. And these two quiet streets, long known to country visitors as chiefly occupied by private hotels and genteel lodging-houses, are now showing signs of further development in huge hoardings and colossal notice-boards, towards the Embankment; and still, as is evident from these advertisements, belong to the great Salisbury estates.

The New Exchange came in its turn to neglect and decay, and its site was occupied with shops and houses along the line of the Strand, chiefly, as we have already told, by that solid block of building known as Coutts's Bank, which was built by the brothers Adam for Messrs. Coutts, and is of the same age as the adjoining Adelphi.

Close by, that is, just to the westward of Salisbury Street, but practically blotted out by the arches of the Adelphi, old Ivy Lane once ran down from the Strand to a pier known as Ivy Bridge, which was in existence in the distant days of halfpenny steamboats; but which has of course been swallowed up in the Embankment.

And this lane formed the boundary between the City of Westminster—which reaches thus far westwards—and the Duchy of Lancaster, which rules the rest of the Strand as far as Temple Bar.

It is an abrupt change from the familiar Middlesex to the County Palatine of Lancaster, and all to be effected by stepping from one paving-stone to another. But when we ask the business of Lancaster in this particular region, our guide will softly whisper: "The Savoy—the ancient palace of the Dukes of Lancaster, and, according to the ancient chroniclers, once 'the fairest manor in all England.'"

But between the domain of the Salisburys and the Savoy, there existed—the name exists still—a little imperium in imperio, known as Beaufort Buildings, once the mansion of the Bishops of Carlisle; and afterwards that of a Marquis of Worcester, created Duke of Beaufort. The old house was partly destroyed by fire in 1695, and was replaced by a mansion, which had some famous tenants in its day—Henry Fielding, the novelist, among others—and that to within recent days presented an antique aspect, and contained some curious remains even of the early dwelling of the Bishops. But all is gone now, and what

there is left to show for it seems to be the back of the new Savoy Hotel.

Nor is there much left of the old Savoy, which once stood so proudly on its sunny slope, with battlements and turrets, and pleasant gardens below, where it was said that Edmund of Lancaster first planted the red rose of Provence, which he brought home from his travels, and which afterwards became the badge of the House of Lancaster. It is the Savoy, because it once belonged to Peter of Savoy, uncle to Eleanor, the Queen of Henry the Third, and then it passed to Eleanor's second son, Edmund of Lancaster, and has ever since been part of the Earldom and honour of Lancaster. John of France, as every schoolboy knows, was lodged here as a prisoner, and liked the place so well, or some fair dame who lightened his captivity, that he came back and died there.

A curious story, by the way, is told by Knighton and Walsingham, how the King of France confessed on his deathbed to our King Edward, that he had confederates in London who collected the finest gold of the kingdom, secretly made it into plates, and put it into barrels, hooped with iron, to send to France, with bows and arrows, and a great quantity of other arms. If there are any of the casks of gold still lying about the foundations of the old Savoy, one would like to be at the broaching of them.

Wat Tyler's men destroyed the Savoy Palace pretty thoroughly, and sent John of Gaunt flying. The gates and certain towers remained standing, but the rest of the manor was left in ruins, and so remained, it seems, for more than a century, when Henry the Seventh, who inherited all the estates and honours of the House of Lancaster, on his deathbed at Richmond Palace bequeathed the estate for the foundation of a hospital. From that time we hear a good deal about the masters of the hospital, but very little as to its inmates. The hospital cells became lodgings for gentlemen of the Court, and various industries were established for the advantage of the master and chaplains—an early glass factory, in 1552, printing-offices at a later date. The liberty of the Savoy became a refuge for debtors and defaulters, as dangerous and disorderly as the kindred Alsatias in Whitefriars or Southwark. But in 1702 the arm of the law was invoked, and the hospital was dissolved by a decree of the Lord-Keeper Wright, the masters and fellows were deprived, as non-

resident, and all the rents arising from the estate were confiscated to the Crown.

Yet, still there was always the chapel in the Savoy which had known some eminent preachers — among others, Fuller of the "Worthies;" but which, in the middle of the eighteenth century, became noted, like the Fleet, for its irregular marriages, which at one time were of great profit to the titular master and chaplain. But carrying on the traffic after such marriages had been legally interdicted, the chaplain and his curate each got fourteen years' transportation, and the Savoy knew them no more. It was later that George the Third, in 1773, constituted the church a Chapel Royal; and since then the chapel has enjoyed a well-earned reputation for the conduct of its services. And when the interior was burnt out in 1864, the whole was restored as nearly as possible to its original state at the expense of the Queen.

It is a pleasant experience, on some fine Sunday morning, to attend service at the Savoy. The Strand as quiet as a country road, the church bells ting-tanging all round, melodious St. Martin's and sweet St. Clement's, that seems to cry "oranges and lemons" as clearly as possible; and from the little square tower the bell of the Savoy joins hoarsely in the general tintinnabulation. It is but a little box or casket in stone, with pointed windows and a tiny porch, this chapel, standing on a sunny, grassy slope among trees and shrubs and white tombstones; but it is grey, and time-worn, and comely enough in its loneliness among the great new buildings, hotels, theatres, and piles of offices, all sleeping in their Sabbath rest. The little church is well filled with habitual worshippers; and it is not till the beginning of the lesson that the silken cord is dropped, and strangers ushered in to any seat that may be vacant. Then a pleasant old-time feeling comes over the listener as he gazes up at the flat, panelled ceiling, where, if he has well studied his "Loftie" beforehand (*History of the Savoy*), he may recognise the emblazoned arms or badges of many a famous Prince and Royal dame: the Black Bull of Clare, the White Hart of Richard the Second, the White Hind of his mother, once the Fair Maid of Kent, the White Falcon of York, the White Lion of March, the White Greyhound of Henry the Seventh, with many others of right noble and puissant belongings. And the choir boys shrilly chant while the sun-

shine filters in through the stained-glass windows, and touches the enamelled pavement, beneath which are sleeping the garnered worthies of long centuries past. And when the sermon is preached, and the benediction given, the comfortable-looking well-dressed crowd disperses, while omnibuses are rattling along the Strand, and the underground trains are beginning to stir once more.

And if we reach the Embankment again we may admire the quietude of the scene, and the river flashing brightly under the arches of Waterloo Bridge. It was the bridge, by the way, that gave the "coup de grâce" to the old Savoy. For Wellington Street crashes through the very heart of it on its way to the bridge, and the remains of the old Savoy Gate, and such old walls as had lasted into the present century, lie deeply buried under the embanked approach to Waterloo Bridge.

OLD STYLE PSALMODY.

SOME of the most interesting passages in the works of our best writers of fiction consist of descriptions of the old style of English psalmody, and especially of the musical malpractices of rustic choirs. Mr. Hughes, in "Tom Brown at Oxford," tells us of the doings of the choir at Englebourne Parish Church; how the bass viol proceeded thither to do the usual rehearsals and to gossip with the sexton; and how, at the singing of the verse in the ninety-first Psalm which ends with the line, "With dragons stout and strong," the trebles took up the line, and then the whole strength of the choir chorused again, "With dragons stout and strong," and the bass viol seemed to prolong the notes and to gloat over them as he droned them out, looking triumphantly at the distant curate, whose mild protests it was pleasant thus to defy.

The works of so minute an observer of English country life as George Eliot naturally abound in notices of a like character. In "Felix Holt," it will be remembered, there is a persistent plaint, by one in authority, about the obstinate demeanour of the singers, who decline to change the tunes in accordance with a change in the selection of the hymns, and stretch short metre into long out of pure willfulness and defiance, irreverently adapting the most sacred monosyllables to a multitude of wandering quavers.

And then, in one of the "Scenes of Clerical Life," we have a rather elaborate account of the process and procedure of the singing at Shepperton Church. How, as the singing was about to commence, a slate appeared in front of the gallery, advertising in bold characters the Psalm about to be sung; how this was followed by the emigration of the clerk to the gallery, where, in company with a bassoon, two key-bugles, a carpenter, understood to have an amazing power of singing "counter," and two lesser musical stars, he formed the complement of a choir regarded in Shepperton as one of distinguished attraction, occasionally known to draw hearers from the next parish. "But the greatest triumphs of the Shepperton choir were reserved for the Sundays, when the slate announced an Anthem, with a dignified abstinence from particularisation, both words and music lying far beyond the reach of the most ambitious amateurs in the congregation"—an anthem in which the key-bugles are described as always running away at a great pace, while the bassoon every now and then boomed a flying shot after them.

Anthems seem to have been occasionally sung without any previous rehearsal. An old country curate once announced after the Second Lesson: "I see some musical friends from Redditch have come in, so that we will have an anthem presently."

Perhaps, of all the customs connected with the old psalmody, that which would now seem most amusing was the "ad nauseam" repetition of lines and syllables of the Psalms and hymns. The singers, after reaching the middle of the line, would go back to the beginning, and repeat the words three or four times before going to the end of the line to complete the sense. In this way some most ludicrous effects were produced; though it is doubtful if our worthy forefathers were much shocked thereby. Thus: "Call down Sal" was thrice repeated before the full word "Salvation" was reached; and the line, "Oh Thou to whom all creatures bow" was spun out until it resembled, "bow-wow-wow-wow." Then there were such startling surprises as, "And take thy pil—and take thy pil—and take thy pilgrim home"; "And learn to kiss—and learn to kiss—and learn to kiss the rod"; "Stir up this stu—stir up this stu—stir up this stupid heart"; "My poor pol—my poor pol—my poor polluted heart"; "And more eggs—and more eggs—and more exalted joys."

And so on, ad infinitum, there being no end to these eccentricities.

But the climax of sentiment and singing was reached when the choir took up such a verse as this:

True love is like that precious oil
Which poured on Aaron's head,
Ran down his beard, and o'er his robes
Its costly moisture shed.

It was not strange that Bishop Seabury wondered whether Aaron would have any hair left after he had been treated thus by the choir:

Its costly moist—ran down his beard—
Ure heard—his—beard—his—shed—
Ran down his beard—his—down his robes—
Its costly moist—his beard—ure shed—
Its cost—ure robes—his robes—he shed—
I-t-s-c-o-s-t-l-y-moist—ure—shed.

For this was really the way the music twisted the words about. By-and-by there came a reaction in favour of plainer music than this, and good, solid, syllabic tunes, of the "Old Hundredth" type, took the place of the old florid "repeat" melodies.

In singing the Psalms, the old custom was for the clerk to read each line—sometimes two lines—before the people joined in with the music. This practice is supposed to have originated in a desire to assist members of congregations who were unable to read. It began in England, and, by-and-by, it was taken up by the Scotch people, who, instead of looking at it in the light of a convenience, began to consider it a matter of principle; so much so, that when efforts were made to abolish it, great opposition arose, and many people left the church. It is told of an old widow at Tarbolton, in Ayrshire, that, though living by herself, she went through the form of family prayers every day, and read aloud to herself each line of the Psalm before singing it! The celebrated Dr. Chalmers related on one occasion his own experience of trying to abolish this old practice at Kilmeny. There was one old lady who stoutly maintained that the change was anti-scriptural. Dr. Chalmers took an early opportunity of visiting her, and on enquiring what was the Scripture of which she regarded the change as a contravention, at once was answered by her citing the text, "Line upon line." It is told of a Scotch precentor that one Sunday, going through the Psalm in this old fashion, he stopped to request some members of the congregation to allow a lady to get into a pew, and then went on to read the next line of the Psalm, "Nor stand in sinners' way!"

Very few of our present-day churches are without some kind of keyboard instrument—organ or harmonium—to accompany the singing. In olden times, however, both organs and organists were less common than they now are, and various substitutes for the larger instrument were to be found. Violins, bassoons, clarinets, and violoncellos seem to have been most common; but instances were to be met with of the employment of almost every musical instrument then in general use.

Pepys humorously mentions "the fiddlers in red vests," playing in Westminster Abbey; and one Smart complains of "pipers" at Durham Cathedral during the Holy Communion.

Strange to say, barrel-organs were to be heard in many churches. A barrel generally "contained" eight tunes; four barrels were the most that were made. The duties of the "organist" were then manifestly simple—they were confined to turning the handle. Barrel-organs began to go out of use in the churches about forty years ago; but they survived in some places to quite a recent date. One was met with in actual use at the old parish church of East Ham, Essex—quite near London—in 1880; and there may be others still doing service of which we have not heard. The barrel-organ had just one advantage over the modern untrained amateur: it did not play wrong notes, which the amateur, alas! too often does.

OUR POETS GRAVE.

Just where the willow, old beyond remembrance,
Casts its deep shadow o'er the daisied grass,
Where robins build, and where the noisy footsteps
Of the world's throng but very seldom pass.
'Twas here we laid our Poet down, when sleeping,
Deaf, for the first time, to the voice of Love,
Tir'd, tho' so young, of this world's fret and passion,
And longing for eternal rest above!

Ah! how we lov'd him, gentle, uncomplaining,
Bright-eyed tho' weighted with a heavy cross,
Tender and patient—making sweetest poësy,
How can we ever cease to feel his loss?
No greybeard cynic—Hope was aye his motto!
"Sunlight will smile beyond the clouds' dark gloom;
All is not ended—Life eternal waits us,
And triumphs o'er the shadows and the Tomb!"

Such was his teaching—ah! my dear, dead singer,
You came amongst us in an angel's guise,
You scatter'd songs of praise and hope around us,
Ere passing to your home beyond the skies.
"A bright, brief journey"—and a tender parting,
Heartbroken sobs from those who lov'd you so,
Weak words of comfort from the lips that murmur'd
"Nay, weep not, dear ones, I am glad to go!"

Calmly he rests—the willow weeping o'er him,
The pink-tipp'd daisies blooming at his feet;
The birds he lov'd because they sang his anthems,
Leaving him never in his calm retreat.
Our gentle Poet! all your brave, bright teaching
Still lives, altho' your Cross has broken down;
The laurel wreath is wither'd on your forehead,
But bright for ever glows the golden crown!

THE TRUE STORY OF THE BRADA MINING COMPANY, LIMITED.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

MR. JOHNSON kept his appointment at seven o'clock that evening, and while Zeb's sister was serving customers in the shop, he and Zeb were seated in the cosy little parlour behind, which had been made tidy for the occasion. The engineer lost no time in getting to business. Beyond all doubt, he said, this mine, if properly managed, would be a big thing. But money—a very large sum—would be required to work it. Was Mr. Quirk prepared to find this money? Zeb frankly admitted he had not a five-pound note to spare in the world, and did not know where to look for another farthing. Mr. Johnson laughed at him. He was very pleasant, very sociable—quite the gentleman, Zeb thought. He put the amount required at forty thousand pounds, and spoke of it in such an airy way, that Zeb, though appalled by the magnitude of the figures, could not but regard him with admiring awe. It was a big sum, he admitted—a very big sum; but he had rich friends in England, and he believed that, by extrens labour, he could raise it. Of course, he must be paid for his work; that was only in the ordinary course of business.

"Now, Mr. Quirk," said he, "here is my proposal. Will you be satisfied with twenty thousand pounds in shares? If so, I will guarantee you that, on condition that I may take any further profit there may be, in return for my trouble in floating the Company."

Twenty thousand pounds! It quite took Zeb's breath away. He tried to realise what that sum meant, and completely failed.

"One-tenth of that!" he gasped. "Only get me a tenth—and take all the rest—and God bless you, Mr. Johnson!"

"Oh, you are fairly entitled to the amount I named," said Mr. Johnson, magnanimously. "You must not take a penny less. I will have none of it. Twenty thousand pounds in shares—that is the

price you are to receive for your lease. Come, shall we draw up an agreement?"

In rather a dazed way, Zeb fetched pens, ink, and paper; Mr. Johnson drafted a sort of deed of partnership; witnesses were called in from the shop; the document was duly signed; and the thing was done. Then the two new partners shook hands, and congratulations were exchanged, most of this being done by Mr. Johnson, for Zeb was too dazzled by the prospect to be able to say much.

But just as they were parting, Zeb asked:

"When will you come with me to look at the mine?"

"Oh, I don't know. Is it necessary?"

"Have you seen it yet?"

"No, no," answered Mr. Johnson, hastily. "Where is it? Somewhere up on Senogles's farm, isn't it?"

Zeb thought this rather odd, but before he could express an opinion, Mr. Johnson went on lightly:

"Well, perhaps I may as well go with you, partner. To-morrow morning at ten; will that suit you? Then I can inspect the mine, collect specimens, write a report, and be ready to start away for London at once."

And this was precisely what Mr. Johnson did. Three days later he left the island, and the scene of active operations was transferred to London.

From a large and handsome office in the City a prospectus was presently issued, headed "The Brada Mining Company, Limited"—for so Zeb had wished it to be called—"First issue of thirty-two thousand shares, of which twenty-seven thousand are now offered to the public." The value of the shares was five pounds each, but only two pounds were to be called up. One thousand of these shares were already appropriated, while another four thousand, fully paid up, together with twenty thousand pounds in cash, was to be allotted to the vendors, George Johnson, Mining Engineer, and Zebediah Quirk, Merchant. The working capital of the Company would therefore be thirty-six thousand pounds, a sum considered ample for the present. It was confidently asserted that upon this capital the mine would pay a dividend of thirty-five per cent.; and this was proved in the clearest way by figures—figures giving the number of tons to be raised per week, the quantity of lead per ton, and the price, with an estimate for expenses and a liberal margin for any contingencies—not a flaw for any one to

cavil at. It was backed up by reports of various mining engineers, and also by statistics showing the enormous profits of other mines, especially of the well-known mine in the same neighbourhood. To show that there was no over-colouring, intending shareholders were invited to visit the office of the Company, and to inspect for themselves the specimens of ore which had been brought from the spot.

The Board of Directors was a highly representative one. It consisted of the younger son of an English Earl, a Member of the House of Commons, a Scotch Baronet, a half-pay Colonel, a retired naval Captain, a solicitor, and a gentleman—at least, he had only a plain "Esquire" after his name. All of them were directors of other companies, so they were men of experience, and their names were presumably known to the public. Two others were to be chosen by the shareholders, and the Vendors would join the Board after allotment.

It is a remarkable fact that, while this prospectus was largely circulated in England among the classes considered to have most money to invest, clergymen, widows, and the like, not a single copy was sent direct to the Isle of Man. But one got there by a roundabout way, and eventually fell into the hands of Zebediah Quirk.

It would be enough to turn the head of any young man; and though Zeb was singularly free from conceit, he certainly began to think a good deal more of himself than he had done before. To see his name in print, joined, too, with the names of members of the aristocracy, naval and military heroes, and other illustrious persons, and himself styled "Merchant"—that was a most pleasant sensation. And then "The Brada Mining Company"—how delightful it looked! How charmed she would be when she saw it! How extraordinarily lucky he was! There, in black and white, was the sum which Mr. Johnson had promised him—twenty thousand pounds in shares. A splendid fortune!

But by-and-by, when Zeb had read the prospectus a dozen times or so, several flaws became apparent among so much that was pleasant to the eye. It occurred to him that the real value of his shares was not five pounds apiece, but two pounds; that being the price at which they were offered to the public. Upon this basis he was to receive only eight thousand pounds, instead of twenty thousand.

There was something wrong here. The more Zeb considered the matter, the more uncomfortable he became. He began to labour under a sense of injustice; he fancied that these clever people, regarding him as a country simpleton, were conspiring to defraud him. He made up his mind to stand up for his rights. True, he had expressed himself as quite ready to accept one-tenth of the terms offered him; but times had changed since then. In those days, he had not learned the value of his property; he had not been styled "merchant," and his name had not been associated with baronets and colonels. He had been — with wonderment and even shame he admitted it—a village grocer; nothing more and nothing less. But all that was altered now. His views had undergone expansion. He was "Zebediah Quirk, Esq.," and, therefore, could claim to be properly treated. Why should he be paid in shares and his partner in cash? The whole arrangement was grossly unfair.

So poor Zeb wrote a letter, couched in very grand language—quite in the "Polite Letter-Writing" style—to Mr. Johnson, at the Company's office in London, and stated his grievance. In due time came the answer. It was genial, bright, and even playful in style. It explained the matter most thoroughly; and it quoted the opinion of eminent authorities, mostly noblemen, in such a free-and-easy way, that Zeb was utterly crushed—angry with himself for having exposed his ignorance.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that, while his profits were strictly limited, Zeb's were unlimited, and might reach a figure far beyond the wildest hopes. He wrote:

"The estimate in the prospectus—an extremely moderate one under the circumstances—puts the profits at thirty-five per cent., and even if we take this low figure, without allowing for any further rise, your twenty thousand pounds' worth of shares would readily sell for a hundred and forty thousand. Come now, partner, will you let me have some of your shares in exchange for my cash—when I get it? If you will, I think you will very soon repent of your bargain. The Earl of Mayfair is wild to get shares. Will you sell?"

After that, Zeb decided he would not.

He carried the prospectus to the mill, and, with pride, showed it to Dan Radcliffe. The old miller looked at it upside down, then put on his horn-rimmed glasses and seemed to study it attentively through

for a few minutes. Finally he handed it back.

"What does it all come to, lad?" he asked. "My old eyes are too dim to spell through it. Give us the gist of it in language that one can understand, for it's just so much gibberish to me."

Though a good deal chilled, Zeb went at it manfully, launching out into an enthusiastic description of the Company, and of his own prospects. But the miller stopped him with an incredulous—

"There's gold on Cushtags there, I'm thinkin', Zeb."

"It's all true I'm telling you, Master Radcliffe," exclaimed Zeb, indignantly.

"Maybe, lad; maybe. But what have thee got in thy pocket? That's the main point."

Zeb had some difficulty in explaining that his shares, though not actually money, represented a very large sum. The old miller only shook his head.

"Brada was down at the shop last night for a pound or two of bacon," he remarked, after a pause. "Thy sister was there as usual, and she said there was none in stock. It was the same tale a fortnight ago."

"Goodness gracious!" cried Zeb; "would you have me bothering my head about penn'orths of bacon when there's a fortune lying yonder?"

"Maybe it'll lie yonder still when thee and me's lyin' in the churchyard, Zeb. Let every man stick to his trade, I say. When tailors go a-tinkerin' it's a bad day for tin kettles."

Zeb rose up with a stormy face. This was not at all the sort of talk he had come to listen to; he had a right to expect something very different. But before he had had time to commit himself Brada entered, and at her coming the clouds dispersed. Zeb, smiling now, appealed to her.

"What do you think your father has been trying to persuade me?" he asked. "To give up the mine and attend to the shop!"

"And you are grown too grand for that, I suppose you mean, Zeb?" said Brada, with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

"There was no talk of being too grand," said Zeb. "Anyway, I'm not too grand for you, Brada."

"I'm not so sure about that," said Brada, saucily. "We're plain folks here, Mr. Zebediah, and when you've got your fine carriage, and, maybe, sit in the Keys,

there'll be no more visits to the mill. Oh, yes, you are much too grand a gentleman for us."

"That's only your pretty, teasing way," said Zeb.

For all that, he was rather doubtful about it. He could not decide whether or not she was in earnest, and he was vexed with both her and her father, because they did not share his enthusiasm, and would not enter into his plans for the future. But, in spite of the indignation which he had shown, the miller's words weighed upon him; he grew more and more uneasy; in the end he wrote to Mr. Johnson to say that he would sell half his shares for cash.

The answer did not arrive for a fortnight, and, when it did come, it struck Zeb—though he was far from understanding it—with a chilling sense of disappointment. Mr. Johnson said that, the Company not having yet been formed, the shares had no market value; but that a sufficient number of applications had been received to warrant proceeding to allotment, and this step would be taken immediately. The Company would next apply for a quotation upon the Stock Exchange, and then, if Mr. Quirk chose to do anything so foolish, he could sell his shares. Zeb learned little from this letter beyond the hard fact that he must wait.

A month went by; shares had been allotted to the various applicants. All seemed to be going smoothly, when an unexpected hitch occurred. An article appeared in a leading financial newspaper, denouncing "The Brada Mining Company, Limited," as a swindle. It declared that the mine had been "salted," and strongly urged the shareholders to lose no time in demanding the return of their money.

The immediate result of this article was a stampede to the office of the Company. The staircase was thronged with men and women who, for all their angry words, could ill conceal their fears; and every post brought an avalanche of threatening letters. The directors, no less disturbed than the shareholders, laid their heads together, and discussed the situation within locked doors. After a lengthy consultation, they announced that an action for libel would at once be commenced against the offending newspaper. But this announcement had little or no effect in allaying the panic. The shareholders still clamoured as loudly as ever for the return of their money.

An informal and very noisy meeting was eventually held, and it was decided, as a sort of compromise, that an independent engineer should be sent to inspect the mine, and should report upon it.

It was the arrival of this engineer, a Mr. Ballantine, that made Zeb first suspect there was something amiss. Upon the following day, a full account of the proceedings in London appeared in the *Manx* papers. Zeb was dismayed when he read it. He was angry; he was puzzled. He could not but remember John Senogles's statement, that there was no lead upon his farm; and yet, on the other hand, he himself had seen it there. Excellent ore, too.

With unsteady footsteps he went after the new engineer, overtook him on the mountain-side, and began to question him. But Mr. Ballantine, a cold, stiff, silent man, utterly refused to give him any information.

"My report will be presented to the directors as soon as possible," he said. "They, no doubt, will make it public in the ordinary way. I am afraid you must wait till then, Mr. Quirk."

And he passed on.

Mr. Ballantine's inspection of the property was singularly short. He spent twenty minutes there. Then he hurried back to London and made his report. There was no mine, he said, and no lead worth mentioning. He had observed, scattered about, a quantity of ore, which was undoubtedly rich in that metal; but it did not come from the rock in the neighbourhood. It had been brought from some other place, probably from the other side of the mountain. This could only have been done for a fraudulent purpose; and the only question was: Who had done it?

Such was the general tenour of Mr. Ballantine's report.

It produced quite a sensation in the office, and was followed by a fresh outbreak of the boisterous scenes which had already given this palatial building an unenviable notoriety. The shareholders were for laying violent hands upon the directors, and the directors fell foul of one another. Mr. Johnson came in for the chief share of the abuse. But he took matters very coolly; expressed his profound astonishment at what had happened; declared he must have been tricked by the original holder of the lease, Zebediah Quirk; and so disclaimed all responsibility.

Mr. Johnson, however, took care to make himself safe. As soon as he could do so unobserved, he slipped away, and the City knew him no more. It was believed that he had gone to Spain. When the accounts were examined, it was found that the greater part of the money paid by the unfortunate shareholders had disappeared.

Zeb was nearly broken-hearted. He could not lift up his head; he dared not stir out of doors; he sat brooding over his troubles, with no power to meet the dark suspicion which had fallen upon him. Then, in his hour of adversity, when his neighbours held their faces averted from him, the girl who had laughed at him in his prosperity came to him, and did her utmost to give him strength and courage.

"Tut, man!" said Brada. "You're no worse off than you were before. You have got a good business, if you will give your mind to it; and that's more than John Senogles can say."

Zeb raised his pale face, and looked up at her gratefully. But all he said was:

"They say I did it, Brada."

"Did what, though?" she asked.

"Acted a lie. Put good ore on the land to deceive people. Planned and executed a cruel swindle."

Brada laughed.

"Is that all?" she asked.

"Oh, but listen!" exclaimed Zeb, rousing himself, for this accusation galled him even more than the loss of the fortune which he had expected. "Who was there to do it but me? Who else could have gained by it? Nobody but me, the holder of the lease. That is what they are saying. And what can I put against it?"

"Your own honesty, Zeb. What more can you want? And who is saying this thing?"

"They are saying it in London. They are saying it in the glen."

"Come with me, Zeb," said Brada, proudly. "Then let him that dare, say a word against you. Come with me to father, and hear what he has to say about it."

"Brada," said Zeb, fervently, "you are the best girl in all the world."

And, conquering his reluctance, he consented to accompany her. But it was a painful walk for him. The few persons they met he passed with downcast eyes. He was right glad when he found himself within the mill. A poor place he had thought it but a few weeks ago; and what

a bright, comfortable, happy home it seemed to him now!

"Come back to us, then, Zeb!" cried the miller, with a hearty shake of the hand. "Sit thee down by the fireside. What's amiss, lad? Thee's lookin' middlin' poorly."

And then, little by little, Zeb told his story. The miller had heard most of it before, but he pretended astonishment; and, at the suggestion of any suspicion attaching to Zeb, expressed utter incredulity. He treated it as a joke, making the rafters ring with his loud laughter.

"Stick to thy trade, Zeb," said he, "and there'll be a future for thee yet, bad though the grocery business is. Maybe, this affair will turn out a blessing after all."

With shame Zeb had to confess he had no money. The miller at once offered to lend him as much as would be required for carrying on the business.

"Thee shall pay me interest on it, lad," said he. "I can't afford to let my money lie idle, and, maybe, it'll be easier for thee to take it from me so. Security! Tut! tut! don't talk of such things. What better security can a man have than downright honesty, and courage, and determination to get on?"

After that, what mattered all the scandal and black looks of the village gossips? Zeb could only express his gratitude in broken sentences. He felt that he did not deserve all that the miller had said of him; but he made a mental resolution that he would deserve it yet. He spent the whole afternoon at the mill, and a very happy afternoon it was. He was surprised how completely he had forgotten his troubles. But when, taking advantage of Brada's momentary absence, he ventured to speak of her as his future wife, he experienced a sharp check.

"Thee's goin' too fast, lad," said the miller. "I'll lend thee my money, but—at a fair rate of interest, mind—but that's a very different thing from givin' thee my daughter. Thee must win her by hard work, Zeb."

And Zeb determined that he would. He did, too, but not before several years had passed away.

One other fact in connection with the "Brada Mining Company, Limited" remains to be chronicled. There was some talk of prosecuting the directors for conspiracy, but before anything came of it, John Senogles met with an accident which

brought him to his deathbed, the result being that he made a confession which completely exculpated Zeb. It was he that, at the instigation of Mr. Johnson, had "salted" the mine, and the plunder was to have been shared between them. But Zeb, all unconsciously, had stepped in and frustrated their purpose. Mr. Johnson had thereupon deserted his fellow-conspirator; and Senogles had had the mortification of seeing others reap the benefits of a fraud planned by himself. But as he had originated the "Brada Mining Company, Limited," so he had brought about its destruction, for the information which caused its downfall had come from him.

"I am sorry most for poor Zeb," said Senogles.

But Zeb forgave him freely.

MRS. GLASSE'S COOKERY BOOK.

A CURIOUS sort of celebrity has attached itself to the plain-spoken and worthy housewife who essayed, in the days of our great-grandmothers, to make the art of cookery plain and easy. For more than a hundred years her fame has never faded into forgetfulness, for she has been endeared to the popular fancy by the pithy saying, "First catch your hare."

Now, considering the terse and homely style of the lady, and the frequent bursts of sarcasm she indulges in, this scrap of proverbial philosophy seems so characteristic of its reputed authoress, that it is not without regret that the lover of strict accuracy must admit that in no edition of this stumpy brown volume can the trenchant saying be found. The copious index gives us "to chuse a hare," to scare a hare, to dress a hare, a hare civet, and, to roast a hare; and it is under the last heading that we find the germ of the epigram which some unknown wit or happy blunderer has worked up into its present unauthorised form. In the original it simply runs thus:

Take your hare when it is cased (i.e. skinned).

The lover of quaint old books, however, would do well not to put this one down after verifying the famous misquotation; for in turning over the yellowing pages, which guided our foremothers to some of their greatest achievements in the fine art of which then Mrs. Glasse was almost the only reliable guide, we can catch pleasant glimpses of the leisurely, old-

world life of the stay-at-home matrons of her day.

The preface—a fine piece of nervous English—is amusing, because of the truly British spirit Mrs. Glasse displays in attacking the French and all their works and ways. With commendable vigour she sets herself against the base superstition that plain English dishes taste any better for being called by fine French names.

"If I have not wrote in the high-polite style," she says, with the pride which aposes humility, "I hope I shall be forgiven, for my intention is to instruct the lower sort, and I must treat them in their own way. But the great cooks have such a high way of expressing themselves, that the poor girls are often at a loss."

She would fain see French cooks banished from English kitchens. It grieves her righteous soul to see how they squander the substance of the great English lords who are so ill-advised as to employ them, forgetting that "if gentlemen will have French cooks, they must pay for French tricks." She points out how careful these reckless wasters can be in their own country, and she promises to prove to her pupils that, by plain English cookery, they can serve up "a genteel entertainment" of many courses for the price that French cookery demands for one single sauce alone.

But with all her confidence in her own skill and thrift, she admits that there will still be some amongst the English gentry "who would rather be imposed upon by a French booby than give encouragement to a good English cook." "I doubt," she goes on, with mingled spirit and resignation, "I doubt I shall not gain the esteem of these gentlemen; but let that be as it will, I but desire the approbation of my own sex."

She very sensibly announces that she has no intention of meddling in matters which concern her not, such as medical prescriptions—save indeed to offer a receipt for the bite of a mad dog, and one "for avoiding of the plague"—and she distinctly refuses "to take upon her to direct a lady in the economy of her own house, for every lady knows, or ought to know, what is proper to be done. So I shall not fill my book with a deal of nonsense of that kind, which I am very well assured none will have regard to."

And then she plunges boldly into her work, giving her directions in a plain and brisk style, and entering with masterly

minuteness into all the details of the lengthy processes by which all manner of solids and kickshaws—as she calls them—had to be prepared in those old days when bought delicacies were unknown.

And when we of these degenerate later days of ease, read with awe of these complicated and anxious undertakings, these elaborate simulations of Indian dainties, and these weary picklings, brewings, and preservings, it cannot but occur to us that it was well for the housewives who achieved these triumphs of nature over art that in those days the higher culture of women had not “come up,” as Mrs. Glasse would say, to distract them from their still-room duties.

Could any woman who “takes in all the new ideas”—like Mr. Brooks in “Middlemarch”—spare time from her literary employments for bestowing the time, patience, and skill that were called for in such culinary labours as “the pickling of elder-shoots in imitation of bamboo”; the pickling of stertion-buds and lime-shoots; the making of clove gilliflowers in a syrup; the distilling of hysterical water; and the making of madling cakes. For all these things require a deliberate and watchful care which implies in the maker a mind that hankers not after higher culture, but may be refrained and kept low; and, like that of the loving lady of “In Memoriam,” “fixed on matters of the house.”

The very full directions for preserving all manners of meats, fishes, vegetables, and fruits for the winter season, are eloquent of a different style of house-keeping from ours, and of the pressing need to “look before and after,” since the pining “for what is not” could not then be satisfied by such bought delicacies as are now common in the most economically-ordered homes.

A list of the various things which a well-ordered garden ought to supply, discourses pleasantly on the fruits and garden-stuff of the year, and tells of old-fashioned varieties, the names of which we no longer hear.

For January, we find among “fruits yet lasting,” the John Apple and the Winter Queening, the Pom-Water, Love’s Permain, and the Winter Permain, the Winter Mast, and great furrein pears. Added to these, February has the Pomery, the Winter Peppering, and the Dagobert Pear. In April we find that the careful housewife of those days could count on cherries, green apricots, and gooseberries for tarts; while

her well-preserved Gilliflower Apples, Winter Bonchretien, and Russetings lasted her well into May, when she was sure to find May-dukes in the hot-beds and scarlet strawberries in the border. Cucumbers, which in April were in hot-beds, would appear to be now ready for use out of doors, “for those old Mays had twice the warmth of ours,” as Tennyson says; and the asparagus and kidney beans were ready for use a month earlier than they are now.

But in this merry and bountiful month, the lady of the house, or her still-room maid, would find her hands full; for Mrs. Glasse ordains that “May is the proper time to distil herbs, which are now in their greatest perfection.”

Among summer vegetables “the flowers of nastertian” figure, also puslain and burnet, for “sallada.” In July, the young suckers of artichokes are to be cut and carefully prepared for keeping. The artichoke, indeed, engrosses a great deal of Mrs. Glasse’s attention, and she gives us more ways of dressing it than of any other vegetable. To make an artichoke pye; to fricasey artichoke bottoms; to dress artichoke suckers the Spanish way; to dress artichoke stalks; also to ragoo, to pickle, and to dry these useful if tasteless vegetables, are only a few of the receipts she gives under this head.

In June, “the forward kinds of grapes” should be ready in forcing frames; and in July, the first apples and pears are ripe; and very alluring are the names of the various fruits, with the old English ring about them. We find red and white Jannatings, and Margaret Apples; the Summer-Green Chissel and Pearl Pear; the Nutmeg, the Isabella, the Violet, the Muscat, and Newington Peaches; and White, Red, Blue, Amber, and Damask Pears vie with the Cinnamon Plumb and Lady Elizabeth Plumb. We have “yet lasting of the last year some Deuxans and winter Russetings.”

Pickling of walnuts and “rock sampier” must now engage the attention of the housekeeper, who must also find time for “shredding of her red roses” if she would make a fine conserve of roses boiled; and for gathering her pear-plumbs for drying and filling (a slow and anxious process) for a dessert dainty; and for making all manner of “gam and jelly” for her household, to be put up in glasses. “A jack of water” is to us an unknown quantity; but it seems to be the proper allowance

for two pounds of fruit. "This do twice daily for three days" is quite a common direction in such delicate operations as "the drying of damosins with fair water." "Coddle them in many waters, and then coddle them again; then boil them, skimming them often," are the final directions for a long and wearisome receipt "for preserving plumbs green," and would seem to imply a considerable strain on the time and patience of the preserver. But this is as naught to the labours of the ambitious housekeeper, who essays to preserve quinces in jelly, and successfully passes the ordeal of the shakings and skimmings, the strainings through a tiffany, and the frequent coolings and boilings during which "you must look that you cease not to turn them."

Among the kitchen herbs for August we find a mysterious rooumbole, and the pears of this month bear such names as Penny Prussian, Summer Popponing, Louding, Red Catharine, and King Catharine, while amongst Imperial Blue Dates, Walla Cotta Peaches, and Muroy, Tawny, and Red Roman Nectarines we hear of the Great Anthony and the Jane Plumb. Three kinds of grapes, the Cluster, Muscadin, and Cornelian, ought to be ripe for eating in the open air in August.

September brings "cherville, sellery, and akirrets" to the kitchen garden, with scorzonerna, and other outlandish names, to which October adds the chardone to the kitchen garden, and the bullace, the pine, and arbuter to the fruits. In November cauliflower grows in the greenhouse, and sorrel, thyme, and savoury, with sweet marjoram dry and clary. Cabbages eke out the vegetables, and we must turn to the hot-bed for herbs, cabbages, and blanched endive. In December the faithful artichoke, companion of every month in Mrs. Glasse's year, still flourishes in sand, while the conservatory shelters the cabbage and cauliflower; and mint, tarragon, and lettuce linger under glasses, where should also be found ready for use the cucumbers that were sown in July. These, with marigold flowers, tops of beet, leeks, and sweet marjoram close the list. Not a bad one for an English garden all the year round.

But should all this fail, Mrs. Glasse thoughtfully provides her readers with a clever device "for raising a salad in two hours by the fire, high enough to cut;" and instructs her pupils in the mysteries of so many triumphs of the still-room, that it

would go hard with them if they failed "to surprise and delight their guests by a show of midsummer at Christmas, or snow in summer."

She teaches them how to send out meat to the West Indies, "so sweet and good it will keep for a whole year in the pickle, and (with care) will go to the East Indies also."

Here you can learn how to make catchup that will last you twenty years; to bake mackarel, that will be good for a year; to keep peas green till Christmas; to preserve tripe to go good to the East Indies; and other *tours-de-force* too many to quote.

An artful way of serving a brace of pheasants, "should you unfortunately have but one," is given; and Mrs. Glasse triumphantly assures us that nobody can detect the sham. But for this trick we must, as reviewers say, refer the reader to the book itself.

We find in this book the use of the many quaint little plates, of odd shapes, which are found in old dinner-sets to puzzle the modern mind. Mrs. Glasse advocates the laying of garnishings on them—onion, horseradish, and the like—so to avoid the cooling of the steak or joint. "Lay, therefore, those things on little plates, and carry all quick to table," she urges, "for the great nicety of a steak is to be hot and full of gravy." A plain fact, which "the lower sort"—whose education she undertook—have not grasped from her day even unto our own.

Turning to "sweet, pretty, genteel dishes for a supper party," we find a bewildering, appetising collection of old-world dainties. Would any lady of the present day wish to try her hand on the "agreeable surprise for your guests" known as The Floating Island: a fine concoction of a gill of sack, "currant gelly," cream, hartahorn jelly, and coloured sweetmeats? Or does she feel equal to "highly adorning her table" with the elegant dish known as Moonshine, wherein rose-water, calves' feet, and almond custards, are nicely blended with the thickest cream?

Of "pyes" we have many specimens; but only once or twice do we light upon a "tort." Hartahorn flummery, fine syllabubs from the cow, and steeple cream, all sound toothsome; but we fancy that in these days no one will hanker much after the almond hog's puddings, or hog's puddings with currants, or greatly desire to try Mrs. Glasse's masterpiece: "How to make

English Jew's puddings for sixpence;" a receipt in which we incidentally learn that, in the author's opinion, "all sorts of lights are good for use"; and find, too, that, if bread was dear in those days, some other things were very cheap.

We could wish, indeed, that our author gave us more information as to how prices ruled in her day; but except for the remark that "you may get seven pounds of lean beef for twelvence," we find no reference to money. She is fond of giving high authorities for her receipts. We have "an approved method practised by Mrs. Dukely, the Queen's tyre-woman, to preserve hair and make it thick." "To distil treacle-water, Lady Monmouth's way," with a wonderful mixture of ellecampane, cypress-tuinail, blessed thistle, cardus and angelica roots, handfuls of balm and marjoram, lily-combally flowers, and cardus and citron seeds, nicely compounded with alkermes berries, hartshorn, burrage water, sorrel, succory, and respice water, and other simples too many to quote. We have "Lady North's admirable way of jarring cherries," and we have "a dish contrived by Mr. Rich, and much admired by the nobility," which bears the name of "the Necromancer," and consists of a neck of mutton in a silver dish, with an appetising set of "trimmings" all cooked "by means of a boiling tea-kettle and two chairs to support the dish. The fire is made by burning three sheets of brown-paper, and the time needed only fifteen minutes."

Having in her preface demolished all "those French gentry who pretend to be better cooks than Britons may be made by taking pains," Mrs. Glasse is still unsatisfied, and returns afresh to the attack in Chapter Three, under the heading: "Read this. And you will find how expensive a French cook's sauce is." In this chapter she deigns, indeed, to give French receipts, but adds such candid criticisms as: "This dish I do not recommend, for I think it an odd jumble of trash, which, if you follow, your pheasant will come to a pretty penny;" or, "Now compute the expence, and see if you cannot dress this full as well without all this expence;" or, apropos of pheasants: "Now a Frenchman would order fish-sauce to this, but then you quite spoil your pheasant. This is the sort of legerdemain by which fine estates are juggled into France."

Rather does she recommend such homely English corner dishes as "Hogs' ears

forced," "a pretty plate of preserved cocks'-combs," "cabbages forced with anchovies, mushrooms, veal, bacon, and eggs," "cucumbers filled with fried oysters in hog's lard," or a dish of "salamogundy garnished with grapes or astertion flowers," all of which dishes "nicely set off your table," and recall to us ignorant moderns, by their strange jumble of condiments, some of the old English dishes provided by Mr. Hardcastle and his Dorothy for the critical heroes of Goldsmith's comedy. Here we find the "Florentine," and "the shaking pudding," but we look in vain for the "pig with prune sauce," so highly eulogised by the irate host. It must have gone out of vogue before Mrs. Glasse's day, for among all the ways she enumerates of dressing the harmless, necessary pig, this one is not mentioned. Indeed, she remarks emphatically, "We never make any sauce to it but apples."

For the "plumb-porridge for Christmas," mentioned by so many old writers, we have a long receipt; but the mixture of beef, claret, prunes, sack, lemons, and loaves is decidedly untempting. Probably, however, as the author would contemptuously say, "all this is fancy, and different palates." A long chapter for Lent gives various onion and fish soups, including one made of a hundred muscels, and one of "scate or thornback." We have plum gruel, Westminster fool, sack posset, kickshaws, water-sokey, bean tansy, cow-slip pudding, grateful pudding; and all manner of ways of potting, collaring, and sousing fish of all kinds for the forty days of fasting. This very ample list of Lenten dishes shows how much more carefully our forefathers observed the time of fasting than we do now.

The wine-making chapters deal with strange drinks. Turnip-wine and birch-wine do not sound inebriating; and though quince and cowslip-wine have a fine old-world flavour in their names, they seem guiltless of any very enlivening qualities. A man would get "no forrader" with the mild beverages here described in such numbers. The plague water so highly recommended by Mrs. Glasse, requires a week's good work, and twenty different roots, sixteen flowers, and nineteen handfuls of nineteen different seeds, as well as various spices, before it can be administered to the patient. The names of the various flowers are very pretty and old-fashioned; and most of them appear again in the surfeit

water so needful to be kept at hand "if you live at London."

The quaint old phrases of carving are enumerated for our instruction. Thus you must say, "rear your goose, allay that pheasant, unlace the coney, and unbrace this duck." And lastly we have some cosmetics: "Miss in her teens," "Nun's cream," and wash-balls; and here end the labours of the famous Mrs. Glasse.

Before bidding her adieu, it may be worth while to glance at one of her bills of fare "after the most modern fashion," so as to see how a fine dinner of her day was sent to table. One for November runs thus:

FIRST COURSE.

Veal Cutlets.	Dish of Fish.	Ox Palates.
Two Chickens	Roasted Turkey.	Gammon of
and Brocoli.	Vermeccillic Soup.	Bacon.
Beef Collops.	French Pye.	Harrico.
	Chine of Pork.	

SECOND COURSE.

Sheep's Rumps.	Woodcocks.	Dish of Jelly.
Oyster Loaves.	Appia Puffs.	Ragoed Lobsters.
Blanc-mange.	Crocant.	Lambs' Ears.
	Lemon Tart.	
	Hare.	

THIRD COURSE.

Stewed Pears.	Petit Patties.	Fried Oysters.
Gallantine.	Potted Chars.	Collared Eel.
Fillets of Whitinga.	Ice Cream.	Pippins.
	Potted Crawfish.	
	Lambs' Ears à la braise.	

And thus does Mrs. Glasse furnish forth all her bills of fare, with a curious jumble of rabbits and cherry tarts, lobsters and greengages, served side by side in a concatenation accordingly.

Did our forefathers really enjoy the pleasures of the table in this indiscriminate fashion, turning lightly from the orange-pudding to the lobster-soup; toying with the "ragoo of fat livers" after trifling with the ice-cream; and revelling in the nice derangement of the courses where green goose and apricot tart with custards appeared at the same time? It must be so, for Glasse has said it, and veracity and plain dealing are her strong point.

Turn over her quaintly-written pages, then, and learn from them, O discontented and grumbling housewives of to-day, that the housekeeping of this latter part of the nineteenth century is but as child's play when compared with the serious business of life it must have been to the discreet matrons who drew their inspiration from worthy Mrs. Glasse's renowned work.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF course, as soon as Doris's engagement was announced, there were not wanting kind-hearted croakers who shook their heads and prophesied that no good could possibly come of it, while others, more maliciously disposed, pointed triumphantly to the dark blots which had stained Laurence's life, and asked how it was possible that such a one as he could shake himself free from the trammels of his old vices, and retrieve the past.

Doris would find out her mistake, they said. Reformation after marriage was a well-nigh hopeless task, and they—with Sir John at the head of them—argued and remonstrated, and poured out upon her a flood of good advice and warning, of which Doris took not the slightest heed. Even Mrs. Robson, though she was Laurence's cousin and liked him well, warned Doris, with tears in her eyes, of the danger of the road which she was bent on following, and spoke sadly, and in a hushed voice, of the weakness and want of decision which had been Laurence's chief faults, as a boy, which had well-nigh wrecked his life as a man. But Doris, secure in the strength of her love, only listened and smiled, and kissed Mrs. Robson's tears away.

"Wait a while, and you will see I am right," she said. "Have you never heard that beautiful old story they tell of the Creation? That man and woman were originally one; but that, having offended their Creator by their folly or sin, He struck them asunder, and how, ever since, the one half has gone about the world looking for its fellow-half! And only when the two come together and find each other is there a true marriage, both of body and soul! Laurence and I are the complement of each other. He can do nothing without me, or I without him; but together we are complete! Wait a while, and you will see," she added, with a smile.

Mrs. Robson might sigh, and friends might advise and entreat, and enemies sneer; but Doris heeded none of them. She was quite confident that she was doing the best thing to secure both her own happiness—though it was rarely that she gave

a thought to that—and Laurence's welfare; and, being convinced of this, advice and warning were wasted on her.

So, early in October, amid the gloomiest of prophecies, the marriage took place. Laurence took his wife to the Irish Lakes for a month, and then returned with her to the Red House, where they had decided to reside for the present. Every one—some out of kindness, more out of curiosity—called on them, and were surprised to see how sweet and fair Doris had grown, how happy she looked, and how apparently devoted her husband was to her. And the change in Laurence was still more surprising. Always handsome, he had lost the careworn, haggard look which had spoiled his face; happiness had brought there a quiet serenity and sweetness, which added greatly to its old beauty.

"He is the handsomest man in the county," one enthusiastic young lady declared, "and I don't in the least wonder at Doris Cairnes's infatuation!"

By-and-by, too, as the time went on, and still the happiness of the married lovers seemed to increase rather than grow less, and when one of Laurence's pictures, shown at a winter exhibition, had won the critics' enthusiastic admiration, and shown the world that the artist's old skill and cunning had returned to him, public opinion veered round, and, reluctantly admitting that for once it had erred, pronounced the marriage perfect, and Doris the wisest, instead of the most foolish, of her sex.

Little Doris cared what it said. She was quite happy and perfectly content in those days, living the life she liked best, in the old country house alone with Laurence. And ever as the months went on, he grew more tender over her, and more devoted to her—the girl whose love had saved him!

In the spring, they went to London for the season; and Doris rejoiced to see how Laurence's old friends flocked round him, and welcomed him back to them, and reproached him for hiding his charming wife so long in the country. Doris's evenings, where all kinds of distinguished people—authors, and artists, and actors—met together, became quite celebrated, and the entrée to them, especially after the picture on which Laurence had been hard at work during the winter, had been exhibited at the Academy, was eagerly sought after.

It was very sweet to Doris to hear herself—as she did sometimes, when she drove in the Park—pointed out as being Mrs.

Ainslie, the celebrated artist's wife; to know that Laurence's success was assured, and that he had more commissions than he cared, or was able, to take.

"You see, you were right," she said to Paul Beaumont one evening, when they met at an "At Home," at some great house where Laurence had been invited to meet a Royal Duke, who had expressed a wish to be introduced to the celebrated artist, whose picture was the success of the year. "You were right; it was the only way, and I can never thank you enough for giving me courage to take it."

Paul smiled. Far away in his quiet Devonshire home, he had heard of Laurence's success, and he had come up to town and treated himself to a sight of the happiness he had helped to bring about. He had been very doubtful as to the wisdom of the advice he had given; but the first glimpse of Doris's sweet, happy face removed all doubts.

"Happy! I never thought it possible that I could be so happy," she said. "What! did you doubt it? Oh, how could you?"

And Paul, looking at her serene face, was happy too!

He had met another old friend at the reception that night, and that was Lady Cecil Butler. She came up to him, looking wonderfully fair in her white laces and velvet, with her diamonds flashing on her white neck and in her hair, as he sat talking to Doris in a quiet corner. She was very gracious to them both, and congratulated Doris, on her marriage and her husband's success, in her sweetest manner; but Doris, though she struggled against it, was conscious that the old dislike and shrinking fear, which she used to feel for Lady Cecil, was by no means dead in her heart; that it lay latent there, ready at any minute to spring into life. Her face paled, and there came such a scared look into her beautiful eyes, as Lady Cecil, with a gracious good-bye to Doris, and a "Mind you look me up, Paul; I am at home on Wednesdays," passed on, to speak to some other acquaintance, that startled Paul. He had been looking after his old love, with a somewhat cynical smile, and turning to speak to Doris, was startled by her look of mingled fear and dislike.

"Why, Doris, what is the matter? Do you dislike her ladyship as much as ever?" he asked.

"I—I am a little afraid of her," she confessed, in a low tone. "She hates me.

She would do me an injury if she could ! Why does she dislike me so, I wonder ? I never did her any harm."

Paul smiled, and caressed his moustache. He knew the reason of Lady Cecil's enmity well enough.

"It is because of me, she hates you ; because I was her lover, and you took me from her ; and she will never forget or forgive that."

This, if Paul had spoken his thoughts, would have been his answer to Doris's pitiful question ; but since he could not give it, he only laughed, and answered in a gentle, rallying tone :

"Don't be fanciful, child ! What injury can she do you ? You have nothing to fear from her, or any one else, now."

"No, not now."

Doris gave a beautiful smile, for, as Paul spoke, Laurence disengaged himself from his little crowd of admirers and came across the crowded room to his wife, and looked at her anxiously.

"Love, you look pale ;" he was very careful over her just then ; "the room is too hot for you. Let us go," and Doris rose and put her hand on his arm, and smiled up in his face with a beautiful love and confidence in her eyes. No ! Nothing, no one could harm her now, she thought.

The first cloud on Doris's happiness came in the early autumn, when the child, for whose advent both she and Laurence had eagerly looked, died a few hours after its birth. It was a great disappointment to both—to Doris especially, for she had hoped that this child would atone to Laurence for the one he had lost—the little Doris for whom he still quietly mourned. The mother's heart beat with a cruel pang of grief and disappointment as Laurence laid for a moment the little waxen form on her breast, and she kissed the cold lips which would never learn to give back kiss for kiss ! She sorrowed then, but she knew afterwards that it was far better so, that "not in cruelty, not in wrath, the reaper came that day," and took the child in his kind hands and laid it in the arms of the Good Shepherd ! So even this trouble was but a passing cloud on her happiness.

Then another happy six months went over, and day by day the great trial and the great crisis of Doris's life drew near.

It was April, and they were in London again, and Doris was sitting alone in her pretty drawing-room. Laurence was lurching at the "Langham" with a rich

American, who had bought one of his pictures in the previous autumn, and had lately offered him a commission to paint a companion picture to it. The day was gloomy and dreary, with flying showers, and a cold wind that beat the rain against the windows, and sadly pinched the tender green leaves of the trees in the square opposite. It was so cold that Doris had decided not to take her usual drive, but to remain indoors ; and now she sat by the fire, a fair picture in her tea-gown of grey silk and white lace, with a cluster of crimson roses at her throat.

The fire burned brightly, the silver kettle on the tripod sang pleasantly over its spirit-lamp ; a table, with a tea-service of delicate china and gleaming silver, stood by her side waiting for Laurence, who, however busy he might be, rarely failed to come into the drawing-room for a cup of afternoon tea.

It was the pleasantest hour of the day, he said, for, except upon Doris's afternoons, she was generally alone then, and he could have her all to himself. He was later than usual that afternoon, and Doris turned her chair from the fire, and leant forward, and looked out of the window to see if he was in sight.

The quiet street was almost deserted on that gloomy afternoon ; now and then a carriage, or one or two pedestrians passed, or a policeman tramped solemnly up and down, but the gaily-dressed children and their nurses, who usually frequented the square, had been kept indoors by the weather, and the square itself looked dreary and uninviting. By-and-by, as Doris gazed listlessly out of her window, she noticed on the opposite side of the street a woman's figure. It was passing slowly up and down, keeping close to the iron railings, and as much under the shelter of the trees as possible. Something in the figure's movements, or the turn of the head, seemed familiar to Doris.

"Where have I seen her before ?" she wondered, idly. "How she paces up and down ! She must be waiting for some one. It is cold work waiting about on a day like this," Doris thought.

The woman approached nearer as this thought passed idly through Doris's mind. She was a tall woman, dressed in what had once been a handsome velvet jacket, trimmed with bear fur ; but the velvet was brown and worn now, and the fur ragged and partly torn away. The long feathers, which drooped over the brim of her broad hat,

were all out of curl, and fluttered wildly about in the wind. The big hat almost concealed her face; but Doris caught a glimpse of shining, golden hair, that lay in a low and somewhat untidy knot on her neck, and blew round her face and over her eyes.

With a feeling of curiosity—for which she could not account—Doris watched her as she paced slowly up and down, and cast, from time to time, furtive glances at the row of houses opposite. After awhile, it occurred to Doris that those glances were more particularly directed to her own house, and that once, when one of the servants opened the door and went down the steps to the pillar post-office opposite, she started and gave him a quick, eager look, and then walked hurriedly away, as if afraid of being seen.

Doris's thoughts were unoccupied just then, and this proceeding on the part of the woman increased her curiosity. She left her seat and went to the window, and watched, with careless curiosity at first, then with a dull terror, at which she vainly tried to laugh, stealing over her. What was it in that woman's face, and figure, and in the way she held her head, that was so familiar to her, that carried her back to those terrible days which were half forgotten now, which could never—oh, thank Heaven for that!—never come back again.

"I am fanciful this afternoon," Doris thought. "I will go back to the fire and my book."

She turned away, and crossed the room, and was startled as she caught a glimpse of herself in a mirror, to see how suddenly pale she had grown. She laughed at herself, sat down again in her chair, and, opening the silver caddy, measured the tea into a quaint old teapot which Laurence had picked up at an old curiosity shop a few days before and presented to her. It was literally worth its weight in gold, and Doris had scolded him well for his extravagance; but she was very proud of her teapot all the same, and she looked at it with admiring eyes as she dropped the tea into it and turned up the lamp to make the kettle boil faster. "I will have my tea—I won't wait any longer for Laurence," she thought. But somehow the tea did not taste so nice as usual.

She put her cup down again, feeling

oddly restless and ill at ease, and a longing to see if the figure opposite was still pacing up and down came over her. She would not give way to it at first; she scolded herself for idle curiosity respecting a stranger's movements; but it grew too strong to be resisted, and, with an impatient laugh, she rose and went to the window again.

Yes, the woman was still there; but she had apparently grown tired of pacing the pavement, for she was standing, now, leaning her back against the railings. Her head was bent; but Doris thought that the furtive glances which she cast from under the shadow of her big hat were still directed to her own house; and, a little annoyed at what she considered insolent curiosity, she frowned and stared directly at the woman. She seemed conscious of the haughty gaze, for she fidgeted and moved a few paces away, and then, suddenly returning to her old position, pushed her hat back, and looked straight into Doris's face, with an insolent smile.

For an instant the two women stood face to face, and looked at each other—the one insolently, the other with a scared look of horror and incredulity in her eyes. The street was narrow, Doris's sight was keen, and in the haggard, but still beautiful, face opposite to her; in the blue eyes blazing now with insolent triumph; and in the fluttering, golden curls that framed the face, she could not fail to recognise her old enemy, the woman who was once Laurence's wife, and the mother of his child, who had deceived and dishonoured, and well-nigh ruined him, both in body and soul!

For that one terrible moment Doris felt as if sense and motion alike had forsaken her, as if overwhelming horror and surprise had turned her brain and stilled her pulses, and clutched round her heart with an icy-cold grasp. She could not move, she could not speak; it was like some horrible nightmare, like nothing real, she told herself. Oh, it could not be real. It was not possible that it was Laurence's wife, who still stood there staring at her, with those insolent, triumphant eyes!

The gaze was withdrawn in another instant, the hat pushed forward over the brow, and the woman walked away. She went half-way down the street, heitated, then returned, and, crossing the road and ascending the steps, rang the bell loudly.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellaoot*,"
"*A Faivre Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXIX. NO EXPLANATION.

MARCH has some delicious days. The sap is rising into those almost unseen buds; the birds are beginning to express their joy of life, they plume themselves, and flutter here and there, they love, and they build, and so express to us very plainly that love and work make happiness. The wild flowers are doing their best to herald future glories of blossoming; the lichens seem to become deeper in hue; perhaps they, too, hear the pulsation of life in Nature, and try, low down as they are, to strive after what is grander. We seem even now to smell the "violets unblown, and the water-lilies unborn." The spring is coming; one tender, sandaled foot is on the earth, and we kneel down and kiss it. Beautiful spring! And yet, in spite of all this joy, there is such a look of sadness on her face.

George Guthrie had been away, and suddenly he returned to Rushbrook, and to the varied conversation of Mrs. Eagle Bennison on the monotonous subject of her societies, and her small gossip.

Nothing could destroy the fun that would bubble up in George Guthrie; even when Mrs. Eagle Bennison explained the shocking thing that had happened at Rushbrook, George could not look serious.

"Some people say that Elva has behaved shockingly; and I do hope, George, that you, who have so much influence with her, will try if you cannot make

her see how terribly unbecoming it is to throw a man over just when her wedding day is settled. Those girls have been badly brought up—over-indulged by their father. It is a sad example to the poor."

"But, dear cousin, I can't agree with you. We are always bemoaning population; now, if all our village maidens would jilt their intended husbands just before the wedding, we should have a simple solution of the difficulty."

"George, how shocking! I am sure that John would never have forgiven me if I had thrown him over; but I never should. My dear mother taught me my duty better. Elva, too, is so hard, she won't allow the subject to be mentioned, and goes about as if she were proud of having done this dreadful thing. Even the members of the T.A.P.S. thought it shocking."

"But the affair was mysterious. Can't you forgive Elva, dear coz, for having just given us something to talk about! You may have heard before the remark of Burnet, 'Everything must be brought to the nature of tinder and gunpowder, ready for a spark to set it on fire, before some people can be made to see anything.' Elva, I dare say, saw that Hoel Fenner had faults, and so she tried him in this way. Ten to one she expects him to come back."

"But some people say that he jilted her."

"Ah! well, that changes things. I wonder you have not found out the truth."

"Indeed, I tried; but the whole family seem quite changed in character. Mrs. Kestell has resumed her bed, with a purely imaginary malady. Mr. Kestell looks

years older; and Pink declares he has overworked himself, and cannot sleep—worried about his child, I suppose; and Amice—really, that girl is more crazy than ever. I hear such strange stories about her.”

George was delighted to hear the rumours, though he meant to form his own opinion. At present it all seemed extraordinary.

He sauntered out to see his poor people, and heard all the gossip over again, but put in plainer words.

“Lor, sir,” said old Mrs. Joyce, whom he went to see because he had made a pilgrimage to Golden Sparrow Street to bring her news of ‘Liza, “it’s been the talk of the village. Such doings we were to have at Miss Kestell’s wedding, and then it all ended in smoke; but she’s a fine young woman, and it won’t be long before some other man comes courting her. When did you see our ‘Liza, sir?”

“About a month ago, I think. She was glad to see me, but seemed in low spirits, I thought.”

“Well, sir, I’m sorry to say our ‘Liza’s coming home because she’s that dull, she says, she can’t abide the place.”

“That’s strange; I thought ‘Liza and I were always cheerful.”

“That’s your joking, sir; but it’s true. Mr. Vicary has left, and the girl takes on so that she’s coming home. We scolded her, too; but it was no use.”

“Vicary left! What for?”

“Didn’t you hear, sir?—he’s left his situation. Work was slack, and they’ve turned him off; and ‘Liza says it’s told on him wonderful. He isn’t the same man.”

“Has he found something else?”

“Not as ‘Liza knows on. Well, Mr. Vicary, albeit his people were poor folk like us, he’s been a real gentleman, he has. Our ‘Liza’s just broken-hearted at his leaving.”

“Does Mr. Kestell know? I’m sure he would get him work somewhere else. I’ll just mention it to him. I’ve been away a long time, so I didn’t know all the news.”

“Well, sir, it seems natural-like to see you again in these parts. It’s more than I can say for some men. As I used to say to my husband, whether you’re earning a penny or not, you’d best be out of doors, that’s the place for the men-folk; and lor! sir, my husband, he were no better than a chump of wood.”

“Yes, certainly,” said George, hiding

a smile. “A great many men are like chumps of wood.”

George went on down the hill towards Rushbrook, and mused as he went.

“Such a short time ago Elva fancied she had discovered perfection, poor child. I have never seen her in trouble; but I don’t think she threw him over. Well, well, why should I interfere? What good can a lone, lorn bachelor do? These affairs are best left alone. I think I had better observe ‘the silence of the celebrated Franklin.’”

But just then George turned round a plantation, and beheld, to his surprise, no other than the person he was thinking of. Elva Kestell was walking side by side with Walter Akister.

George paused, a curious sensation came over him, and then he quietly retraced his steps; and, taking another silver-sanded path leading to Mr. Kestell’s house, he reached the first Pool, now beginning to put on a spring-like green garment.

Here he paused. Elva must pass by here before she went in; and George Guthrie meant to wait for her.

Walter Akister had been silent long enough, that was his own opinion. He had left Boulogne—after courageously saving his enemy from the water—with the firm intention of wooing Elva again. He had not paused to enquire whether Hoel had friends, or whether he was hurt. He knew he still lived, and that he had saved him. Walter would have saved a drowning dog with just as much feeling as he had shown for Hoel Fenner. He despised him too much to question him further. His sister Betta had told him that Mr. Fenner had jilted Elva. Amice had told her, or had let it out when Betta had wondered at Elva’s conduct.

That letter had brought Walter home; but, though he often met Elva, till now he had not dared to say anything. It was not that she showed any signs of sorrow. On the contrary, she went about as usual alone on the moors. She had even gone to a dinner-party with her father; but her mother’s illness had prevented much greater stir.

Walter, in search of his ideal, had yet hesitated, because he saw that she was a different Elva to the woman he had seen at the railway accident.

It is better to disbelieve in a sudden change of character, because, except in rare cases, everything changes sooner than a man or woman’s character. But those who

carefully watched Elva Kestell, felt the alteration in her—most of all, her father. She was more loving and more attentive to him, if possible; but she was not the same.

Amice, too, saw it, and it affected her powerfully. Night after night she had paced up and down her room, thinking that the result was her fault, and that she had ruined her sister's life. If so, she must find a way to bring back her happiness.

As to Mrs. Kestell, she took to her bed from the sheer dread of Mrs. Fitzgerald coming down to hear all about "poor Elva's engagement."

Mrs. Kestell had gloried in having got the better of her sister; and now the tables were turned. She visited her disappointment and dulness upon her husband. And yet she had not been told the truth. Mr. Kestell had invented a long story to account for the unaccountable breaking off.

Certainly, Elva was changed. She had drunk so deeply of the cup of bitterness that now the taste was always in her mouth; she had waited so patiently at first, that all her patience was gone. It had turned into gall. She rose up after the blow, and determined not to be beaten down, as another girl might be; and the result was a hardness which could not be hidden—a pride which scoffed at sympathy, even sympathy from Amice.

She took to walking miles along the great lonely road that ran through the seemingly endless forest land; she watched the early cobwebs melt the dews of morning, and saw them again spread out to receive the minute diamonds; she noted the squirrels climb the red stems and scamper away to their warm shelters, and she hated Nature and Nature's beauty. So at last she stopped indoors, and read, and read.

Books were said to be friends, and she appealed to them; but, instead of the printed words, she saw: "Hoel left me, and never told me why; he never answered my letter. It was cruel, cruel; and I hate him."

These words were seen over and over again, and were maddening; so she shut up the books, and wandered by the Pools. That beautiful sheltered walk, full of exquisite thought, and poetry, and beauty, had one fault: it had the power of calling up the remembrance of him. In all the fulness of her young love she had walked

there with Hoel. So she turned away and fled to the open moorland again, and chose little walks he had never discovered, or places he had never seen. Here it was that, one day, Walter Akister joined her, and she did not repel him.

She knew she was wrong; she hated herself for allowing his silent sympathy. She said to herself, too, that Walter knew her heart was given away, and could not be his; but she let him wander with her, and now and then offer her a hand over a stile, or talk on about the news in the paper. Even, gradually, he made her come to the Observatory and see Betta—Betta who had had her instructions beforehand, and shyly tried to follow them out.

When a human being is crushed by the unfaith of a loved one, Tennyson tells us it works like madness in the brain. In after years, Elva said she was mad during these days, and yet outwardly she looked calm and self-possessed.

In spite of all this hardness, every morning her first waking thought was:

"Will he write to-day and explain? Oh, Hoel, Hoel, I loved you so much!"

Every day brought no answer; and at last, sullenly, Elva accepted the final silence; accepted it at the same time that she inwardly rebelled and outwardly grew calmer, and her voice now and then sounded as of old, only something was gone out of it.

"For papa's sake I will keep up. I will not give way. I will not show my feelings. He suffers for me. Papa, papa, I do love you; your love at least is sure."

The day that George Guthrie saw Walter and Elva was the first day in which Walter Akister dared to say even a word of love. He was a man who would rather have his hand cut off than let go something he intended to seize. He meant to have Elva, and nothing would prevent him. The passionate temper has a power over others, as well as being a curse unto itself.

"Spring has come early this year," he said, when it was time to go homeward. "I never saw things so forward."

He looked at Elva sideways, and saw the line of pain hovering round the smile.

"I did not know you kept a chronicle of the first primrose, the first cuckoo, and the first swallow," she said, scornfully.

"Didn't you? I suppose you never much cared to know what I did do? Any

way, Elva, I have recorded in a special diary every time I have met you for the last five years," he said, suddenly.

Elva flushed crimson. Had it come to this? Was he saying this to the woman who would have been Hoel's wife now, if—he had not forsaken her? Ah, well, Hoel had known her only a short time, and had won her love merely to cast it away again.

"You might have noted something more useful. When are you going back to town?"

"When—when you are my wife, Elva."

Elva stopped still now.

"How dare you say such a thing, Walter! Did I not tell you before that I never would be?"

"Yes."

"Then why do you dare to——"

"Because, since then, Hoel Fenner has changed his mind. I never change mine."

Elva shuddered. The words might have touched many women; in a way they touched her, but, also, she seemed to recoil from this man.

"Who told you Hoel Fenner had changed his mind?" she said, trying to be haughty.

"I know it."

"And the reason?"

Elva spoke superciliously, as if she disbelieved every word, and yet, in truth, she longed to know what Walter knew.

"Yes."

"Then you will tell me?" still very scornfully.

"Yes. He was afraid of having to make too many sacrifices for a wife."

Was that the truth? No, no, it was not that. But what was it? she said to herself.

"It's not true, not true," cried Elva, dropping her tone of scorn, and her eyes flashed out some of the passion of her soul. "Walter, you have no right to say this. I will not hear it." And without waiting to hear more from him, she walked away so hastily, that Walter did not even attempt to catch her up.

He looked after her with a fierce, angry look on his dark face. All the concentrated hatred of his rival seemed to be expressed on his features. If envy, hatred, and malice are human propensities, then at this moment Walter Akister did not belie poor humanity.

"She loves him still, after his conduct, his dastardly refusal to marry her. But

what do I care? A man who has acted as this man did can never return. He can never show his face again. Let her love him; but she shall be my wife."

He did not attempt to follow Elva. On the contrary, he turned once more up the hill, and went home. His home was dull in spite of his devoted sister. Betta was good and kind; but she was oppressed by her men-folk, and she had not enough courage to rise above her troubles and her dull life.

As for Elva, she walked on and on quickly, breathlessly thinking.

"Even Walter knows it. They all know it. They know that he left me, and they do not know the reason. Oh, if only I knew it! Now I never shall—never——"

Elva had left Walter feeling very angry; but before she was in sight of the bridge her anger had calmed down. Once more there stole over her the terrible cloud of despondency, against which it was so hard to struggle.

Suddenly she remembered she must put on her usual manner, for there was George Guthrie leaning over the parapet, evidently studying the lights and shades on the water. Elva was angry that she was thus forced from proper pride to appear careless and happy. It was almost worse before an old friend who knew her—and him so well—than before strangers.

"There you are, Elva. You came like a ghost. I have been waiting for you. Have you had a nice walk?"

Elva paused; positively she was unable to answer in the usual bantering tone George at once assumed.

"No, not nice. I was with Walter Akister."

"Ah, I thought I saw you."

George now and then stretched the truth.

There was a pause, and Elva came and leant beside him against the bridge. Her face was pale, except for two bright spots of colour. Her hands were thinner and very transparent. One saw a haggard look in them, which is a very tell-tale sign of deep mental feeling. And George broke the pause. He suffered for his friend with that deep, sympathetic feeling which lay beneath his genial fun and chaff.

"I am so sorry, Elva, for—for all that has happened."

He thought it better to break the ice at once. It was impossible to ignore facts when they knew each other so well. But Elva was up in arms at once.

"Sorry! Why should you be?" Then she laughed a little. "We thought we knew each other's ways and minds; but like many other people, we found we had made a mistake."

"I can't understand it. Don't frown, Elva. May I say at once that it is a mystery to me? Tell me, can I go to him and see if—"

How Elva longed to grasp this friendly hand, and to say:

"Go; it is a mystery to me, too; go and find out."

But pride was too strong.

"Thank you, George; but such things are quite beyond the power of a third person. You can't mend china cups, can you? And it is a third person who puts in rivets, and very ugly they look; besides, after a time, they come apart again."

"You were never bitter before," said George, deeply pained.

"No; I never was. I am changed, I think. I can't help it. Whatever I do now will be done by a third person. Oh, George, life is so very miserable; and just think, only a short time ago I was so happy—so very happy."

"Let me do something."

"What can you do? Even if you could, I would not let you go to him; but you cannot. No one knows where he is. Then, papa is ill. That is almost a comfort; he leans on me; he could not spare me. All this has tried him. George, papa has the tenderest heart of any man I ever knew. He just prevents me from disbelieving in mankind altogether—he and you."

"Upon my word, Elva, there's some mystery in all this. Will you trust me? All the poor people do; why shouldn't you? Honestly, Elva, do you know of any reason why Hoel Fenner, a gentleman, if ever there was one, should have done this? I know it was not your doing."

Elva covered her face. Pride fled before this true-hearted sympathy.

"Honestly, George, there is no reason. Not one! You know originally he fancied I had too much money; but I soon showed him that was pure nonsense. Then his uncle died, and left him nothing; but Hoel never expected to be his heir. There is no reason, except that he got tired of me; or, or— I don't know; if only I did— But, there, it's no use talking about it," she said, with her strong will forcing back the useless tide of regret and disappointed love. "George, you are the

first, the only person I have spoken to like this. Promise me you will forget it. Tell no one. I have always trusted you; let me trust you—at least; come in now and see papa, it will cheer him up."

They walked over the bridge together, and, before opening the swing gate, George Guthrie paused again.

"Elva, may I say something? We are old friends."

"Yes."

"Don't judge Hoel Fenner yet. There must be a reason; the man is not mad. I will go and find him. In these days nobody is lost."

"No, no, George. I wrote, and he did not answer. It is kinder to forget, entirely to forget. Promise me that you will never mention this subject again."

George Guthrie wanted to say:

"Don't let Walter Akister make you untrue to yourself;" but he dared not. When anything did stir the depth of his feeling George Guthrie was as weak as a woman.

"I promise nothing about myself, Elva; but, of course, I shall respect your wishes. You will always let me be your friend?"

She gave him her hand, and George Guthrie felt at this moment the full beauty of friendship; but his was a rare case, and such platonic friendship has few examples on earth.

When they entered Rushbrook Hall George Guthrie registered a vow that, whatever the mystery of Hoel Fenner might be, he would discover it. He reserved judgement, though pretty sure in his own mind that it was Hoel's fault somewhere—somehow.

"The man's a coxcomb; has ideas that Elva will be too expensive and luxurious. Ten to one he did expect that uncle's money, and threw up the whole thing when the old man died. Still, it was dastardly conduct, and Hoel Fenner's a gentleman of honour. No, George Guthrie, that answer doesn't fit the puzzle. Try something else."

Elva opened the study door.

"Papa," she called, and George admired the bright tone she forced into her voice, "here's George come back."

George saw that Mr. Kestell was writing at his table, he saw him look up quickly and almost suspiciously; he saw that for half a minute he stared at the visitor as if he did not recognise him, and then the recognition came quickly and the curious look fled.

"George Guthrie! Come in, my dear fellow, I'm very glad to see you."

George came in, and then a strange feeling came over him, as he thought:

"Old Kestell has been much tried by all this. He is changed — very much changed."

THE ART OF SILENT SPEECH— AND THE ARTISTS.

You write with ease to show your breeding,
But easy writing is cursed hard reading.

And a very aggravating, as well as unnecessary, waste of time. Writing certainly does not "come by nature" to everybody, neither does the art of letter-writing appear possible of attainment to a very large majority of letter-writers.

It is not difficult to see a reason for this, though so little, apparently, is required on the face of the matter. Only to provide good materials, and to write in a legible hand, as one would speak to the person addressed.

This is all that is required to write a letter, and the requisites cannot certainly be said to be many or difficult to obtain.

But there are letters, and letters. Though little is needed to write a letter, to write a good letter is another matter. If a man cannot speak in an interesting, taking manner, neither can he write so. Much as the man is, so will his letters be. A keen observer, with a good memory for small facts, as well as for the more important events, a graphic narrator, possessed of a sense of humour, a delicate touch, and a strong bump of charity, is sure to write letters which are always welcome, and always worth reading. He will paint like an artist, and write like an author; but there will be nothing stiff or ungraceful in his pictures, because they keep so close to Nature. No matter how trivial the occurrences related, they are facts in which both writer and reader have a mutual concern, and that, together with the easy, chatty style in which they are related, gives them a charm which never fails to make them acceptable.

But everybody cannot write these sort of inspired letters, any more than we can all write readable and charming books. But we can, all of us, endeavour to avoid those pitfalls of correspondence into which so many of us fall. It was Cowper who said that he liked a "talking letter"—that is, a letter written much as a person

speaks; passing from one subject to another, as the thoughts spring up in his mind, omitting nothing that would be of interest, and telling everything in a simple, natural way.

This is the very essence of letter-writing, but instead of adopting it, many persons do just the contrary, and assume an unnatural, stilted, verbose style, quite different to their manner in ordinary conversation, using a vocabulary much more polysyllabic in its nature than is their wont. For "mend" they write "repair," for "enough," "sufficient," and so on, till their letters are no more like themselves than if some one else had written them, and one of the greatest charms of correspondence is entirely lost—its identification with the writer. Some persons are so entirely free from this fault; they write so naturally and unaffectedly that they almost reproduce themselves. As you read their letters, you seem to hear them speak, and fancy you have them beside you. This is, of course, a natural gift, not common to all, and not to be learnt in its beautiful perfection by even its most ardent admirers, unless they themselves possess the peculiar qualifications necessary.

A stiff, stilted style is the greatest possible bar to pleasant letter-writing. Yet, some persons seem to consider it an imperative duty to write as they never speak, and to appear on paper as they never by any chance appear in real life. No matter how intimate they may be, or how affectionate in real life their intercourse with their friends may be, in their epistolary correspondence they invariably assume a rigidity of style which, as a lively young friend once declared, reminded her of farthingales and minuets.

But, however uninteresting this style of letter may be, it is generally written in a precise and readable hand, which cannot be said of many less stiff and stilted, but equally uninteresting letters.

The flowing, sloppy style, which is often combined with an excruciatingly sharply-pointed writing, very difficult to read, has been aptly termed the "much-ado-about-nothing" style. The writer runs on, or rather writes on, line after line, page after page, in one dull, uninteresting stream; and when the many sheets of painful-to-read writing have been waded through, nothing worth having is left on the reader's memory, and a certain sense of irritation and headache possesses him.

Some persons — especially those who

complain of want of time—have a perfect mania for letter-writing. Where one sheet would suffice the ordinary scribe, they cover three, and then not unfrequently fill the blank spaces left, if they do not cross the whole.

There are even those who cannot resist crossing a post-card. As a mere amusement, we once wrote out the contents of a thin post-card, in an average-sized hand-writing, on a sheet of note-paper. It was found to cover it completely. To inflict the penalty of deciphering such a cramped and crowded correspondence on one's friends is a downright cruelty, and altogether inexcusable in these days of cheap writing materials.

In spite, however, of the small outlay required nowadays, in comparison with what of necessity was formerly spent on correspondence, there are those who ride the hobby of epistolary economics to death. They write their letters on scraps of paper which have come to them from various sources: the doctor's bottle-wrappings, the wrappings of parcels, blank half-sheets, etc. We have even seen the blank strips of newspaper edges utilised in this way, whilst some people have been known to turn an already-used envelope and make it do double duty.

The most triumphant effort in the economical letter-writing line, however, that it has ever been our happy lot to see, was a letter written within the lines of our own returned to us.

If there were a good reason for such painfully rigid economy, one would feel bound not to complain—all honour to honest poverty; but where, as in this case, the only object was to add, by parsimony, to a miser's store, one felt aggrieved.

There are other letters, almost as aggravating as these excessively economical epistles; and these are the begging letters, which, instead of stating their purpose first, and leaving their excuses and apologies to the last, where they may more conveniently be skipped, make a long epistolary journey before they reach their goal, which the unfortunate recipient is expected, and, indeed, is bound to travel over before he can find the object of the appeal.

If a letter is of a business nature it should be short, concise, and to the point. Its object should be made apparent as soon as possible, unencumbered by any flowery or high-flown expressions. These are useless in any written communication; but in

a business letter they are an unwarrantable intrusion. Such letters should never contain a word more than is absolutely necessary.

A celebrated French statesman once advised a petitioner always to exaggerate the importance of the favour he asked, and to make little of that he conferred.

This is excellent advice, and it would be well if it were more generally followed. The exact contrary is more frequently the case. The interest requested, the privilege asked, or the loan begged, are all minimised. "Would you say a word—?"; "Grant me a small favour—"; "to beg a trifle—"; forgetting that if the one appealed to is at all logically inclined, he may conclude that these favours, which seem scarcely worth the asking, may also seem scarcely worth granting.

There is an irritating class of letter-writers one longs to repress, but that they are so benevolently irrepressible; these are the kindly, easily-impressed persons, who fall deeply in love with you, write to you continually three or four sheets every letter, and beg for an answer by return. One fears to hurt their feelings; but not returning their affection at all—or not in the same degree—one feels their oft-recurring letters a terrible nuisance.

Closely akin to these are the good-natured folk who keep up a perpetual flow of correspondence on matters in which you have no interest in common with them; perhaps on religious subjects, enclosing papers, cards, tracts, and pamphlets, which are "to be returned, please, as soon as possible." No sooner is the precious enclosure sent back than another promptly takes its place, with the same request attached. The waste of time, to say nothing of the stamps consumed in such a fruitless, though kindly, correspondence, is no trifle.

But if there are people who write too much and too often, there are also those who write too seldom and too little. This is more generally the fault of young people, and arises chiefly from thoughtless selfishness. Their thoughts and their time are engrossed with their own pleasures and pursuits. It is more amusing and interesting to write to young people of their own age, than to write duty letters to parents and relatives; and they give way to their selfish inclinations rather than to their sense of what is right and fitting. A shabby, ill-considered, stilted letter, is written at wide intervals to those whose whole life has been spent in their service, whilst folios of trash are

lavished on bosom friends to whom they owe no duty whatever.

This is wrong. It is the bounden duty—as it should be the pleasure—of young people to remember their elders regularly and affectionately in the matter of letter-writing. A great deal of unnecessary pain and anxiety might be spared those who, by reason of years, can ill afford to be anxious and pained. If the duty of letter-writing is owed to any, it is especially due to those who watched over us during our years of helplessness with so much tenderness and care. There is something of meanness and shabbiness, as well as of downright selfishness, in the thoughtless carelessness of many young people on this point.

Put it into few words, it looks very much like: "Get all you can, and care nought."

The excuse so often given, "I had no time," is a poor one at the best; but it is often a very untrue one also. Most people can find time to write a letter long enough to allay anxiety and convey an affectionate interest in home and its concerns, if they have the will to do so. The want of will, not the want of time, is generally the reason for silence.

Most people have what may be called duty letters to write; that is, letters at stated periods expected from them. Such letters are apt to become dull and uninteresting if an effort is not made to procure some pleasure from the act of duty performed, as well as to give pleasure to those on whose behalf it is made.

In writing letters—no matter on what topic, or what the relation between the persons corresponding may be—one thing should never be forgotten. What is written is written, and can never be effaced. By the mere act of reading, the kindly or unkindly words may always be recalled to wound or to cheer, over and over, every time they are read.

Hastily-spoken words may be blotted out the next minute by others calculated to soothe and heal; but written words remain as long as the paper on which they are written, and retain their power to please or pain as long as it lasts. Because it is so, we should be careful to write just so much as represents our real feelings, and to let those, if possible, be kindly; not to exaggerate, not to detract; to let our letters be simple, candid reflections of our mind, so far as we choose to reveal it, and according to the terms on which we stand to those whom we address.

As there are innumerable shades of character amongst letter-writers, so there will always be various styles of letter-writing; and this is well, for in their endless variety lies a great part of their power to please. But, to every letter that has ever been written, or that ever will be written, one fixed rule applies: it should be clearly expressed, and legibly written.

Writing is but a means of talking silently; and, if the writing is illegible, the writer is as little understood as a dumb man trying to make himself heard. But illegible writing is worse than useless. A badly-written letter consumes valuable time. It consumes time on the writer's part, and it consumes time on the reader's part. It may be urged against this, that the writer is at liberty to spend as much of his own time as he chooses. This point is debatable, and depends entirely on another question: has any man a right to waste time, even though it be his own? For the sake of argument, however, let us take it for granted that he has. But, that side of the question settled, the other still remains: has he a right to waste other people's time, as hundreds waste it daily, by writing illegible letters, which the hundreds who receive feel bound, in common courtesy, to read?

Hard labour it is, indeed, if even the matter be good, and worth the time and trouble it takes to decipher; but doubly hard and unsatisfactory when, after all, the game is not worth the candle, and one would have been just as well without having waded through it.

If people choose to waste their own time, they certainly have no right to waste other people's time, especially in a matter which can so easily be set right. No one need write illegibly. If their natural handwriting is bad, in the sense of being indistinct and difficult to read, they should alter it. This may be some trouble, and it may take up a good deal of time, and be a great annoyance. True; but the bad writer is the one in fault, and it is but just that he should suffer for his own shortcomings, and not the innocent person on whom he inflicts his bad writing.

There are unfortunately, however, several stumbling-blocks in the way of amendment on this point. Some persons are too lazy, others are too selfish. The first lack the energy required to undertake such a task with any prospect of success. The latter will not sacrifice so much time and labour for the sake of others. There is also a

great deal of vanity connected with some bad handwritings. A man writes a remarkable hand. Scarcely a word may be legible, and one can only guess at the meaning of the whole letter; but it is an uncommon hand, and in his heart he probably considers it, on account of its singularity, a distinguished hand, and will not give it up and take to copperplate, because that would be common, the style of village school children and lawyers' clerks, vulgar and plebeian. Others take a pride in the fact that their writing is like no one's else. They care nothing for the trouble they give; their writing is peculiar and uncommon, and the reflection gratifies their vanity. There is nothing that some people dislike so much as to be of the common herd—common. They would rather be uncommonly bad than commonly good.

If ever there was a time when writing has been made easy it is this present time, when even the poorest are well taught, when schools are plentiful, and the instruction they provide of the best quality at the lowest possible cost, when paper, pens, and ink, are all good and cheap; yet we find a large percentage of persons whose handwriting is illegible unless deeply pondered over, and critically examined, and compared with former specimens. And this amongst those who should both know and do better.

The writing of the so-called lower classes has greatly improved in the last fifty years. There are few amongst the labouring classes, much less the artisans and tradesmen, who do not write both legibly and intelligently. It is with the so-called more educated classes that we venture to find fault; and amongst these, oddly enough, Bishops take the lead as pre-eminent for their illegible writing.

We could cite a great many cases, past and present, in which their writing is crooked, cramped, illegible, following no straight line, and in some instances almost wandering from the top corner on the left hand of their sheet of paper, to the right-hand corner at the bottom. The fact that these right reverend gentlemen are many of them not good, or, rather, are very bad scribes, has grown so notorious, that the saying, "he ought to be a Bishop, he writes so badly," is becoming quite a general one.

It is held to be of the greatest importance in the elementary schools, that children should learn both to compose and

write a legible letter, and to read handwriting, before they leave school, that they may communicate freely with their parents—tell them how they do, ask for what they want, give information intelligently on such subjects as come within their province, without being forced to apply, as in the ancient days, to the schoolmaster or the general village scribe.

Surely, if it is important that when Jack Hodge writes to his small family at a distance they should be able to read and understand his paternal epistles, it is also fitting that when Peter Mitre issues his pastoral behests to his flock—and most of them pay for the reading—they should, without difficulty, be able to read his private and written, as well as his printed, communications. We have not infrequently witnessed the ludicrous spectacle of three or four of the inferior clergy assembled in solemn conclave over one of their ordinary's letters, struggling hard to make it out, comparing it with other equally undecipherable manuscripts from the same pen, in the vain hope of finding a clue to the episcopal hieroglyphics.

And as the Bishops have become proverbial for the illegibility of their writing, so are the lesser clergy renowned for their lengthy letters. Is this from mere force of habit? Do they get so used to a written discourse divided under three heads and a conclusion, that they find it impossible to un-sermonise themselves? Let us hope, if this be so, that force of habit may influence them in another way. As short sermons are becoming fashionable, short letters may follow suit. Both suffer from unreasonable length, unless, indeed, they contain much valuable information, interesting and applicable both to the reader and the listener.

There are other reflections connected with letters and letter-writing, of minor importance, perhaps, at first sight, but still having a great influence on that most necessary point, legibility.

It is next to impossible to write distinctly on flimsy or uneven paper; and the best paper will be spoiled by a bad pen. And again, a good pen will not write well with greasy, ill-made ink. Further, if even the paper, pen, and ink, are of good quality, yet the writing will be indistinct, blotched, and blurred, unless good blotting-paper, not black and dusty with age and ink, be used. Yet further still, with all these requirements provided, a letter may be made, even with good

writing, very difficult to read, if not practically illegible, by being crossed.

We have frequently seen letters, written on foreign paper, to all intents and purposes quite illegible. They were handed on from one relative to another—most of them unable to decipher all but fragmentary parts of the hastily-written, blotched, irregular writing. The bad pen had been too freely filled, and too hastily laid on the thin paper. At every other word the impatient writer had driven it through, and effaced a word on the other side of the sheet.

Crossing, with this state of things in what may be called the first course, naturally put the finishing stroke to the whole letter. The heat of the climate, and other atmospheric influences, only too well known to sufferers from Indian and foreign letters, generally reduced the remnant of colour to an almost imperceptible, undecipherable manuscript.

The oft-recurring question: "Any news from E——, this mail?" invariably received the same unsatisfactory reply: "I don't know; to tell the truth, we can none of us make out E——'s letters. We pass them on from one to another; but no one can read the half of them." The climate, of course, in the case of Indian letters, is answerable for a good deal, but not for all; even with them, and with home-letters, there is no such excuse.

When postage was high, and stationery of all kinds expensive and weighty, there may have been some excuse pleaded, with reason, for the abominable habit of crossing letters; but everything has been changed since then.

Postage is but a small tax, at least as far as the British Isles is concerned; stationery is both cheap and good. We beg those who cannot, under such circumstances, give up crossing their letters, at least to consider the feelings of their correspondent, so far as to use different coloured ink for the second layer. If their warp be black, by all means let their woof be red.

A very small—yet a stinging—fly in our pot of ointment is that class of thoughtless writers who, directly they have posted their letter, begin to negative it by the next posted, to countermand or modify both by a third epistle. If one's memory is not equal to the task, it is easy to keep our unanswered letters at hand, that we may make up our minds exactly what we have to say, and remember

and reply to the questions that have been put to us. It is very provoking to appeal, time after time, for information which is never supplied.

Equally annoying is it to write for a certain purpose, information on a special matter, or some particular paper required, begging for it by return, and to get no answer for an indefinite period, or a letter in which no notice is taken of the appeal.

It will generally be found that the most negligent as to these matters—answering questions put in letters, answering the letters themselves, or returning papers, and so on—are persons who have very little to do; whose time has never been so fully occupied or so valuable as to oblige them to be methodical and prompt.

Business men, or those whose time is very fully taken up, cannot afford to be negligent or slovenly. Punctuality, accuracy, and prompt attention to all matters of business with them are indispensable adjuncts to success. It is only those who have more time than they know what to do with, who can afford to be lavish with their own, and heedless of other people's, time.

TOBY AND I.

QUITE recently, in these pages, I confessed that I am a dreamer of dreams, good and bad, sometimes indifferent. There is nothing to be ashamed of in such a confession, seeing that we are all of us such stuff as dreams are made of—"apparitions," in fact, as Carlyle put it in one of his less dyspeptic moments, when, for a brief interval, he had forgotten to snarl.

Years ago, I was also permitted to describe certain specialities of the place I then dwelt in, and which I still inhabit. Those specialities are far from exhausted, and there is one which certainly ought not to be omitted from the list.

We have, residing amongst us—for nothing on earth would induce them to stir a mile from their home—a few individuals whose sole object in life is to stand at their open door, or on the step, and look out into the street. Sometimes they take their places alone; sometimes in a family group of two, three, or four, in due position, behind each other, as if they were in a box at the theatre, in front and back seats; only they never sit, but always stand. Sometimes they relieve each other

—I suppose for meal-times—leaving one on guard to fill the gap at their doorway, which, like Nature, abhors a vacuum.

Weather makes no difference to them, nor hour of the day. There they are, in fixed position, in the blaze of noon, and the shades of evening. Like the showman, they might promise that the performance will take place to-morrow, "hail, rain, blow, or snow, dead or alive," except that there is no performance here, any more than by Madame Tussaud's waxwork figures. An irreverent bus driver—not I—tired of seeing them stuck fast in their places every time he passed, called them "stuffed bears," with scant politeness.

Whether "stuffed," and with what, internal autopsy can alone determine; for "bears," they are extraordinarily mild. They attack nobody, unless with their tongues, and that for their own private, confidential amusement, just to vary the monotony of the thing. They may have some education; but it is quite sufficient, needing no further extension into science or art. Their last schooling was considered a finisher. They may have books—more than enough, because never opened. Half-penny journals, hawked under their noses, are not bought unless some phenomenal murder is announced.

They live on their incomes, exempt, in every case, from all exertion, mental or bodily. If circumstances are easy, the surplus accumulates; if straitened, they cut their garment according to their cloth, and live on bread and butter and coloured water miscalled "tea." Anything will do for them, so long as they can pass their existence in standing at their door and looking out.

But for what? It cannot be through curiosity, for, except on market-day, there is often absolutely nothing to see. In which case, they are equally pleased to gaze at vacancy, with the indifferent stare of a lazy cat that sits stupidly looking into the street when she is not sleeping on the sunshiny window-sill. They unconsciously parody a line in Ovid's "Art of Love": "And if there is nobody passing to look at, still look at nobody passing;" which, indeed, very often happens, when afternoons and evenings are dull and chilly.

Nevertheless, their patient watching is occasionally rewarded by interesting incidents. Dogs, not on speaking terms, will now and then fight; the postman passes, with letters and papers for this house and not for that; the costerwoman pushes a

long narrow cart, containing an honourably-to-be-mentioned horticultural show of vegetables for the noontide soup. At irregular hours, on irregular days, a fat fishwife screams vocalic utterances, which may mean skate, herring, mackerel, or "whichever you please, my little dears."

Note that her fish, always cried "fresh," "alive," really is, at times, the former, even if not still living. But it may also happen that her wares, when not good enough for the seaport whence she comes, are forwarded, through her agency, to us; and when not good enough for us, are taken to customers still further inland.

That stout fishwife and I are friends at present. We were not so always. She told me one day—because I often brought fresh fish from the sea, and let friends have some of it at cost price, or gratis—that I took the bread out of her mouth and reduced her to the very verge of starvation. She is a poor, plump, rosy creature, with legs like an elephant, and a back broad enough to carry one.

But life is too short to bear malice long. We made it up over a basket of live shrimps on the one part, and a glass of strong sweet wine on the other. And now, if on passing she has nothing presentable to offer, she gives me a wink with her knowing blue eye, to say: "To-day's lot of fish won't do for you."

Such are the events, in witnessing which some of my fellow citizens pass contented lives. Who shall say where true philosophy elects to dwell? Moreover, of these happy people there is a constant, never-failing succession. When one dies—which they are in no hurry to do, for they hold a patent for getting into the eighties—another takes his place, if not at his door, at one close by; so that door-sill occupiers are never out of the land.

I possess a little dog—he wouldn't be pleased if I called him "little" to his face, because he believes he is somebody—inherited from a dear, departed —. Well, that is over—irrevocable. I know Toby, and Toby knows me; but he would hardly allow me to say I "possessed" him. Some dogs at least would refuse to admit that the person they follow can be their "owner." They fancy that the man belongs to the dog, quite as much as the dog to the man. In the East, dogs object to owning any man. They consider them—the men—not worth the trouble of keeping.

But here, in the West, Spot or Fido will

say to himself: "I was lucky to meet with Mr. Trincombob, and have no intention of giving him warning; for he is a very useful man of all work, and I might not easily find another so serviceable. I know that other dogs are trying to get him away from me. True, he has his little tempers, and is now and then unreasonable; but I excuse his faults, and let him have his own way. You cannot expect a weak-minded human, with his limited intelligence, and defective sense of smell, to be perfect. So long as he answers my purpose, I shall not be too hard on the few shortcomings which Trincombob, poor fellow, cannot help."

Who has not witnessed the self-interested manoeuvres of independent dogs at watering places? They frequent the beach, in sunshiny weather, between the hours of breakfast and dinner. They fix on some well-dressed, likely-looking visitor, mostly a young person, boy or girl. They affect a sudden fit of attachment—of love at first sight. By canine arts of insinuation, they soon succeed in obtaining a caress, followed before long by an invitation home to lodgings, to partake of the remnants of the family meal.

By close listening and shrewd observation, they discover the probable duration of their protégé's stay, whom they regard as people are apt to regard servants who "do not object to take a job"—as stop-gaps; in short, as temporary retainers, to be easily replaced by other new-comers when the "job" is at an end.

My dog, however, behaves better than that. Still, Mr. Toby never trusts me out alone by day, for fear some other rival dog should engage my services, and shamefully entice me away. At night, he sleeps on my bedside carpet, just under the pillow on which my head should lie, where he can listen to every sound and movement.

Given these three elements, I think we may arrive at an explanation of the events about to be related.

One evening, after looking through the day's quota of journals, I thought it might be time to go to bed. Toby seemed to think so, too. But while sitting on the bed's side, before undressing, I felt uneasy, restless—I didn't know what. A voice, familiar to my childhood, kept singing in my ear, "Billy, Billy, boy! Come out to play! The moon doth shine as bright as day." Well, I would go out. I did go out, of course closely attended by my proprietor, Toby.

Once outside, I beheld a marvellous spectacle. The place was transfigured by brilliant moonbeams. The crooked streets were straightened in bright perspective, semi-transparent, as in a diorama. I could look round what I always thought were corners; and at many a door was stationed an upright form, white and motionless as a statue. In admiration, I quoted Southey:

Queen of the valley, thou art beautiful;
Thy walls, like silver, sparkle in the—

"Good Heavens! There is old Mother Doubleyew Ecks still standing at her open door. Impossible to escape passing her. What a nuisance!"

Instead of her habitual walking-stick, she was leaning on a little spade, like those which ladies are wont to use when they pretend to do gardening. And her face, usually ugly and wrinkled, was now smoothed and renovated by a sort of blooming, youthful mask.

Taking courage, I civilly accosted her, as there was no help for it.

"Good evening, Madame Doubleyew Ecks. Hope you are quite well. It is late for you to be out in the cold. I thought you had been in bed long ago."

"You know I never go to bed until Charles takes my place at the door at daylight."

"But what a lovely night! The sky is clear; the moon has eaten up all the clouds. Perhaps you are watching to see the Great Bear turn round the Pole."

"I know nothing of the Great Bear or the Little Bear either; and pray what do you mean by the Pole? There is no pole here. You have insulted us enough already. It was you, sir, I think, who called us, your neighbours, a set of stuffed bears."

"Beg pardon, madame; I only said you resembled waxworks—which are sometimes very beautiful."

"Never; often frightfully ugly. But look! There stands our old friend Wyezed before his door. He awaits your coming. You will hear from him something greatly to your advantage. Hum! Yes; very greatly." (I had been reading "The Times" advertisements that same evening.) "He has discovered a treasure buried in his garden. He wants your help to dig it out, and promises to share the proceeds with you. Let us go there at once. I should like to see what comes of it."

Toby kept uttering low growls aside, at the same time nudging my legs with

his nose, as a warning to have nothing to do with the business.

Without waiting for my answer, she stalked forward from her door, with stiff, erect mien, like a figure carved in stone. Every one of her steps on the ground sounded like a blow from a pavior's rammer. An irresistible impulse forced me to walk by her side. As we proceeded, from open doors along the illuminated streets, other uncanny individuals, standing on the look-out, joined us. I never knew there were so many of them. They made quite a little crowd of pale-faced mutes, each holding a spade in its shrivelled fist, when we reached Wyezed's residence.

There he stood, as usual, motionless, like a sentinel frozen at his post. His face, too, was covered with a smooth, wax-like film of something that gave him the aspect of a young man of twenty instead of the septuagenarian that he was. In his left hand was a long-handled shovel, such as sextons and grave-diggers use.

"Please to come in, sir," he gruffly said. "You shall not have taken the trouble for nothing."

I entered, closely accompanied by Toby. The other uninvited companions followed also. At the end of a long entrance passage was a gate of open iron-work. As soon as we had passed through, it shut to with a clang, showing that there was no escape in that direction. Wyezed led us into the garden, and made us stand round a large oblong hole in the ground, exactly as if we were at a funeral.

"I believe, sir," he said, "you once visited a Trappist convent, where every monk has to dig his own grave?"

"Indeed, I have," I groaned. At the same time, the youthful masks fell from off those hideous faces, and I beheld them uglier and older than ever.

"Jump in, sir, and dig," he continued, giving me a violent push. "It is your turn now; you shall have your deserts. The Bears have made up their minds to bury you alive. Stuffed Bears, indeed!"

Then they all began shovelling the earth in upon me, till I felt that death from suffocation was near at hand. I could hear with my own ears how pitifully my groans appealed for mercy: "Help! Oh, Toby! Murder! Help!"

The earth was still showering down, till I could not stir. Every limb was held fast by the incumbent weight. Poor Toby then jumped into the grave, barking and howling, as plain as dog could speak:

"You shall not kill my man! No, that you shall not!"

He then set to scratching the earth away, so as to give me a little relief. In fact, he barked and worked away, until I felt that his sharp claws were scratching my shoulder.

"Why, what are you about, Toby?" I asked, opening my eyes, and thankfully turning in my bed; for there, sure enough, I was.

Toby, answering with a short snap of satisfaction, jumped off the bed and resumed his place on the carpet. Sundry queer and curious sounds expressed his desire that I should not disturb him again that night, nor make any more horrid noises in my sleep.

"Well done, good Toby!" I replied. "I will try my best to obey your orders. You shall have a nice chicken-bone at tomorrow's breakfast, with a little bit of meat belonging to it."

SNOWDROPS.

SHE stands before her looking-glass,
I see the busy handmaid pass

On fairy work intent;
Pure white the robe that round her flows,
And fair the flush that comes and goes
On cheeks of rose and lily blent.

I watch her from my cushioned nook,
I see the shy and sparkling look
That tells of sweet delight:
And while the handmaid smooths adown
The lustrous curls of ruddy brown,
I hold her wreath of snowdrops white.

I hold the wreath with trembling hand.
Ah, daughter mine! to-night you stand
Beside a mystic door:
The school-room porch was closed to-day,
Your childish tasks are put away
With childish dreams for evermore!

Life lies before you full and fair,
The hour has struck, you claim your share
Of pleasure's scented flowers;
Your share of laugh, and dance, and song,
And all sweet doings that belong
To youth in its unfolding hours.

So be it, dear, pass out, pass free
To scenes of cheer, to sounds of glee;
But, darling, ere you go,
Kneel lowly down at mother's feet,
And let me kiss that forehead sweet,
And whisper something soft and low.

My pretty flower, so fenced around
In love's fair plot of garden-ground,
From touch of worldly blight:
My milk-white flower with vernal heart,
Through quick, fond tears that trembling start,
I crown you with my snowdrops white.

Light rest the blossoms on your brow,
God keep it free from care as now,
God bless you, daughter dear!
God guide your feet to sheltered ways,
And love and comfort all your days
When mother is no longer here.

But oh, my child ! my dear, one child !
 God help you, pure and undefiled,
 To choose the better part.
 Life may bring roses for the brow
 I crown with love and blessing now,
 But like a snowdrop keep your heart !

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE LANE.

It is past meridian in the latitude of Drury Lane, and yet not so long past but that the flavour of the working man's dinner hour still lingers about the humble cook-shops not uncommon in that locality. But the meridian daylight is already a vanishing quantity ; and here and there a snow-flake flutters across the field of view, while a keen nor-easter makes sport of the passers-by at every street corner. That nor-easter whistles keenly, too, about the angles of Drury Lane Theatre. The coachmen on their boxes, in front of the great portico, bury their ears in their fur tippets as their horses wince under the blast ; and beneath the piazza, where the "early doors" are already surrounded by a little crowd of early pittites, there is a whirl of icy breezes that search out every unguarded cranny in the panoply of male or female apparel. The latter predominates, decidedly, in the continuous stream of people that hurries along towards the stage-door of old Drury—a door which just now is always on the swing, and which admits into a lobby whose atmosphere is snug and warm enough, in contrast with the nipping outside air. Here sit two watchful, but certainly not stern-faced door-keepers. Pleasant greetings, nods, and smiles, from a continuous flow of good-looking young women, have no effect in turning those seasoned heads ; but they turn sympathetic ears to hurried confidences, and whispered admonitions.

"Jenny wouldn't come along with me. Blow her up, Mr. —, when she comes."

"I will," rejoins the other, with a twinkle of the eyes.

Or, is it Miss Montmorency, who, while signing her name with a flourish on the roll, contrives to impart the information of :

"What a jolly time they had at Caddis's, dancing and keeping it up till four o'clock this morning."

Information received with a paternal shake of the head, and the remark :

"Just as if you hadn't dancing enough along here."

But the young ladies who assist at the pantomime at Drury Lane : and who will presently be transformed into fays and sprites, and nymphs of wood and stream, are quiet and pleasant-looking people for the most part : who are not to be distinguished in dress and bearing from the rest of the great army of young women who seek their bread upon the troubled waters of the world. Only most of them seem to have a genuine liking and relish for this business, which hardly exists in other occupations.

Not with such alacrity do the dress-makers' assistants seek the workshop ; or the female clerk the counting-house ; or even the governess her schoolroom and troublesome little pupils. Indeed, if the affair lasted all the year round, there would be little to seek, as a young lady observes, in the way of a light and agreeable employment, beyond the role of a dancing sprite, a gracefully-posing nymph, or goddess, or fairy queen in a Drury Lane pantomime. Then there are the children, of whom a noisy little band come trooping through the stage-door, and pass with shrill greetings into the regions beyond, all as if there was some mighty bit of fun going on, in which they intended to be the chief performers.

Altogether, this lobby by the stage-door is not a bad place to wait in. Yonder sits a comfortable cat, which blinks complacently down upon the bustle—a bustle that grows more pronounced as the hour of performance draws near. The signing on goes forward more rapidly, and new-comers look up anxiously at the clock to make sure they are in time. There is the notice-board, too, to study, with its reminders of various kinds—advise to carpenters ; warnings about lights, and the unguarded use of them, which will entail instant dismissal ; Treasury memoranda as to the walking of the familiar ghost ; but all thickly covered with Thespian dust. And then the expected summons comes, and a passage of surprising shortness—for one would have expected, somehow, to be led here and there, and boxed round the compass in numerous turnings and windings—brings a visitor full upon the stage, the great stage of Drury Lane, where reputations have been made, and triumphs scored that have echoed through the land, and also where brilliant hopes have been quenched for ever, and long-cherished ambition brought to naught.

It is a dim, vast region, this, vague and

undetermined, with daylight filtering through at places, and mixing with the yellow glow of rows of gas-jets far overhead, while fold behind fold stretch the painted scenes, with dark shadows linking between, and so, without any apparent limit, passing into the dim, vast region, "behind the scenes." It is something like a walk to the furthest limit of the stage; and then begins a kind of Hall of Eblis, supported by huge columns, or what appear such in the subdued, mysterious light, between which is a gigantic kind of pigeon-hole arrangement, substituting for the imaginary pigeon the great Auk himself, or even the monstrous Roc—not an unfamiliar bird, this last, in a region where Aladdin and Sindbad have ere now put in an appearance, and won their share of applause.

From these mighty pigeon-holes look down upon us a most marvellous collection of objects, which seem to defy enumeration or description, but which the stage-manager airily summarises as "props"—a collection of miscellaneous "properties" that it would be difficult to match anywhere out of realms of Enchantment. Here are stabled the cow with the crumpled horn, the hansom cab and its fiery steed, surrounded by the tropical vegetation of the fairy beanstalk, with all kinds of huge objects that gleam with gilding and glow with crystal and tinsel, in the stray rays of daylight that find their way among them. All the machinery of fairyland, and all the masonry of topsy-turveydom are somewhere stored away in this dim nether-world. And yet every day, and twice a day when there is a double performance, every article in this huge store comes down, takes its appropriate place for some brief moments on the stage in the full glare of publicity, and is then carried back to its customary resting-place.

Above the great storehouse at the back of the stage, a steep staircase leads to a series of wooden galleries, which afford a passage along the back and sides of the stage, some thirty feet or so above its level, traversing a maze of rigging and cordage more complicated and bewildering than those of any full-rigged ship. All this cordage communicates with the scenes—or cloths, as they are called in professional language—each of which has its own particular framework to function in. And following the footsteps of the stage-manager—to whom this dizzy labyrinth is

like so much native heather—we come to the "flies," close to the front of the stage, where there is a clear platform of a more substantial character than the wooden galleries, from which, as from the bridge of a steamship, the general management of the scenery is carried on. Here you have a general view of the scenery as arranged for the rising of the curtain; the carpenters' scenes of mingled timber and canvas; the flats, that are run in and out; the fields of painted cloth; the caves, and fairy-dells—all inextricably mixed up and confused to the unaccustomed eye.

And then we come to firm flooring again at the back of the house, where are long vistas of property-rooms and carpenters' shops. Here, in the busy, fervid weeks that herald the approach of Christmas, a busy scene might have been witnessed as the work of preparation was in full swing, and hundreds of skilful hands were modelling the features of the fairyland of the future. At the present time matters are proceeding calmly, in the way of renovation and repair. Here the silver casque of a fairy prince is in want of a rivet, there the glittering cestus of a goddess must have a link or two renewed. The bowl-hilted rapier of some Shakespearian hero has to be straightened out, or a new tail is wanted for the cow; the beanstalk must have a fresh suit of leaves, or some fairy chariot requires a coat of varnish and regilding. At one time the armoury was an interesting feature of the theatre, with its collections of armour and weapons of ancient and modern times; but pantomime has a way of turning everything else out of windows, and the armour is now stored away out of sight.

Here is the old painting-room, also occupied in force by properties new and old; the long, narrow, lofty room, with the scaffold-like frames still standing on which were stretched the canvases of the scene-painters of old, artists who have often distinguished themselves in other fields of art, as David Roberts, Clarkson Stanfield, and Absolon, who is still with us to tell stories of early painting days at Drury Lane. Then there was William Beverley, with Grieve, and Telbin, and many other famous wielders of the scenic brush. For the artists of to-day, not inferior to their predecessors in the arts of scenic illusion, there are new painting-rooms in an annexe of the main building.

Higher, still higher, by steep, precipitous

ladders, till the very top is reached—the roof of the world theatric. Here is the gridiron, a place of purgatory for scene-shifters and stage-carpenters. Here are the great beams in which work the blocks and pullies, the guide-ropes, the halliards, the running-rigging of the scenic show beneath. And here is the mystic machine which directs the flight of that intrepid aeronaut, the flying lady, whose skyward flight is keenly watched by an anxious husband from this dizzy height, while he, so to say, “rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm.”

It is all quiet enough now upon the gridiron, which is some eighty feet above the level of the stage; and sounds from below come up softly enough, while such airs that blow are of the gusty, north-easterly character prevalent in the outer world. But at night, when the exhalations from a thousand lamps and the lungs of several thousand people have been rising continuously for hours, then the gridiron, as well as the flies below and the galleries that wind about the place, are as hot and mephitic as you please. Then are the sounds like those upon a ship in a storm: the groaning and creaking of rigging, the flapping of canvas; while the roar of wind and sea is replaced by the gusts of laughter and applause that come eddying up from a crowded house in front. As for the crew, they are represented by about a hundred scene-shifters or carpenters, half of whom are aloft and half below, and who are kept busily employed by the constant changes of scene in the performance.

It would not be a nice place to be caught in should a fire break out, with all these painted cloths, like so many flambeaux, to carry the flames straight up to the roof; but there is a way out well known to those who work the rigging. Swarm up this ladder, dive under this beam, and there we are upon the roof of old Drury—on the leads, if not upon the tiles. Below lies the town, in a foggy, sulky mood, with a spire or a turret showing among wreaths of smoke; the courts about Drury Lane in their ruddy hues of ancient respectability, being the only part of the scene distinctly brought out against the hazy background. But there is Covent Garden Market, like a collection of cucumber frames, and, yonder, the line of the Strand and the roofs of neighbouring theatres. When the air is clear there is a pretty good panorama of London to be obtained from the roof of Drury; for it

stands higher than you might think, and is well placed between east and west, and not far from the centre of that famous river bend,

Where two joynt cities make one glorious bow.

But, if it were a case of fire, one would not much care about the surrounding scenery; and what a grip one would take of that iron ladder that goes down perpendicularly into the depths, and, after scrambling over an adjoining roof or two, land at last on terra firma in some secluded court!

While we are on the subject of fire, it is as well to note that there is always a body of trained firemen on the premises as long as they are open. Also, that the whole of the operative staff of the theatre are trained to fire drill, with each his appointed station, and that at times, an alarm is given by the head fireman's whistle to test the promptness of the service, an alarm which perhaps occurs just when the men are putting on their out-door things and preparing to take their departure for the night, when they are to be seen often with one boot off and another on, hopping away to the scene of duty; or, perhaps, entangled in the meshes of a tight great-coat, or embarrassed with a stout gingham and goloshes, but, anyhow, up to time; although profoundly relieved, if not altogether thankful, to find it only a false alarm.

And now, to descend, which is easier, no doubt, if also more perilous, than the other way: sliding down precipitous ladders and hurrying along galleries suspended in mid-air.

Down below, on the level nearly of the outside world, we come upon the manager's rooms, a snug nest of apartments, looking out upon Vinegar Yard. Here are shelves of books, portraits of famous actors, with a fine, comfortable fire, before which we may meditate for a moment on the long roll of managers, more or less distinguished, who have presided over the fortunes of Drury Lane. The archive-room, by the way, is close at hand, but without attempting to ransack its treasures, we may recall a name or two from the abyss.

Not to go farther back than the existing house, which rose upon the ruins of a new theatre destroyed by fire in 1809, we are brought to Sheridan's time, and the brilliant, but decidedly shifty, management of that versatile genius. Then, by-and-by, came Elliston, actor as well as manager, who

is noted for having so thoroughly identified himself with his part—that of George the Fourth, in some coronation pageant—that he advanced to the footlights in response to the applause of his audience, and extending his arms with tipsy gravity, exclaimed: "Bless you, my people!" Then, with an interval, "Poet Bunn"—the butt of youthful "Punch"—brings us well within the Victorian era; and Macready follows, grand, but unprofitable. And then a run of ill-luck—when Drury fell to its lowest ebb, and was hired by the week, like a village concert-hall—till E. T. Smith redeemed its fortunes, although he failed to secure his own. And then we come to Falconer and Chatterton, decidedly within living memory. And so, with a reputation for ill-luck, the theatre came under the rule of the present monarch, under whose reign old Drury has attained a substantial reputation, and recovered the prestige of other days.

Here, close at hand, is the green-room, the old green-room of Drury Lane, not at present used for its original purpose, for the genius of pantomime has taken possession of it, and it is now a storehouse of odd properties, which are piled up in every corner. Yet it retains its faded, old-fashioned air, with a dim old pier-glass over the fireplace, in which one may imagine reflections, vague and indistinct, of the famous actors and actresses of other days. There is an original-looking press, too, that might have a history to tell; and round the walls are marble busts of the great performers who are connected with the history of the theatre, David Garrick fitly presiding over the scene, and Sarah Siddons occupying a place of honour on the walls. Others there are concealed behind the comic masks and gilded trappings of pantomime.

With the earlier race of actors, indeed, our green-room cannot boast an acquaintance. But it must have known the majestic presence of Mrs. Siddons, and witnessed her last farewell to her old associates when she retired from the stage in 1812. Unhappy Perdita, too, was here; and her Prince Florizel, in the portly form of the then Regent, may have admired his own august person in that faded pier-glass. Lord Byron, too, was often a visitor behind the scenes, and loved to chat with the pretty actresses. And then we have the fascinating Vestris, with Mrs. Glover, and Fanny Kelly, and Miss O'Neill, and many others of more or less renown.

Among the men, the most commanding presence is, perhaps, that of Edmund Kean, who, on the stage of Drury, passed at a bound from poverty and obscurity to fame and potential wealth, to which last, however, the snug taverns about Drury Lane and elsewhere supplied the antidote. The inimitable Joe Grimaldi was also known within these walls, and redeemed the fortunes of the house with "Tippertwitchet" and "Hot Codlins." And T. P. Cooke retired here breathless from the vigorous execution of the sailor's hornpipe. Then we have Farren and Harley, the Mathewses—Charles the First and Second—with Macready's overwhelming dignity, the drollery of Paul Bedford, and the versatility of Webster.

All these must, at one time or another, have had a share of Baddelay's Twelfth Cake, which, by the will of that good fellow and actor, is cut and distributed every Twelfth Night in this Drury Lane green-room.

From the shades of other days to the realities of the present is but a step, and by this time the world behind the scenes is fully peopled with real live performers. We hear a murmur of voices and a patter of feet; from the long rows of dressing-rooms figures flit to and fro, some in the garb of fairyland, others in everyday attire, and others again in a temporary combination of the two; but the haunts of the naiads and dryads are not to be penetrated by rude masculine footsteps. But it is permitted to have a peep at the little children, who are undergoing the process of transformation. And how merry they are, these little imps and elves, the childish treble of their laughter ringing fairylike in our ears!

And now to dive down into the subterranean regions, where the stage itself is the roof over our heads, with pipes, and rods, and wires traversing it in every direction. Here are the traps which, working with counter-weights and served by attendant carpenters, shoot up some daring fiend or sprite into the enchanted world above, or which open beneath his feet, as, baffled and defeated, he seeks congenial realms of darkness. And here is a trap that will dispose of a whole batch of imps of darkness, and which bears the ominous name of the "grave trap," not from any danger about its mechanism, but as resembling, in its descent, an open grave. There are all kinds of openings, too, and platforms that may give passage to a procession, or bear

a troop of sea-nymphs to the surface of the laughing waves.

And then into the bowels of the earth penetrates the squeak of the first fiddle—first, at least, in point of arrival—that first preliminary quaver of the violin, which often excites a certain flutter of expectation, even in the heart of the hardened playgoer. It is a summons to us to leave the nether world.

Now we are again upon the stage, which is fast becoming peopled by all kinds of shapes—strange, or quaint, or beautiful. And now we are shown the very pulse of the machine, the little cabin bordering upon the front of the stage, whence the whole direction of the piece is carried on—where electric signals communicate with the various posts from which the scenery is managed; with the dressing-rooms of the chief performers; with the manager's box; and, indeed, with every part of the working machinery of the stage. Here, too, a vast array of brass taps controls the lighting of the various points, which are necessary to give full effect to the show. The brilliant balls of dazzling light, the fiery radiance that shines on "helm and hauberk's twisted mail," the splendour of stage sunshine, the soft moonlight that creeps o'er brook and dell, the deep gloom of the night, all these are turned off and on from this veritable magician's cave.

By this time the early fiddle has been reinforced by many companions, and a glance through the curtain shows the popular parts of the house already darkened by a swarm of occupants, while in the long gilded lines of boxes some early and youthful enthusiasts have already taken up their places. On this side of the curtain everything is going on quietly enough; children are romping about, wood-nymphs and water-nymphs are pacing amicably up and down, with arms about each other's waists, and a little fairy with gossamer wings is playing fly-the-garter in competition with an imp of like dimensions, in flame-coloured satin, the point of vantage being "the bank whereon the wild thyme blows," as illustrated in stage-carpentry.

Then the orchestra begins in earnest, the music sounding strangely distant, as if the performance were going on in another world altogether; and then bells ring out far and near, and from every side there flock in a host of angelic and demoniac beings, forming a maze of colour

and glitter, which without any seeming effort or confusion ranges itself into order.

And now, to avoid the dangers of flying flats and rolling scenery, and the rush of properties and performers hither and thither, the tyro behind the scenes is put under the charge of the green man (who is a red man, by the way, as to his coat), and who is powdered and tall, but affable, in a narrow squeeze of a place where there are a narrow table and a chair, upon which two or three people are balanced—the ballet-mistress in a warm winter jacket and furs, somebody else with a book and pencil, and another professionally interested spectator. There is another general ringing of bells; the last loiterers are in their places; all the glittering throng begins to sway and bend to the music, which sounds louder and louder as the curtain majestically rises; and then the opening chorus rings out, and the performance is fairly launched.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE loud ring echoed through the silent house, and struck painfully on Doris's dulled ears, and startled her back to life and consciousness again. With a desperate effort she rallied her courage to meet her enemy. She was still standing by the window, tall and statuesque, in her sweeping, grey robes, when Stephens, the footman, entered. Her face was turned away, and he noticed nothing unusual in her voice or manner, as, after he had said that a lady—with just the slightest hesitation before the word, for Stephens had lived in the "best families," and knew a lady when he saw her as well as most people—wished to speak to her, she answered, quietly:

"A lady? Did she not give her name?"

"No, ma'am. She said there was no need; that you would know her well enough when you saw her," Stephens replied, apologetically. "I don't think she is quite a lady, ma'am. Shall I take her into the housekeeper's room?"

"No, you may show her in here," Doris answered, quietly; and then, as soon as

the man had left the room, she went to the mirror and looked at herself, and rubbed her cheeks, and bit her lips to bring back the vanished colour. It would never do to show the white feather; to let this woman think she was afraid of her. She must fight her bravest for Laurence's sake.

She was standing on the hearthrug, with one hand resting on the back of a chair, when, in another moment, Stephens opened the door, and ushered in the visitor, with a solemn and decidedly disapproving, "The lady, ma'am."

The door closed, the visitor advanced a few paces, then paused and looked across the room at Doris with an odd mixture of timidity, and defiance, and shame in her face. Doris's attitude, the pose of her stately head, as she drew up her throat, and looked at the intruder with a pitiless contempt and hatred, but not a shadow of fear, in her clear eyes, did not tend to reassure her; inwardly, she wished she had never come, never braved that pale, resolute-looking woman, under whose pitiless eyes she inwardly writhed. Doris spoke first:

"Why have you come here?" she said, in a stern, contemptuous voice.

Mrs. Ainalie tossed her head. She was not going to be cowed by Doris's grand airs, she told herself, and she gave a defiant laugh as she answered:

"And, pray, why should I not come if I like? I have surely a right to come to my husband's house."

"You have no right."

The scorn in Doris's voice grew greater and more intense; a red spot sprang up in each of her pale cheeks; but she spoke quite calmly, and her steady, pitiless gaze never moved from the other's face.

"You forfeited that right two years ago, when you—false wife, heartless mother, that you were—left the home you had disgraced and dishonoured for the lover you preferred to your husband. You have not a shadow of right here; and you know it as well as I do. Take my advice. Go, before I call my servants to turn you from the door."

"That's all very fine."

The woman laughed again; but she would not meet Doris's eyes. They seemed to scorch her with their steady flame.

"I have more right here than you, anyhow. Laurence never got a divorce. I am his wife still in the eyes of the law; and, if I am his wife, who are you, pray?"

she added, with a sneer and a coarse laugh.

The red spots burned still brighter in Doris's cheeks at the insulting words; and her thoughts flew back to that little grass-grown grave in the churchyard at home, where the wreath of violets—which every week during her absence she had sent from London for old Margot to place there—was lying. Oh, thank Heaven for that little grave, Doris thought, wildly. Thank Heaven that her child was beyond the reach of shame and reproach! That there was only herself to suffer it—only herself! And what of Laurence? Laurence, who at any moment might run up the steps and open the door, and call out in his cheery voice to his wife.

Only one thought was quite clear to Doris just then, and that was, that the interview must be terminated, and her visitor got rid of, before Laurence returned. What might he not do in his anger if he came in suddenly and found her there?

She did not take any notice of the last sentence.

"If Laurence neglected to get a divorce it was only because, as you know quite well, he thought you had passed beyond the reach of the law," she said, still speaking very quietly and coldly. "He could do so at any moment now. He will do so at once if he is aware of your existence, if you force yourself into his presence," she added. "You, who know best the life you have led, must know that also. Was that why you allowed him to think you dead?"

"Not exactly."

The answer was given slowly and unwillingly.

"I was hurt very badly in the accident where Captain Milton was killed. Oh, killed at my side. My hand was in his when the crash came;" and she shuddered. "And I was badly hurt too. They thought I was dead at first, and so my name was put in the list of the killed; but later on they found that I still breathed, and they took me to an hospital in New York. I was there a long time. The doctors gave me up time after time; but I didn't mean to die. I told them so, and I struggled back to life again, though they told me"—and she laughed oddly—"that I should never quite recover from the effects of the accident. I was hurt internally; and, though they've patched me up for a bit, the hurt will kill me some day. They were clever doctors, those Yankees; and one of them"

—and she glanced at herself complacently in a mirror—“was very kind to me when I came out of the hospital.”

“And you lived—how?”

“Never mind how I lived. I found some kind friends, anyhow; and one day I heard them talking about a Mr. Laurence Ainalie, an artist, and the beautiful pictures which one of their friends had brought back from England. So I asked a lot of questions about him. And when I heard what a great man he was, and what a beautiful house he lived in, and”—again she laughed—“what a charming wife he had, I thought I might as well come over and see for myself, and have my share of the good things. I suppose it is true”—she glanced round the beautiful room—“he is rich? This is a far finer house than he ever gave me; but perhaps it was bought with your money?” she added with a sneer.

“Yes; it was bought with my money.”

Doris spoke absently. She was listening so intently to a footstep that was coming down the street, that she scarcely heard the last sentence. Was it Laurence's footstep? Oh, must he come? Could she not save him? Thank Heaven! The footstep passed the door and went down the street. Doris drew a deep breath of relief.

“Yes; it was my money,” she repeated.

“When you deserted him after you had murdered the child he loved, and dishonoured his name, and had almost—thank Heaven! not quite—succeeded in dragging him down to your own level, and he was poor, and lonely, and despairing, I came to him. I gave him wealth and love, and I raised him from the depths of degradation into which you had sent him, and I saved him, and he is mine—body and soul he is mine,” Doris cried, and her eyes flashed, and her lips quivered with passion, “and I will never give him up to you—never!” she cried.

She flung up her beautiful head, and looked so tall, and grand, and terrible in her wrath, that involuntarily the woman standing opposite ahrank back, and cast a scared look at the door.

“I don't want you to give him up. Keep him, and welcome,” she muttered; “he was never much to be proud of in my opinion. Keep him, by all means, if—you are willing to pay for the luxury! I am in very low water just now, so, if you like to make it worth my while to hold my tongue, I will do it; but you must make it

worth my while,” she added, with her unpleasant laugh.

Doris hesitated for an instant; then she crossed the room, and, unlocking a desk, took out a roll of notes and selected two.

“Here are ten pounds for you,” she said, coldly. “No,” as Mrs. Ainalie hesitated, and cast an avaricious glance at the roll. “I will give you no more at present. I must have time for consideration; and I am willing to pay for it. Take the notes, and go at once.”

“Before Laurence returns, I suppose,” Laurence's wife said, sarcastically.

Doris looked at her gravely.

“Yes; before Laurence returns. I do not want him to find you here. Your life might not be safe if he did,” she added, significantly. “Laurence is very passionate, and he is very bitter against his child's murderer; and if he came unexpectedly and found you here, I dare not think to what lengths he might be driven in his rage. So go at once.”

Mrs. Ainalie cast a frightened look towards the door. She did not grow paler; for the brilliant colour on her cheeks was not of the kind which changes with emotion; but her eyes dilated, and she shivered. Her fingers closed greedily over the crisp notes.

“I am going,” she said; “but don't think that you are going to get rid of me in this easy fashion, or that I shall not come again if I please.”

“Go,” Doris repeated; “I will send you more money when that is done. I have bought your silence for a time, and I am willing to pay for it. If you break it; if you make yourself known either to Laurence or any of his friends, or to any one who knew you before, I will not give you another farthing. You may die of starvation, if you like, for all I care!”

“But Laurence—” Mrs. Ainalie began.

Doris turned round on her sharply.

“Laurence!” she said. “Laurence! If you lay dying at Laurence's feet, and if, by lifting his finger, he could save you, he would not do it. The sooner you understand that, the better,” and then she turned and rang the bell. “Show this person out, Stephens,” she said, quietly, as Stephens appeared at the door, “and if she calls again, neither your master nor I am at home.”

Then she turned her back on them both, and stood apparently gazing into the fire; while Stephens, who had taken a violent

dislike to the visitor, opened the door with an alacrity born of good will, and pointed down the staircase.

"Eh, but she was as impitent a baggage as ever I saw! She looked at the pictures on the staircase, and says she: 'These is Mr. Ainslie's paintings, I suppose,' she says. I wouldn't have demeaned myself to say nothing to her; but I couldn't let even such as her think that them old-fashioned things, all cracks, were the master's paintings," Stephens remarked with dignity. "'These is 'Old Masters,' mem,' I says, quite dignified like, an' she laughed.

"'They look old enough, certainly,' she says; 'why, they're all over cracks.'

"'Which they certainly are; an' surprised I am that the master has them hanging there on the staircase, where everybody can see them,' Stephens went on, candidly; "and then I showed her out."

"An' what did the missus say, Stephens? Did she look angry, or annoyed like?" the cook enquired, in a tone of deep interest.

"She looked rather pale, but she did not speak angrily, only very calm and cold like," Stephens answered, meditatively. "Well, there's one comfort, we won't be troubled with her again. Neither missus or master is at home to her. Them's my orders."

Doris maintained her rigid attitude till the door closed, then, with one hurried glance round the room to make sure that she was alone, she staggered to a couch, and flung herself on it, and hid her face from the light among the cushions. She dared not allow the tears and sobs, which would have been such a relief to her overstrained brain, to come. Laurence must not find her with swollen eyes, and tear-stained face.

Ah! surely that was Laurence's step coming down the street. She started from the couch, and listened with straining ears, and hand clasped tightly over her heart, as if in vain attempt to still its suffocating throbbing. Yes, it was Laurence; in another minute he passed the window, accompanied by a tall, thin man, with a sallow face, and keen, bright eyes, the American with whom he had been lunching, and ran up the steps, and opened the door with his latch-key.

"Is your mistress in the drawing-room?"

Doris heard the usual enquiry. With a

great effort she forced herself into calmness, and smoothed back her ruffled hair, and rubbed the colour back into her pale cheeks, and went back to her chair by the fire, and, taking care to keep her back turned to the light, busied herself with the tea equipage.

CHAPTER XV.

It was a pretty picture of English home life, the American thought, as he followed Laurence into the pretty drawing-room, where the wood fire burned brightly in the polished grate, and gleamed on the silver and dainty china on the table, and on the face of the tall, graceful woman who rose from her chair and advanced to meet him in her softly falling silk and lace, and said a few gracious words of welcome, and held out a somewhat unsteady hand.

He was a bachelor, and spent most of his time in hotels and boarding-houses; and, until that evening, he had never felt the faintest desire to give up his liberty, or any longing for a home. But Mrs. Ainslie was so charming, and her husband apparently so devoted to her, and there seemed such a perfect confidence and love between them, and such an atmosphere of quiet, domestic happiness seemed to surround them, that for the first time he began to doubt whether his freedom could not be too dearly purchased, if it was only to be bought by the renunciation of all home ties and affections.

Laurence was in the highest spirits that afternoon. His interview with the American had been of the most satisfactory nature. The price offered for the proposed picture was more liberal than he had hoped or expected; the luncheon had been of the most sumptuous description; the wine of the best quality. And, altogether, Laurence was in the highest spirits, and on the best terms with himself and all the world.

He fancied, by-and-by, that his wife was rather silent, and that her face, as the fire-light fell upon it, was paler than usual. He looked at her anxiously.

"Love, you look very pale, to-day. Have you a headache?" he asked.

Doris started, and a flood of vivid colour rushed into her face at the question.

"No; I am quite well. I have not been out to-day. That is the reason I look pale," she said.

And she forced herself to join in the conversation, and to laugh and joke, and looked so pretty, with her flushed cheeks

and eyes glittering with excitement, that Laurence could not help but look at her with tender admiration in his eyes; and the American declared afterwards that she was the most charming woman he had met in England; and that Ainalie was a lucky fellow to be so gifted, and famous, and to have such a charming wife.

And all the time while she laughed and talked, Doris felt as if sharp knives were at intervals being driven slowly into her heart. As she looked at Laurence, lying back in his chair, with his tea-cup in his hand, looking so handsome and so ineffably happy and contented, and thought of the gulf of shame and dishonour which had opened before his unconscious eyes—on the edge of which his unconscious feet were even now standing—she could have shrieked aloud in her misery. His gay laughter, his calm placidity seemed such a horrible mockery, such a ghastly farce to her just then.

It was late before the American rose to go. He had given Doris and her husband an earnest invitation to visit him in America in the autumn, and promised them a hearty welcome from many to whom Laurence was known by reputation, and who would like nothing better than to make his personal acquaintance.

"And I need not say that the welcome would be extended to Mrs. Ainalie," he said as he bowed over Doris's hand. "That is scarcely necessary. Now, remember, it is a promise which I shall remind you of later on."

Doris gave an odd smile as the door closed upon him. In the autumn? And now it was April. Who could tell what might have happened before then? she thought drearily.

They had an engagement to dine with some friends that evening; but Doris looked so pale and tired when Laurence returned to the drawing-room, that he insisted on sending an excuse. They would have a quiet evening at home, he said; and he made her lie down on the couch, and sat by her side and would not allow her to talk, but read to her, in his clear, pleasant voice, from one of her favourite books.

And ever, as the evening went on, the stronger grew, in Doris's breast, the fixed determination that she would not give him up. So long as secrecy was possible, she would keep her secret; she would spare him as long as possible the shame and agony which the knowledge that his wife

still lived would bring him, and the torture of the notoriety of the divorce suit, which would inevitably follow the knowledge. She would spare him this as long as possible, no matter how heavy the price she had to pay for silence might be, the long torture of suspense which she herself must suffer.

"I am stronger; I can bear it better," Doris thought, tenderly; "and if the worst comes to the worst, and he knows all, I will never leave him. We are true husband and wife in the eyes of Heaven, if not of the law; and I will never leave him or give him up. Right or wrong, I will stay with him as long as he needs me. And as for what the world may say," and Doris gave a scornful smile, "there is another and a higher tribunal than the world's verdict; I will appeal to that."

Doris had need of all her courage, and all the strength which her resolute will could give her, during the next three months. Fortunately for her, Laurence was very busy, and very much absorbed in his work just then during the daytime; and they had so many evening engagements that the husband and wife saw much less of each other than usual. Laurence used occasionally to regret this, and to sigh for a little quiet; but Doris was glad of the constant whirl of engagements which prevented thought, and diverted her attention in some slight degree from the torturing subject which was uppermost in her thoughts by day, and haunted her dreams at night.

She had had two or three interviews with Mrs. Ainalie at the latter's lodgings before they came to terms. Doris offered her first one, and then two hundred a year, on condition that she left London at once, and assumed her maiden name. Mrs. Ainalie accepted the terms at first, then drew back. She liked London. There was no place worth living in but London or Paris; and she intended to remain in town as long as she liked, she said, defiantly.

"What does it matter where I live as long as I keep out of Laurence's way?" she demanded; "and I will promise to do that as long as you supply me with money; but take care you do that."

"I need not send you any money at all," Doris answered, coldly.

She never, even in the most trying of these interviews, lost her self-control, or allowed herself to show any signs of weakness; and her quiet contempt went far to

cow Mrs. Ainslie, and to moderate the demands which would otherwise have been excessive.

"I only do it because you were once Laurence's wife, and the mother of his child; not because you have any claim upon either him or me," she added.

"And because you want to keep him," Mrs. Ainslie sneered.

"I should do that in any case," Doris answered, contemptuously. "The moment he knows of your existence he will institute a suit for a divorce, which he will have no difficulty in getting, as you know," she added.

But gallantly as she bore herself before her enemy, and in spite of the sturdy courage which had come to her from a long line of brave ancestors who had proved their courage in many a battle-field, Doris felt sometimes as if the strain on her nerves, and the constant suspense, were becoming too great to be borne any longer; as if she must give in, and break the silence which was wearing her out, and share her burden with another. And then the sight of Laurence's happy face, and the gay ring of his voice, and the look of perfect contentment and peace which had come into his face of late and smoothed away the lines and wrinkles and made him look younger and handsomer than ever, would nerve her afresh, and bring back her falling courage and strength. As long as it was possible, she would keep the secret, and spare him pain, loyal Doris thought.

By-and-by a new source of annoyance arose. Mrs. Ainslie, who at first had, in accordance with her promise, strictly avoided the neighbourhood where Laurence lived, and any place where there was a chance of meeting him, now began to haunt the street wherein his house was situated. She generally came in an afternoon, about the time when Laurence was usually at home; and she would walk up and down on the opposite side of the way, and stare up at the windows, till the policeman on the beat grew suspicious concerning her, and kept a watchful eye on her movements.

Doris lived in terror lest one day Laurence should meet her face to face in the street. Once he did see her from the window; and, though her face was hidden, the something familiar in her appearance and gait which had first attracted Doris's attention, attracted his also. He started and frowned, and bit his lip.

"Doris," he said, in a quick, sharp voice,

"come here." And as she came and stood by his side, he pointed to the figure which—having caught sight of him at the window—was now hurrying away. "Of whom does that person remind you?"

Doris turned her face away from him, for she was conscious that the colour had suddenly left it, that her very lips were white. With an effort she answered carelessly:

"Oh, I don't know. Of no one in particular," she said.

Laurence gave a short, agitated laugh.

"I—I fancied it reminded me of—her," he said.

"Nonsense!" Doris put her hand through his arm, and smiled bravely. "You are fanciful, Laurence. How cold and dreary it looks outside; more like November than May. Come back to the fire, dear;" and she drew him gently away.

But the—as he thought—chance resemblance had roused a train of painful memories in Laurence's mind, and all the evening he was silent and preoccupied, and unlike himself.

Lady Cecil Butler came to town much later than usual that year—not until the last week in May. The fact being, that she had been so extravagant, and spent so much money during her last season, that long-suffering Sir John had rebelled at last, and refused to furnish the necessary funds for a longer campaign in town.

It was soon after her arrival, that Doris noticed a change in the manner of some of her friends. It was colder, and a little uncertain; invitations to dinners and dances did not flow in so quickly as in the earlier part of the season; once or twice they were for Laurence alone, a fact which he attributed, with a careless laugh, to negligence, and Doris, with a sinking of the heart, to something worse.

Several times, as she drove in the Park, she fancied that, as the carriage drew near to some one of her acquaintance—and that some one Doris always noticed belonged to Lady Cecil's set—a parasol was lowered, or a face turned persistently away, in order to avoid a bow. And once or twice, too, when they had met Lady Cecil in society, there had been a careless insolence and contempt in her manner to Doris, though to Laurence she was as gracious as ever, which brought the hot colour flaming into Doris's face for a moment, and then fled, and left it ghastly white, banished by the

sudden terror which had flashed across her mind.

Could Lady Cecil, by any chance, have heard of the existence of Laurence's wife? Was Doris's secret in the possession of that cruel, treacherous woman who had always—as Doris once told Paul Beaumont—hated her? The thought was torture to her, and she tried to banish it in vain. If so—if the secret she had so carefully guarded was known to Lady Cecil, the cold looks and neglect of her friends were easily explained. Very soon it would be known to every one—to Laurence, from whom she would have guarded it with her life!

Her doubts were soon to be set at rest. She was at an At Home one evening where Lady Cecil was also present. Doris was sitting in a corner near a window, talking to Paul Beaumont, who had run up to town for one of his short visits, and was truly concerned to see how pale and worn Doris was looking. Doris felt half inclined to tell him the reason of her altered looks; but pride and her natural reticence sealed her lips, and so she parried his questions, and laughed at his anxiety, and declared she was as well and strong as usual, though a little tired with her dissipations. As they were talking, Lady Cecil, and another lady—a leader of society, and a great admirer of modern art, and especially of Laurence's pictures—approached, and paused near them. Lady Cecil smiled, and bowed to Paul, but bestowed only a stare upon Doris, and pointedly ignored her bow. Her companion, who was in the act of bowing, noticed this, and hesitated.

"Isn't that Mrs. Ainslie?" she whispered to Lady Cecil. "I was just going to bow; but as you do not recognise her, I suppose I am mistaken?"

"Recognise her! My dear Lady Verson, I should think not."

So long as she lives, Doris will never forget the tone in which the insulting words were said, or the insulting glance

which accompanied them! They brought a sudden exclamation, and a stifled oath from Paul, a sudden chill round Doris's heart. She gave Paul a piteous glance, and put a detaining hand on his arm, as he half rose from his seat.

"Recognise her? Why, have you not heard how shamefully she has imposed upon society? She is not Laurence Ainslie's wife at all. His wife is still living. I met her—I used to know her slightly long ago—and she told me a piteous story of the way her husband, and the woman we have received as his wife, have treated her."

"But are you sure there is no mistake?" Lady Verson lowered her voice, and looked round nervously. "Hush, she may hear you. Are you sure there is no mistake?"

"Quite sure. I have cut her name out of my visiting list; and others I know have done the same," Lady Cecil answered, carelessly.

And then another acquaintance came up, and the subject was dropped.

Paul looked straight down into Doris's face. It wore such a pale, deathly expression, there was such a piteous appeal in the sweet eyes that returned his gaze, and then faltered and dropped, that his heart gave a quick throb of mingled pain and fear.

"Doris, don't look like that, for Heaven's sake! I will silence that woman's malicious tongue, and force a humble apology from her," he said, fiercely.

"No, no—Laurence has more right than I. I will tell him."

He half rose, as if at once to carry out his intention; but again Doris's detaining hand was laid on his, and her solemn eyes, full of an unfathomable despair, looked into his.

"No; you must not tell Laurence," she said. "I forbid it."

"Why not?" Paul cried.

And Doris looked up at him again, and the anguish in her eyes grew deeper.

"Because it is true!" she said.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Faire Dame," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XL.

THE STRENGTH OF WEAKNESS.

It was that same evening that the spring weather, which had come too soon, seemed to hurry away again, as if afraid of the reception it might meet with. Winter returned, loth to leave the Rushbrook Valley, and once more the wind swept over the forestland, and snapped off the boughs of trees by the Pools, and ruffled the deep water and sent little eddies over their inky blackness.

It was late in quiet Rushbrook, and all the household had retired to rest from the dwelling-rooms. Even the master of the house had been persuaded by Elva not to sit up this evening because Mr. Pink had said he must "court sleep by early devotion to that mistress."

But there was one person who did not sleep, who did not even court sleep. Amice Kestell had been kneeling for an hour in prayer. She was more and more accustomed now to live away from Elva and her father, because Mrs. Kestell required so much nursing, or rather individual attention, that she was seldom out of the sick-room. Had she not been willing to do this, Symee's strength would have been worn out; and Symee herself looked so pale and miserable that it was a wonder she kept up.

Amice was one of those whose lives cannot be understood by the ordinary man and woman. She had been going

through a period of acute mental suffering, and yet she had appealed to none for sympathy or help; but night after night she spent much time in prayer.

Ever since the day that she had met Hoel Fenner in the wood, Amice had fancied she had done wrong. She said to herself that she ought to have forced Hoel to explain himself. She ought to have told him that whatever he did, whatever he thought, Elva was not to be made to suffer; in fact, she ought to have insisted on hearing all he knew.

Mingled with this self-reproach was a stronger feeling that the curse had fallen, that now, whatever the sin of her father might be—and in Amice's mind it was clear that some mystery enveloped them—now was the time for her to sacrifice herself for Elva.

Why was Elva to suffer when she, Amice, was ready to offer herself? And on her knees the girl, full of the spirit of the early martyrs, prayed to bear the punishment. She could not unravel the story of the sin, but she fancied she knew that it related to gold. Had she not always had that shrinking from it? Was she not sure in some way that, if she could only find out the clue, "John Pellew" was the man who had been wronged—wronged by her father?

"The sin has found us out in Hoel Fenner; but why should Elva suffer when I am ready? Take me, take me, O Lord! I care nothing for the gold, only for their happiness."

Sometimes, as the girl prayed, one of these strange periods of acute sensation would come on; and full of horror at some unknown intangible something, she felt as if she must rush away out of the house into the darkness. It was the same

feeling that takes possession of human beings when they feel the earth shake, and all power of thought, except the thought of flight, seems to forsake them.

This evening the storm of wind that raged without increased the feeling of horror, and suddenly starting up, the girl, pale as death, seized a white shawl, and wrapping it around her, made some steps towards the door. Then she paused, and changing her mind, she went and listened at Elva's door. She bent her head and held her breath, but all was silent. Elva was sleeping.

"No, no, it is not here. Where am I to go? Some one wants me."

Again she crossed her room, and very silently opened the door into the passage. Here all was darkness and stillness, except for the sound of wind. No human foot-step or voice could be heard.

Amice needed no light, she had always had a wonderful knack of finding her way in the dark.

"Some one wants me," she repeated to herself.

She came to her father's door, and hurried past it, shivering; then a light broke in upon her over-wrought brain.

"It is Symee," she said, half disappointed. "Symee, of course." She had fancied the clue was about to be discovered.

Then she walked up to the girl's room, and opened it without pausing.

"Symee, you ought to be in bed. What is the matter?" for Symee was kneeling by her bed, sobbing, as if her heart would break.

She started up.

"Oh, Miss Amice, why have you come? I am so miserable, so wretched! There never was any one so wretched in all the world! It is all my fault, my own fault."

"What is it, Symee?"

Amice noticed a crumpled letter in the girl's hand.

"It is from Jesse, Miss Amice; he told me not to tell any one here. But I must, I must tell you. He has been out of work for some time now, and he can't get any more. I have begged him to let me tell Mr. Kestell; but he won't. He writes such dreadful things; he says he would rather starve than accept a penny of his money. He refused to emigrate. And now, when I write about it— Oh, Miss Amice, my heart will break! And I feel as if it were my fault."

"Out of work! How is that? Did he

leave the office? Why did you not tell me before?"

"No, they gave him notice. Business was slack. Mr. Kestell could get him another situation, but I dare not ask him. He would say Jesse refused the farm in Canada. I can't bear to think that perhaps he is wanting food."

"You must go to him, Symee. I can't understand. Papa used to say——"

Amice paused; a flash of light seemed to tell her the truth. Her father had wanted Jesse to emigrate, and, on his refusal, he had been dismissed from Card and Lilley's.

No, that would be too dreadful; it could not be true! She herself was wicked for supposing such a thing.

"Go to him? How can I, Miss Amice? I would go if I dared, but how can I? Mr. Kestell will not let me. I cannot be spared. No, no; I refused before, and now—— And yet Jesse will starve. I have a little money saved; if I went there, he would not know that I spent my money. Now he will not touch it. Oh, Jesse, Jesse!"

"You must go to him to-morrow, Symee. Never mind about money, I have enough for you both; I can borrow it if necessary. As to being spared, now mamma does not get up, I can do all that is wanted. Besides, we are rich enough to get nurses. No, you must go to-morrow, and I will go with you. During that time my sister will stay at home. Don't cry, Symee, all will yet be well."

"How can I go? You do not know. Besides, Jesse has taken a room at some cheaper place; he is no longer in his old lodgings. He will say it is not a fit place for me. What can I do? I dare not go, Miss Amice. With one word he could have the farm. Mr. Kestell told me to tell him so several weeks ago. But I do not know what has come to Jesse; he is changed, quite changed. It is dreadful."

Amice laid a cool hand on the girl's burning forehead.

"Hush," she said; "hush. Don't you know, Symee, that we can't go on when God bars the way? We do but struggle uselessly. It is our restless striving to shape our own lives that brings us sorrow. He never gives us any sorrow that makes us unhappy. Come, Symee, do not cry, but just trust Him."

The soft tones, the soothing words, seemed to have a healing effect. Symee got up, and the tears slowly ceased.

"Will you really come with me, and what will Mr. Kestell say?"

Symee had very little courage.

"I will tell him, Symee. Just do as I think best. You must go to-morrow. You have delayed too long already."

And after that Symee slept. There seemed such strength in Miss Amice's words. When she said something it had to be done. To-morrow, she would go. How she would get away, she knew not; but it would be done.

Amice felt strong now. Up till now she had trembled before her father; but she was getting over her fear. It was Elva's sorrow that had made her brave. All day long she said to herself: "Somehow, I must expiate that unknown wrong done to an unknown person."

Just as the carriage came round to the door the next morning for the master of Rushbrook, Amice walked into the study.

"Papa," she said calmly, yet with her blue eyes bent on the ground; "papa, I am going to take Symee to London to-day."

Mr. Kestell was folding some papers and putting them into a large pocket-book.

"Symee—to London! What for?"

"She is going to her brother. He is in trouble."

Amice looked up, and, though her voice was calm, she grasped the back of a chair to still her trembling. Her father walked away and opened a drawer, so that she could not see his face. She noted, however, that he stooped more, and the grey hair had become whiter. Elva would often call it his venerable love-locks; but Amice never joked with her father.

"Has your mother said she could spare Symee for the day, dear?"

His voice was almost tender.

"No, papa. It is not for the day; it is for good. Symee must go. We have kept her here too long. She ought to go to her only relation now he is in trouble. How can she learn to be a good woman if we crush out her natural affection? Shall I bring back a nurse from London?"

Again a slight pause, and still Mr. Kestell kept his back turned. Then, suddenly, a terrible trembling seemed to possess him. He rose up to his full height, and turned upon his child with the wrath which is so overwhelming to the young—the wrath of the aged.

His voice shook, but was not raised

much; and his hand seemed to be trembling from very strong emotion.

Amice turned cold as her father approached her; she seemed frozen with fear.

"Amice, how dare you do this—this thing? How dare you take upon yourself to interfere in my house, with my affairs? What right have you to thrust yourself continually between me and what I consider to be justice? I forbid you to take Symee away. Do you hear? I forbid it. If Vicary is suffering, it is from his own obstinate folly; his confounded pride. He has had the offer of a first-rate position in Canada, and he has refused it. Now let him learn what it is to want work. I am in a hurry, Amice. Let me hear nothing more of this."

A dreadful feeling of dizziness passed over Amice; never had she seen her father like this. She longed for Elva's presence, but she would not give way.

"I am very sorry you are angry with me, papa; but tell me if Jesse Vicary lost his work because—because he refused your offer of the Canadian farm?"

That truth is stranger than fiction is a very trite remark; but its very triteness shows how terrible may be its truth. At this moment Mr. Kestell's trembling hand seemed unconsciously to raise itself as if he would seize Amice and shake the life out of her. A lurid light flashed in his eyes, followed by a look of hatred, most awful in the eyes of any human being, but far more awful in those of a father towards his child; and all the time Amice never lowered her eyes, but gazed, horror-struck and speechless, at the sight before her.

She understood, and her father saw she did so, even before, with almost super-human power, he let fall his hand upon the table. The hand was now powerless; it could not now have shaken a mere child.

"Go," he said, faintly. "You know, or you might know, if you had any heart, that these scenes are most distressing to me—most injurious. I command you to leave me."

Amice's lips moved, but her power of utterance seemed gone. Her tender heart was breaking.

"Go!" he repeated; "you are a cruel, unnatural child. If I were to—"

"Papa, papa, don't," cried Amice, finding speech under the terrible expectation of a father's curse. "Don't you know that I—I must do it? Don't you, at least, understand that if, if it would take it away, you might kill me, I would only be

—oh, so glad! But we must not keep Symee—we must not. Don't let us have that upon our conscience—that, as well as—”

Mr. Kestell felt as if something had overtaken him. He was not himself—the venerable and venerated Kestell of Grey-stone standing in his luxurious study talking to his gentle Amice; but he was out upon a bleak, stormy land; a storm, such as he had never before experienced, was raging around him; the lightning flashed across the sky and showed him every object, every action of his life for years past, with terrible plainness. Only one had not yet been revealed to him, and he was about to see that. How unnatural his voice sounded.

“As well as what, Amice? Pray speak out. I hate these foolish mysteries.”

“As well as—John Pellow.”

Mr. Kestell breathed a deep sigh of relief. The lightning had flashed across the sky and had not revealed the object he dreaded to see. He laughed now, and the laughter sounded worse in his daughter's ears than his words of anger.

“John Pellow! What do you mean? Ah, I suppose that scoundrel Fenner told you of his relationship with him. Unfortunately for me, I knew the poor fellow, and had to pay his debts as best I could after he left the country. It was fortunate for his family that he died before he plunged further into dissipation.”

“The carriage is waiting, sir,” said Jones, opening the door; and, as if he had been a prisoner in his own study, Mr. Kestell immediately followed the butler out of the room, leaving Amice standing alone. There came a distant call in Elva's voice.

“Papa, papa, don't forget to take your plaid,” and in another moment his eldest daughter ran into the hall, and passed her arm into that of her father's.

“You naughty, forgetful dad. Why, I told you at breakfast that you were not to forget, and now you have. I must go and fetch it out of your study.”

“No, no, darling, I prefer this rug. Jones, put it into the carriage. Why, you look more like your old self, dear. Don't leave your mother to-day. I shall be back early; most likely for luncheon.”

“Shall you? I am glad. Why, this morning you said you were coming home late. You are using the liberty granted only to ladies, sir.”

Mr. Kestell smiled and kissed Elva, and then hastily entered his carriage.

SPANISH FABLES AND GHOST STORIES.

WHILST Slavonic and Scandinavian literature engrosses so large a share of public attention, both in England and France, literary Epicureans may well complain that Spanish genius is somewhat neglected. For genius is still to be found among the fellow-countrymen of the great Cervantes.

The works of the Spanish Thackeray—as the author of the popular “National Episodes” has been called—are certain, ere long, to find their way into English. Perez Galdoz is rapidly attaining European recognition, and the same may be said of Vallera, Echegaray, and other brilliant contemporaries.

Scant attention, however, is paid in England to the literature of the Peninsula, although characterised by qualities that counterbalance the sombre realism of Russian fiction. Southern imagination, in all its richness and amplitude, here runs riot, whilst, in works of deep tragic interest, dealing with the realities of human life, such as the “Trafalgar” of Galdoz, a light vein of wit relieves the horror and gloom.

Foremost among imaginative writers of contemporary Spain, stands Gustavo Becquer, the richly-endowed young poet and romancer, cut off in his early prime some years ago. Had he lived, he would undoubtedly have achieved great things. As it is, he has left behind enough, both of prose and poetry, to embellish Spanish letters, and to indicate the loss caused by his premature death.

Becquer possessed something of the wildness of Hoffman and the subtle fancy of Jean Paul. His legends and fables are always inimitably written, due reservation being made for Spanish redundancy. We must not look for the crispness and precision to which we are accustomed in English models of style. He seems to delight in the wealth of words at his command; using too many, rather than let one of extra fascination go. Of course, in translating into a language so unlike his own, much ornateness and poetisation have to be excised. A translator must be satisfied to give the exact meaning and spirit of his author; style being wholly untranslatable.

In the following little fable, Becquer is

in his airiest mood, his playfulness mingled with the deep, introspective melancholy inseparable from the true poet.

THE WITHERED LEAVES.

There are moments when, having passed from abstraction to abstraction, the mind loses hold of actualities; bent on self-analysis, we seem able to comprehend the mysterious phenomena of man's inner life. At other times, the thinking part of us seems freed from the physical envelope, bursts the bonds of personal existence, and becomes one with Nature.

It happened that on a certain autumn day, I found myself in the last named mood. As I idled away the hours out of doors, I overheard the following dialogue. Two withered leaves discoursed thus:

"Whence come you, sister?"

"The whirlwind has just let me go, after having driven me hither and thither with others of our kind."

"And I have been drifting on the stream, till a gust, stronger than the rest, swept me from my temporary resting-place amid mud and reeds."

"Whither wend you now?"

"Whither indeed? Does the wind itself know, the wind soon to bear me once more aloft?"

"Ah, me, sister, who could have dreamed that we two should one day lie thus, cast aside, faded, of no account, on the ground—we who so lately danced gaily, clothed with brightness, informed with light."

"Do you remember those exquisite days in which we first burst into bud; that lovely, serene morning, when, springing as from a cradle, we sought the sun, our hues of dazzling emerald?"

"Do I remember, indeed? Ah, how delightful to swing on the breeze on those airy heights, to drink in air and light through every pore!"

"And ah! how sweet to behold the stream below, bathing the rugged stem supporting us, to live between two heavens, the azure sky, and the bright blue water reflecting it."

"We loved to watch our own images there, ever shifting in the limpid waves."

"And to sing, imitating the sigh of the breeze, and the rhythm of the flowing waters."

"Around us—you remember them?—danced insects with jewelled wings."

"Whilst gorgeous butterflies skimmed the air in circles, their brief hymeneals hidden in the leafy covert."

"Then we were as notes in the vast symphony of the forest."

"And a tone in the harmony of universal colour."

"Do you remember on moonlight nights, when metallic light made resplendent the mountain-tops, how we whispered amid the shadows below?"

"Recalling the fables of sylphs, who swing on golden cobwebs betwixt branch and branch."

"Till we paused to hearken to the nightingale plaintively singing close by."

"Ah, that sad song of the nightingale! It brought two lovers to the spot, a fair girl, listening to fond vows; and ere summer was over, she had faded with the leaves."

"She rests in the tomb. But we, too, when shall we finish our journey?"

"When indeed? The wind that bore me hither summons me again. I am wafted aloft; adieu, sister, adieu."

Does not this parable embody the truth, so subtle to conceive, so hard to grasp, that the visible world is not made for man alone, that the life of Nature must remain, in one sense, a sealed book to us? Man passes from the earthly scene familiar to him, his spiritual part being reserved, as we hope and believe, for immortality; so, doubtless, the natural forces only partly known to us, possess, even in their humblest manifestation, a continuity bound up with the destiny of the universe itself.

In another vein is the weird little story called "The Kiss;" surely the strangest romance ever founded on the subject. The events herein narrated are said to have taken place during the French occupation of Spain. A young French officer, quartered with his company in the church of a monastery, professes himself enamoured of a statue there—that of a beautiful lady in marble, kneeling beside the figure of her husband. These two chefs d'œuvre of the sculptor's art adorned the Lady Chapel. This young dragoon was, however, far from worshipping his idol after the pious fashion of a Pygmalion. His fancy rather takes the form of bravado. He summons his comrades to a drinking bout in the church itself—their improvised barracks—and his sacrilegious act is punished in a most unexpected fashion. I give the dénouement.

The quiet-loving Toledans had long bolted themselves within their stately old

houses; the cathedral bell had sounded the hour of the soldiers' retreat; the note of clarion and trumpet had died away on the Alcazar, when a dozen officers hastened to the Captain's rendezvous. These visitors, it must be confessed, felt a far livelier interest in the promised carouse than in their host's much-vaunted Galatea.

Night had closed in with lurid clouds; the heavens were leaden; the feeble lights of the little retablos flickered in the wind; from end to end of the city the iron weather-cocks made shrill, strident noise.

No sooner were the guests within sight of the monastery than their host came out to meet them, and, after a few words of boisterous greeting, all entered the dimly-lighted interior.

"On my word," said one, looking round with an uncomfortable shrug of the shoulders, "this is no place for a jollification!"

"Nor exactly propitious for the admiring of a beautiful woman," cried another. "I can hardly see an inch before me."

"Worse still," exclaimed a third, drawing his cloak closer around him, "it is as cold here as in Siberia."

"Patience, patience!" cried the host. "You shall see what I can do in the way of miracles. Ho-la! my men, firewood; the first you can lay your hands on. Do not be too particular."

Thus bidden, his man, aided by another, brought firewood, and soon a huge fire blazed in the central chapel. Without a second thought, the Captain's underlings had hacked away at the woodwork lying handiest, irrespective of carving and ornament; the artistic auto-da-fé lighting up the place.

The host now led his guests to the Lady Chapel, and pointed triumphantly to the marble figure of the kneeling lady.

"I have now the honour," he said, "to present to you the ideal of my dreams. No one, I fancy, can accuse me of having exaggerated her charms?"

"In very truth, fair as an angel," cried one, gazing on the sculptured image of a beautiful woman; none more beautiful had ever been immortalised in stone.

"The pity of it is that she should be a mere bit of marble!" sighed another.

"Now tell us, who and what was she?" asked a third.

"My Latin is somewhat rusty," replied the Captain; "but I have just managed to make out from the inscription that the warrior beside her was a famous soldier,

and that his wife bore the name of Doña Elvira."

After this brief explanation and a rough yet appreciative criticism of the monument, host and guests, seated in a semicircle round the fire, proceeded without further ceremony to uncork the champagne. Soon the mirth grew boisterous, snatches of drinking songs, stories that savoured of the camp, rude jests, accompanied by loud laughter, hand-clapping and applause, resounded from end to end of the sacred building.

The Captain, who had, perhaps, been drinking more freely than the rest, by degrees grew silent and self-absorbed, from time to time casting strange glances at the figure of Doña Elvira.

To his disordered fancy the stone image, lighted up by the flames, wore the look of a living, breathing human thing, of a lovely woman; her lips seemed to move, her bosom seemed to heave, whilst, as if ashamed of the sacrilege committed in her presence, her cheeks glowed with a deep blush.

"Look at Doña Elvira!" he cried. "Don't you see the colour on her cheeks? Will you aver that there is no vitality here? Could she be indeed more real, more life-like?"

"But mere marble, the sculptor's handicraft, after all; no real flesh and blood," replied his companions, jestingly, yet a little taken aback by his strange manner. "Come, let us have another song."

"Flesh and blood, earthiness and corruption!" cried the Captain, persisting in his wild mood. "The kiss of a nymph like this, 'twould be as a sea-breeze after the desert, snow after fire. Yes, one kiss, just one I will, must have——"

"Captain!" expostulated his companions in a breath, "have you lost your senses? This is sorry jesting. For Heaven's sake, man, leave the tombs alone."

But the young man, paying no heed to their loudly-uttered remonstrances, made for the statue. Just as he had reached it, as his lips seemed to touch those of the marble lady, a cry of horror rose from the lips of all.

With blood streaming from his temples, stricken with a mortal blow, the Captain had fallen to the ground, and not a finger was lifted to support him. The roistersers stood petrified with fear.

Their host was close to the figure of Doña Elvira, his face touched hers, when, swift as lightning, the marble warrior be-

side her had risen, dealing the sacrilegious lover a deadly thrust with his stone gauntlet.

A singularly weird, touching, and beautiful story is that called "Maese Perez, the Organist." Becquer was no musician, yet, as will be seen, he was strangely susceptible to musical influences.

Maestro Perez is a poor, blind organist, whose entire life is dedicated to music, in whose soul burns the veritable "feu sacré" of musical inspiration. From an old organ, in one of the most insignificant churches of Seville, he would elicit such strains as mortal ears had never before heard; the time-worn, battered instrument, under his fingers, became a magic thing.

It is especially at midnight mass on Christmas Eve that Maese Perez put out all his powers. The narrative opens with an intensely-vivid, richly-coloured description of the crowds that flock to hear him. We seem to hear improvisations of an obscure, blind musician, on a poor, worn-out instrument.

On one especial Christmas Eve, however, the vast congregation seemed to have come for nothing, to be doomed to a cruel disappointment. The service began, but the familiar figure of the old musician failed to appear. Like wild-fire, the rumour now spread throughout the church; Maese Perez was ill; Maese Perez was mortally stricken, and would never touch his beloved organ again!

When consternation had somewhat subsided, and another musician was about to ascend to the organ-loft, a second murmur—this time of joy and relief—ran through the building. The frail form of Maese Perez was seen being borne to his place in a chair. Pale, feeble, evidently in the last stage of bodily weakness, he had insisted on fulfilling his best-beloved task of the year: not the commands of the physician, not the tears of his daughter could stop him.

The celebration of High Mass recommenced, and soon came that solemn moment when the priest gently raised the Host; a cloud of incense floated about the altar, the bell signalled the elevation, and Maese Perez, with trembling fingers, touched the keys.

First was heard a slow, prolonged, and majestic harmony—a vast volume of sound, as if the combined prayers of universal humanity were here made vocal. Like the lulling of a mighty storm it died away,

soon to be followed by a soft and gentle murmur, the caressing voices of angels wending their way earthward.

Next was heard the sound of hymns chanted from afar, a thousand in one. At first, seeming but one, by degrees the ear could distinguish air and accompaniments; both the most marvellously beautiful, thrilling each hearer to the very soul. And gradually, the elaborate combination of harmonies grew simpler, easier to comprehend, till only two voices were heard. Finally, one; that one, clear, piercing, metallic. The priest bent down, the sacred emblem showed faintly through a cloud of incense, and still the sustained note of the maestro expanded into a more and yet more magnificent burst of harmony. Each separate note seemed in itself a complete theme, a superb melody: this near, that remote; one, low-voiced and tender, the other fiery and passionate. The waves of ocean, the murmur of forest leaves, the notes of woodland birds, the summer breeze—all earthly and heavenly voices of men, angels, and God's manifold creations—were now made one by music, their voices pouring forth a glorious hymn in honour of the Nativity.

The crowd listened with bated breath, every eye moistened, every bosom heaved with pious emotion. The priest's hands trembled in that supreme, unutterable moment. The symbol he touched, the emblem angelic as well as human voices seemed to salute, became much more. It was as if the Heavenly Presence made itself visible to mortal eyes.

The organ was still heard; but its many-toned voices now died away one by one. Soon the deep hush pervading the church was only broken by a cry—the wail of a woman in despair. A last murmur, soft as a farewell sigh, and the instrument gave forth no more. The service was abruptly stopped. All was suspense and confusion till the report reached the crowd:

"Maese Perez is dead!"

True enough, the musician was found lifeless at his post. By his side was his daughter, calling vainly upon his name, pressing the once magically-endowed hands to her heart.

But, although the blind organist's earthly career was over, he continued in spirit to visit his beloved instrument. Christmas Eve came round again; a foolhardy musician of third-rate ability, who had envied Maese Perez his renown during the old man's lifetime, ventured to replace

him now. What was the astonishment of the congregation to recognise the marvellous touch of Maese Perez himself! There was no mistaking the fact. No other fingers could have elicited such sounds. It was a veritable cascade of melody, celestial harmonies such as those are said to hear whose spirits are about to quit their mortal envelope; strains caught rather by the spirit than the senses; notes like the caressing murmur of summer winds, the kissing of forest leaves, the trills of the lark winging its arrowy flight towards the empyrean; seraphic quires with cadence and rhythm unknown to the children of men; hymns that rise to the very throne of the Most High—all these were now given forth with the poetic mysteriousness, religious fervour, and inspiration of old. As to the unhappy man who had ventured to fill the place of Maese Perez, he descended the organ-loft, pale as death, stricken with terror. All knew why. Other hands than his had touched the keys that night.

The dénouement is thus given :

Another year passed. Once more it was the eve of the Nativity. The Abbess of the Convent of Santa Inez and Maese Perez's daughter were talking in subdued undertones as they sat in the dimly-lighted choir of the old musician's church. The bell summoned the faithful to prayer; but only a few worshippers obeyed the summons. One at a time these stragglers entered, touched the holy water, and took their places.

"You see," whispered the Mother Superior to her young companion, "your timidity is groundless. Hardly a score of people have come; everybody is flocking to the cathedral. Do, then, play the organ. You are among friends only. What can make you hesitate?"

"I am afraid," replied the young girl, shrinking back.

"Afraid? Holy Virgin! Of what?"

"Mother, I know not. Of something supernatural. Last night I heard you say you wished me to play at Mass to-night; and, proud of the honour, I thought I would go into the church and practise a little, so as to get accustomed to the instrument. It was dusk when I came here, and not a soul was in the place. Far away, like a star shining on a dark night, burned the lights of the high altar. By those lights I saw—Mother, I am speaking the truth, and nothing but the truth—I saw a

figure seated before the organ. He sat with his back turned towards me, and began to play the most wondrous strains mortal ears ever listened to. Suddenly he moved. I was going to say that he looked at me. That he could not do, for he was blind. It was—it was my father!"

"Bah, Sister! away with such fancies—mere temptings of the Evil One! Say a Paternoster, an Ave or two to St. Michael, leader of the angelic hosts, and he will drive away the bad spirits. Here, put my own rosary round your neck—it has just this moment touched the reliquary of St. Pacome—and go to your place, fearing nothing. See, the hour has struck; the faithful await the elevation. Be sure your sainted father will look down and bless his child upon this solemn anniversary."

The Mother Superior now took her seat among the nuns. The trembling girl, daring no longer to disobey, rose, slowly opened the door of the little staircase, and climbed to the organ-loft.

The service began, and nothing unusual occurred till the consecration of the Host. Then the organ pealed forth a glorious strain, above which rose a piercing cry. The Mother Superior, followed by the nuns and some of the congregation, hastened up the staircase.

"Look at him—my father!" cried the girl, pointing with trembling fingers to the seat she had just quitted.

Nothing was seen; but still the organ continued to give out the same wonderful melodies of former Christmas Eves. No visible fingers touched the keys. The musician's stool was empty.

It is in the weird and the supernatural that Becquer revels. The horrible exercises a spell over him also, although he softens it with a play of fancy and poetic colour. A striking little story is "The Haunted Mountain." A joyous cavalcade of cavaliers and high-born ladies who have been hunting and have allowed night to steal on, are suddenly bidden by their leader to hasten home.

"Leash the dogs, blow the horn, let us be off and away," he cried. "It is All Saints' Eve, and we are on the haunted mountain!"

"The haunted mountain, what may that mean?" asked Beatrice of her cousin, Alonzo, as the handsome, high-born pair, superbly mounted, rode towards the town.

Alonzo explained how, in former days,

the Knights Templars had a monastery on the spot mentioned, a territory wrested from the Moors and made over to these soldier monks by the King, to be defended by them against aggressors. This measure gave great umbrage to the Hidalgos of the neighbourhood, between whom and the new-comers arose war to the knife. Under pretext of a monster hunt, both parties prepared for a final trial of strength, the result being a downright battle. The mountain was covered with the slain, and so fearful was the slaughter that the monastery was vacated by Royal order. Both cloisters and chapel became a mere heap of ruins, and the entire region was deserted — by the living! Not by the dead. From that time, when All Saints' Eve comes round, a phantasmal hunt takes place on the mountain. The ghostly huntsmen glide hither and thither, the affrighted stags utter cries, the wolves howl; next day footprints of skeleton feet are seen in the snow.

Such was the story told in careless tones by the young man to his cousin, one of those imperious beauties, only capable of measuring devotion by the power thereby acquired over the adorer.

Alonzo loved Beatrice, but felt that his cause was hopeless. As the two talked together that evening after the banquet, he hesitatingly begged her acceptance of a jewel. It is the custom on All Saints' Eve to exchange gifts. And she had noticed this jewel fastening the plume to his hat.

"I foresee what will happen!" he added, sadly. "We shall soon be separated. The life of a Court, already familiar to you, will entice you from us. Do take this keepsake, and give me one in return."

"Why not?" replied the girl, with a strange, cruel glitter in her eyes. "You remember the blue scarf I wore at the hunt to-day? I intended to give it to you, but now it is lost."

"Lost! and where?" cried the lover, overjoyed at this apparent sign of interest and affection.

His looks told her he would go to the world's end in search of her scarf.

"I lost it somewhere on the mountain," was the reply.

"On the haunted mountain?" Alonzo murmured, turning pale, and sinking back into his chair.

"Listen," he continued. "You know well enough that I am a fearless hunter; no one has ever seen me turn my back upon

peril of any kind. Were it any other night of the year, I would hasten to the mountain in search of your gift. But to-night — Why hide it from you? I am afraid. There are sights there on All Saints' Eve that curdle the blood of the doughtiest, that blanch the hair as he gazes, that turn the living into shapes of terror —"

He paused, his cousin's look had startled him. A contemptuous smile played on her lips. As she rose to stir the fire, she laughed derisively.

"Darkness, wolves, ghosts! To look for my sash under such circumstances. The thing, of course, is not to be thought of!"

Those mocking words were hardly uttered ere Alonzo's resolution was taken. Rising hastily, with a hurried word of adieu, paying no heed to her lukewarm remonstrances, he hastened away. A few minutes later, she heard the sound of horse's feet on the courtyard. He had ridden off in the direction of the mountain.

Bitterly, of course, was the heartless coquette to rue her wicked caprice. The Knight never returned; but the first object on which Beatrice's eyes lighted at dawn was her scarf. Stained with blood it lay there, brought back by ghostly hands in the dead of night. Next day his body, the prey of wolves, was found amid the scenes of yesterday's merry hunt.

It is pleasant to turn from these grim stories to the graceful, quiet "Letters from my Cell." Here he gives us delightful descriptions of rural life and scenery, with dissertations, always interesting, and original, on books and passing events. A fascinating volume of selections, both in prose and poetry, might be made from the works of this gifted author.

THE BACHELORS' BALL.

ONE of the leading events of the social year in my town is the Bachelors' Ball. The Benedicts, too, have a ball the following week. But though quite as much money is spent at their ball, it does not win the hearts of the ladies like the Bachelors' Ball. The "belle" at the Benedicts' does not take rank like the "belle" at the Bachelors'.

Another thing. The Benedicts have an absurd craze for masquerading. Of late, all their "hops" have been in fancy

costume. Now, undeniably, this has a pretty effect, if you view the proceedings as a whole from the minstrel gallery of the ball-room. It is a great thing to see the costumes of our ancestors, from William the Conqueror to the time of the battle of Waterloo, strutting about like animated figures from old canvases. There is also an immense amount of absurdity in the scene. Mr. So-and-So, dressed to represent a carrot, has a good deal of a tender kind to whisper in the ears of pretty Alice This-and-That, whose ambitious mother has set her up as Mary Queen of Scots. Obviously the Queen cannot take the addresses of a carrot in a very serious sense, which, like enough, sooner or later piques Mr. Carrot, and sends him sulkily towards the card-room. There are a hundred such entertaining little episodes on the Benedicts' evening. If you are behind the scenes, and know, moreover, how one masque stands towards another masque, you are sure of a vast deal of fun even as a spectator.

The Bachelors', on the other hand, is a grave affair. There's no disguising the fact, locally, that a number of marriages every year are the direct outcome of it. The "belle" of the Benedicts' may owe much of her reputation to her gown, and her mamma's audacity in making her—for her profit—personate some lady of old time who was remarkable for her loveliness. The world is uncommonly soft. If a man tells it over and over again that he is so astonishingly honest that he may safely be trusted with anything, it is odd if the world does not by-and-by show exceeding confidence in him—until the trust is abominably abused. Similarly, if a girl goes forth into the midst of the men of our town in an attire that says, as plainly as silks and satins can speak, "I well befit the pretty maid who has the courage to wear me," ten to one, ere the evening is out, half the men in the ball-room agree with the gown's boast.

This, I repeat, is all very well at the Benedicts'. But at the Bachelors' we are vastly more critical. Each girl stands distinctly on her own merits here. She is just what Nature has made her. Her pretty face, her round, white shoulders, her adorable hair, her shapely arm, her incomparable figure, or her dainty ankles, cannot be dissembled.

As a rule, the Bachelors' Ball is discussed about three hundred and sixty-four days ere it takes place. In other words,

no sooner is the ball of one year over, than the girls wonder if they have any chance of being reckoned the "belle" at the next-one.

It is considered alightly bad form in the "belle" to repeat herself in a single state at a second Bachelors'. She has enjoyed her fame; out of question she has received offers of marriage from five or six ardent youths of tender years, whose moustaches have just gained bulk enough to be coaxed into a tender upward curl; it is more than probable that she has also listened to the more sober, and much more interesting, proposals of two or three eligible young men of position or promise. What more, ask the other maids, can she want? Let her take a husband, and leave the field open to others.

Now, this is very reasonable. Nevertheless, it does not always satisfy the "belle." She may have been raised to the enviable dignity at her first appearance in the ball-room—in her seventeenth or eighteenth year. In that case—as her mamma assures the other mammas of the town—it would be suicidal of the poor child to sacrifice the fairest days of the spring time of her life upon the exacting altar of matrimony. Mamma, who is possibly ambitious, or too censorious towards the young men who assemble at the small feet of her daughter and breathe the incense of their sighs towards her winsome face, has then no notion of having her lovely child shelved out of the way of Bachelors' Balls of the future. She schemes untiringly to secure the goodwill of the other mammas of the town. They are implored to consider how young dear Blanche or Florence has the misfortune to be. And, on the other hand, they are tranquillised by the oblique assurance—with such deep glances as none but mothers in communion may indulge in—that the sweet girl will, please Heaven, be married to a good and opulent young man long ere yet another Bachelors' Ball takes place.

It is hard upon the other girls when their charms are thus shadowed a second time by the irresistible Blanche; but they are by no means, therefore, deterred from behaving as prettily as possible to the young men, their partners in the dance. And they have always this curiously grim hope in their hearts: that the much-admired Blanche of one year may, in the course of the ensuing twelve months, have developed some oddity of manner or defect of personal appearance, which will act as a

bar to her pretensions in the esteem of the gallant youths, from whose judgement there is no appeal.

In the old days a ball in the country was as different from a London ball as a raw beef-steak from a cooked one. The metropolitan spark condescended to the rustic ball-room, which he honoured with his exquisite presence, solely in the wicked hope that he might break a few female hearts across his elegant knees. He had not a doubt about his superiority—in dress, manners, and everything else, except morals—over the other men at the ball. He had as little doubt that he should find the ladies perfectly amenable to his flatteries and snares, even though the former were ever so gross and the latter ever so transparent. He reckoned them all as so many hoydens, who would pipe, sing, or caper in accordance with his own imperious whims.

Really it was worth while being a young blood in the time of our greatgrandaires, four or five generations back. Their impudence was quite loveable. To recur to our earlier parallel: they were so convinced of their own excellence as human types, that they ended by playing the part they assumed so as to make others think them what they claimed to be. The consequence was that they were adored in the country much as a recognised new incarnation of Buddha is adored by the devout Buddhists of the East. They lived a gay, perhaps even a happy life in town, and at the worst, when their pockets were empty, or, their figure and face no longer sufficiently *comme il faut* for the exacting metropolitan atmosphere, they could fall back upon some rustic centre famous for its pretty girls with pretty fortunes, and simply help themselves to the best that was to be had. They were sad rogues at heart, it is to be feared; but they took extreme care not to wear their hearts upon their sleeves.

In these days of the daily press, telegraphy, and all the other inventions which conjoin to put men and women upon one level, it is by no means so. Your country "belle" is likely to be fully as well informed and modish as the average frequenter of London ball-rooms. She takes a man's measure quite as keenly as her metropolitan sister, and will keep him at a distance, or trifle with his civilities, just as she pleases.

This gives a relish to our country balls that they had not before, though of course it also deprives us of much of the piquant

glamour that in the old days attended upon the charming naiveness of the rustic fair ones.

Indeed, perhaps the modern "tone" of women in their public intercourse with men may be perceived better in the country than in the town. There is less finish in the manner, it may be; and therefore the framework is the more visible. Thus the manishness of Miss Stafford or Miss Warwick at the Bachelors' may, to some, seem to be carried to a point that positively repels. Both the girls are pretty enough to be able to afford themselves this eccentric luxury of manner. Otherwise they would make themselves intolerably ridiculous, and none of us men would strive to keep our countenances in their company. It is the same in the other attributes which the last decade or two have thrust upon our girls. If your partner has any tendency to be intellectually clever, she will push her gift as far as it will go. Either she will astound you by whispering that those sweet little verses on "The caterpillar in the thornbush" which appeared in the corner of one page of the "Weekly Chronicle" are from her own brain; or she will tell to you without a blush the plot of a three volume novel, the inception of which will take place the next day, or at latest the day after. Last year one of the writer's partners, a sylphine little thing of eighteen or nineteen, with large blue eyes, pathetic with unutterable yearning, even went so far along the byway of bad taste as to ask him a question about a Greek reading between the dances.

Anything quite so bizarre as this would not be suffered in a London ball-room. We are, in so far, even more advanced than our friends of the world's capital.

But to recur more peculiarly to the Bachelors' Ball. Though the guests in all number between three and four hundred, it is not so easy for an outsider to get a dance worth remembering as it might seem to be. The management is of course in the hands of a committee of the Bachelors' themselves. The tickets of entrance proceed exclusively from the contributing Bachelors, the number of whom is strictly limited. These happy fellows, a month or two before the great day, are courted and caressed by the ladies in a manner that would turn their heads if they had not sufficient wit and knowledge of human nature to realise that it was all the outcome of cupboard-love. They control the situation. Only the girls whom they

favour with their regard are likely to secure the coveted invitations.

At such a time one smells plots and schemes in the air of every house which contains a certain number of marriageable young ladies whose interests are in the keeping of a discreet mamma. If the master of the house, or the girl's brothers have no friends at court—that is, among the beloved Bachelors—the lady of the house will not allow herself to be balked of her purpose by any ordinary obstacle. She knows or ascertains the idiosyncrasies of the two or three "Bachelors" most accessible to her. If they sing she arranges a musical evening for their especial enjoyment. If they like innocent flirtation, it is as easy as A B C to tell off Isabel or Louise, or this or that other daughter for their entertainment. The girl may go all lengths, so she does not commit herself to an engagement; and this, too, she may of course consummate if the youth be eligible.

None but they who know the full capacity for intrigue of the female soul can imagine the arch wiles and lures by which the precious emblazoned ticket of invitation is at length obtained. But obtained it is; and thus one or two of the girls have their chance of the year.

When the desirable day arrives, the ball-room really has a sufficiently fascinating appearance. The first upholsterer of the town, aided by the first landscape gardener and the first confectioner, have worked wonders in the hall, which serves upon common occasions for the assemblage of the farmers of the district for the sale of their wheat and oats. The supper tables are spread in one of the galleries; and in the other the musicians, with their harps and violins, take up a prominent position.

The senior bachelor of the society has the somewhat questionable privilege of distinguishing himself by opening the first dance, with the lady of our local county member. Still, some one must fill the gap; and he may as well advertise his years as another. And so, with a lively flourish, the ball begins.

The county member, our municipal members, and the more portly of our local magnates—all "Bachelors" in their day—if they do not dance once or twice in a way—as a matter of form, not for diversion—betake themselves, with as little delay as is seemly, to the card-room. Here they soon get so absorbed with their whist, at half-a-crown points, that they do not

scruple by-and-by—the barbarians—to growl at the noise of the continuous scraping of feet on the ball-room floor. They think the rest of us a coterie of imbeciles, and we are hardly more charitable in our estimate of them.

I do not suppose that our conversation at the Bachelors' is more remarkable for its sparkle than ball-room talk elsewhere. One is not here to exercise one's understanding, but to dance, and admire the ladies, and exchange greetings with as many bright eyes as possible. Still, there is one subject that is eternally to the fore. It comes up with each new partner, and is not finally tabooed and abandoned until we are in the last, the very last, waltz, at four o'clock in the morning—"Who is the 'belle'?" that is the question.

Now, for my part, I find infinite pastime in mooted this somewhat tough problem with my partners. Of course, tact is necessary, or it will happen that you offend the fair creature upon your arm, or in your arms. It will never do to assume point-blank that she herself has no claim to the honour. Rather, it is perhaps judicious to make her, in such case a good—nay, a certain second, if you are in extreme doubt about her right to premier honours. This will, at least, gain her good-will, and induce her to open the battery of her criticism upon the girl who is really the beauty of the evening.

"But," she protests, perhaps, "you surely don't mean to say you admire a girl with a foot so large as hers?"

You admit that you have not noticed her feet; though you do not say further that her face is so absorbing that you care to look no lower.

"Besides," continues your companion, "though she has a taking manner, and such a simple look, I assure you she is not one of those girls in whose mouths butter would not melt, as the saying goes. She is reckoned rather bitter at home."

"Yes? Well, spirit is no such bad endowment, if it doesn't go too far."

"And her governess pronounces her an arrant dunce. Really, Mr. Prettyboy, I don't think, upon the whole, I admire your taste."

The rejoinders of your other partners are all on the same plane. Perhaps they fish deliberately for the compliment which is so visibly impending over their own sweet heads. And, whether this be or be not so, you must be a perfect Goth if you do not give them their heart's desire, and

so bow them into the hands of your successor considerably happier than they were when you received them from your predecessor.

The worst of these semi-public balls is the occasional dangers with which you are menaced by the negligence or inefficiency of the workmen who have been employed to embellish the room.

At one time, a nail was left in the floor, and it played some cruel pranks with us ere it was discovered and eradicated.

At another time, what must the senseless florist—entrusted with the decorative part of the room—do but give the leaves of certain rather sickly shrubs a coat of green paint. This, of itself, would not have been serious, had the assistants not used the plants with the artificial complexion to form a certain little bower, which was obviously intended for the sweet intercourse of soul with soul. It was certainly too bad that the confiding maid who allowed herself to be seduced into this sequestered little nook, should go forth again into the world with smudges of green paint on her dainty gown.

Such errors of management as these may be trivial; but they are not the less discreditable. I may safely add, however, that they are blemishes which will never occur again. We have been accused of contriving an accident, now and then, solely that we may have opportunity of playing the hero. But this is absurd. As if there could be anything heroic in the act of wiping a lady's gown, lifting her to her feet after a misfortune, or rushing to relieve her and several others from the avalanche of flags and banners which, by the snapping of a string, have fallen in a body from the rafters overhead.

The true test of the success of the ball is shown by the eagerness of the mammas, as I have said, to procure for their daughters a share in it. The mother, whose daughter has for three or four hours been the cynosure of three hundred pair of eyes, is a happy woman when the frolic is at an end. You see, it is an agreeable reflection upon her bringing up of the child; and also, perhaps, of the beauty which distinguished her when she was no older than her daughter of to-day. The girl herself is sure to be exalted high in the domestic esteem from that day forwards. What does it matter if her papa churlishly complains about the expensiveness of her frocks since the ball? What can he know about the delicate business in which his

wife is engaged? And further, strange to say, he is so dull of wit that, even when the news is whispered to him that pretty Bella has had an offer which it would be madness to refuse, even then he is not contented. He may not like the bills of Bella's dressmaker; but he likes to see Bella's face within smiling distance of him.

But both Bella and her mamma know better. They know that the Bachelors' Ball has done its work for them, and they are satisfied.

THROUGH FIRE AND WATER.

THE origin of the phrase "through fire and water," as in a friend's emphatic assurance that he will go through those two elements to serve you, is to be referred, no doubt, to the old custom of Ordeals. And it is from those mediæval forms of trial and justification that we have borrowed the figurative expressions—an ordeal of affliction, an ordeal of criticism, an ordeal of adversity. There is much in their origin and history that is both interesting and important, so that a brief survey of them may not prove unacceptable to the reader.

They were of two kinds—by fire and by water. With the former we shall do right, perhaps, to connect the idea of purification; with the latter, that of cleansing. Both date from a remote antiquity. Thus, the ordeal of cold water, "*aquæ frigidæ judicium*," was known to the Hebrews, who compelled suspected wives to drink of the "waters of jealousy," just as some African tribes, to this day, administer to their better halves, under a similar cloud, the "red water." In another form it was used by the Greeks. At Palike, in Sicily, was a fountain, into the waters of which the accused person threw a tablet, on which he had inscribed his oath of innocence. If the tablet floated, he was safe; if it sank, he came to grief. In the case of a woman, the tablet was suspended to her neck, and she advanced into the water knee-deep. If it preserved its usual level she was acquitted; if, rising to her throat, it touched the tablet, she was condemned.

The mediæval ordeal, which was mainly confined in practice to the "lower classes," consisted in throwing the supposed offender into a pond or tank with his right hand tied to his left foot, and his left hand to his right foot. If he floated, his guilt was

assumed to be established; if he sank, he was innocent, and was dragged out by a rope tied to his middle. As the pond or tank was usually twelve feet deep, and filled to the brim, the test in either event was sufficiently disagreeable. In later times, it was applied to persons accused of witchcraft; and a belief in its efficacy long lingered in rural districts. An instance occurred at Castle Hedingham, in Essex, as late as September the fourth, 1863, when the victim, a poor old woman, perished.

A ninth century manuscript, quoted by the learned Mabillon, erroneously attributes the introduction of this form of ordeal to Pope Eugenius the Second. What he really did was to sanction its employment, which his predecessors in St. Peter's chair had refused to do. The same manuscript describes the ceremonial as practised at the Abbey of Reims. The monks chanted a mass, at which the accused were present, and communicated, after the mass-priest had solemnly conjured them not to receive the Body of their Lord if they were guilty. In communicating them, he said:

"May this Body and this Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ save you to-day in your trial."

After exorcising the water into which they were to be plunged, he lowered them into it with his own hands, praying that it might reject them if they were guilty.

The Council of the Church, which met at Worms in 829, under the presidency of Louis the Debonnair, vainly prohibited the employment of this ordeal. The imperial prohibition was openly disregarded; and Hincmar, a celebrated ecclesiastic of that age, when counselled by Bishop Hildegard, of Meaux, endeavoured to justify it by a subtlety of reasoning which, in the present day, would have been worthy of a theurgic expert or a theosophist.

Guibert de Nogent tells a curious story of two brothers, Everard and Clement, who, having been denounced as heretics, were brought before the Bishop of Soissons, and subjected to a rigorous examination. As nothing in their answers inculpated them, "I said to the Bishop," continues Guibert, "that, since the witnesses were absent who had heard the accused make profession of their impious dogmas, he should submit the latter to the water-ordeal. The prelate then celebrated mass, after which he and Peter, the archdeacon—a man of the purest faith, who had rejected all the bribes they had offered him to screen them from being

put on their trial—repaired to the spot where the water had been got ready. The Bishop, with tears rolling down his cheeks, intoned the litanies and pronounced the exorcism. The two brothers then took a solemn oath that never had they believed or taught anything contrary to the Christian faith. However, as soon as Clement was dropped into the water, he swam as a twig or a spray might have done; whereas the whole church resounded with cries of joy from the vast multitude whom the occasion had brought together. Then Everard confessed his guilt; but, as he refused to do penance, he was thrown into prison along with his brother, whom the judgement of God had convicted. Some time after, the faithful, apprehending that the clergy might show too much lenity, surrounded the prison, seized upon the heretics, lighted a fire outside the town, and gave them to the flames."

So much for freedom of thought in the good old times. He who indulged in it had to go through fire and water!

Down to 1601 this cruel ordeal continued to be employed in France, though, latterly, only in cases of witchcraft. In 1601 it was abolished by a decree of the Parliament of Paris.

The Hot Water Ordeal (*aquis ferventis judicium*), consisted in plunging the arm, or hand, into a boiling caldron, and taking out a consecrated ring, stone, or piece of iron, suspended in it at a greater or less depth, in proportion to the gravity of the accused person's offence. If the arm or hand showed no trace of scalding, the innocence of the accused was established.

The following story comes from Gregory of Tours:

Two priests, the one an Arian, the other a sound Catholic, fall into a pretty little controversy. At length, Orthodoxy says to Heterodoxy: "What is the use of all this talk? Let us come to deeds! We will set on the fire a brazen vessel; we will throw into it a ring; he who extracts the ring from the boiling water shall be esteemed the victor, and the defeated shall embrace his creed, thus convincingly shown to be the true one." Agreed. The next day is appointed for this new theological test. Night brings wisdom. Orthodoxy rises before dawn, rubs his arm with oil, and plasters it with an unguent. At the appointed hour the two adversaries meet in the public place; the people gather in crowds; a fire is kindled; a caldron placed over it, and a ring thrown

into the bubbling liquid. Orthodoxy invites Heterodoxy to fish for it; but no. Orthodoxy made the proposal, and must be the first to carry it out. Tremblingly the good priest bares his arm; the Arian detects the precautions it has undergone, and exclaims: "This is cheating, and will never do!" By chance, a priest of Ravenna, named Hyacinthe, comes on the scene, and being informed of the cause of the uproar, throws back his sleeve, and, without a moment's hesitation, plunges his arm into the caldron. As the ring is thin and small, it slips about with every movement of the water, which is kept at boiling-point all the time; so that it takes Father Hyacinthe an hour to get hold of it. But there is no scar, not even any redness, on his skin; and he declares that the water was quite cold at the bottom, and only moderately warm at or near the surface. At this result Heterodoxy is emboldened to follow suit; but, alas! with a yell, draws back his arm immediately—scalded to the very bone.

In this way was Orthodoxy justified, and Heterodoxy put to shame.

Theutberga, the infamous Queen of Lothair the Second, successfully submitted herself to this ordeal in 859. Not that her success was a proof of her innocence—it simply showed that she had some clever accomplices.

The trial by hot iron—"ferrum candens"—appears to have been of as ancient an origin as the cold water ordeal; for, in the "Antigone" of Sophocles, the soldier, who comes to inform Olen that the body of Polyrius has been recovered, exclaims:

"We were all prepared to handle the burning iron, or pass through the fire, to attest before the gods that we were neither guilty of the crime nor accomplices of him who planned and executed it."

The hot iron ordeal was performed in various ways: 1. The accused walked bare-footed over red-hot ploughshares, or iron bars. 2. Or, thrust his hand into a red-hot iron gauntlet. 3. Or, carried in his hand a piece of glowing iron nine times the length of his foot. The hand or foot was immediately bound up and sealed until the third day, when, according to its appearance, the guilt or innocence of the accused was determined.

How a trial so severe as this could ever have been borne successfully it is difficult to conjecture. We are forced to believe that collusion existed between the accused and the officials charged with the proceed-

ings. Either the iron was incandescent only in appearance, or, the hand was fortified against the heat by some chemical preparation, and the three days' interval would allow for any slight inconvenience to wear off. This is the explanation given by Planck, Soames, and Hallam; and I conceive it would apply to such a case as the following. Richard, Duke of Normandy, had two sons—Richard and William—by a low-born beauty, who, when they had grown up, presented them to their father, that he might recognize them. Perceiving that he hesitated—notwithstanding the proofs which she brought forward—she publicly carried in her hand a bar of red-hot iron, and, as she received no injury, her veracity was considered to be established beyond doubt.

Various religious ceremonies were attached to this ordeal, as to the less onerous trials previously described. There was much fasting and prayer; the Eucharist was administered; a solemn oath of innocence was taken; the mass was attended for three days consecutively.

The accused, if a man of rank or wealth, was permitted to find a substitute. Matthew Paris relates that, when Remy, Bishop of Dorchester, was accused of treason towards our Norman William, one of his servants offered to undergo the ordeal of hot iron, and thus saved his master.

When Louis, son of Louis le Germanique, took up arms against his uncle, the Emperor Charles the Bald, in 876, he subjected—in the presence of his partisans—ten men to the cold water ordeal, ten men to the hot water ordeal, and ten men to the ordeal of hot iron; all of them imploring Heaven to declare by its judgment whether Louis ought not, by right, to have a larger share of the territories left by his father, than that which had fallen to him when the partition had previously been made with his brother Charles. They bore the ordeals triumphantly, and Louis immediately crossed the Rhine with his army at Andernache.

The ordeal of fire—which consisted in passing through a pile of blazing wood—though of comparatively rare occurrence, dated from a remote antiquity. We have seen a reference to it in the passage from Sophocles already cited; and the reader needs not to be reminded of the miraculous deliverance of the Three Children—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—from "the burning, fiery furnace," as recorded in the Book of Daniel, chapter iii.

In the ninth century, Gottschalk, the great German heresiarch, who taught the doctrine of two-fold predestination, publicly professed his desire to testify to the truth of his opinions by plunging successively into four cauldrons of boiling water, oil, fat, and pitch, and, lastly, by walking through a blazing fire.

One of the so-called miracles of the period of the First Crusade, was the pretended discovery of the Holy Lance—that is, the lance or spear with which the Roman soldier pierced our Lord's side, as He hung on His cross—during the siege of Antioch, in 1097, by an obscure Mar-seilles priest, Peter Barthelemy. After the first excitement was over, sceptical tongues boldly asserted that he had found the lance because he had originally hidden it. The spirit of incredulity rapidly spread, and to prove his veracity, the monk was compelled to appeal to the judgement of God. On the day appointed, a pile of dry faggots, four feet high and fourteen feet long, was raised in the middle of the camp. It was divided into two parts by a perilous pathway of twelve inches. The Crusaders—Princes and people—assembled to the number of forty thousand; and the clergy assisted, with bare feet, and clothed in their sacerdotal vestments. The Bishops having solemnly blessed the pile, the flames of which shot up to an elevation of thirty cubits, the unhappy impostor traversed the blazing mass with speed and dexterity; but the intense heat scorched his thighs and belly, and he died in agony twelve days afterwards.

During the Hussite controversy at the Council of Basel, in 1433, John of Palomar, disputing with one of the Hussites, offered to vindicate the orthodoxy of his creed, "probatione ignis," by the fiery ordeal; but the offer was declined.

The last occasion on which we read of it is during the fierce struggle between the Florentine reformer, Girolamo Savonarola, and the old Catholic party represented by the Franciscans. Effective use has been made of the incident by George Eliot, in her noble romance of "Romola;" but our brief narrative will of course be restricted to authentic historical particulars. Fra Dominico, one of the most enthusiastic of Savonarola's disciples, having openly declared his readiness to support his master's opinions by the ordeal of fire, the reformer's enemies eagerly seized upon it as a means of involving him in disgrace and defeat, and put forward as the orthodox

champion a Franciscan monk, named Guiliamo Rondinelli. Savonarola at first exerted himself strenuously against it. He did not believe that any living creature could pass through the fire unscathed; and in Fra Dominico's failure was involved, as he plainly saw, the failure of his great schemes for the regeneration of the Church. The zeal of his followers overcame, however, his resistance; and at length the ceremony was appointed for April the seventh. The place chosen was the Piazza della Signoria, where, on a platform sixty feet long and eight feet wide, and divided by a central passage of three feet, was raised a pile of fuel, with tar, rags, and other combustible material. It was arranged that, to begin with, the mass should be lighted only at one end, that the two champions should enter at the other, and that that end should then be lighted behind them.

On the morning of the seventh, the friars of San Marco, Savonarola's convent, formed in procession, led by Fra Dominico, who, wearing a flame-coloured cope, and carrying a tall crucifix, advanced between two of his brethren, with head erect and countenance serene. Behind him, in the white robe of a priest, marched Savonarola, holding in his hands a vessel containing the consecrated Host; and then followed upwards of two hundred monks, clothed in the Dominican habit, and chanting in deep tones the exultant Psalm: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." They reached the Piazza about half-an-hour after noon, and passing through the barricaded entrance two by two, took up their stations in that half of the loggia which had been allotted to them, the other half being occupied by the Franciscans. An immense multitude filled all the open space. Since early morn there had been a gradual swarming of the people at every coign of vantage offered by the façades and roofs of the houses, and such parts of the pavement as were accessible. Men were seated on iron rods, which made a sharp angle with the rising wall; were clatching thin pillars with arms and legs; were straddling the necks of the rough statuary that here and there surmounted the entrances of the larger houses; were finding a palm's breadth of seat on a tiny architrave, and a footing on the rough projections of the rustic stone-work, while they clutched the stout iron rings or staples driven into the walls beside them.

But where was the Franciscan champion?

As a matter of fact, the Franciscans never intended to immolate their champion; but, at the same time, their object was to represent the failure of the ordeal as due to the reluctance of Savonarola and his representatives. To gain time, they pretended that Fra Dominico's cope was enchanted, and insisted that he should remove it. While declaring his disbelief in incantations, Savonarola consented to their demand. They next refused to allow the Dominican to enter the pile with his crucifix, alleging that it would be profaned. To this objection Savonarola also yielded; but Dominico then said that he would hold the consecrated Host. The Franciscans immediately raised a fresh clamour. It was impious to carry the Sacrament into the fire. Did he wish to burn it? He contended, supported by Savonarola, that even if it were burned, only the accidents would be consumed; the substance would remain intact. Here was a nice theological distinction, warranted to supply material for almost any amount of discussion; and the two parties plunged into it with the utmost goodwill; while the crowd, weary with long waiting, began to murmur angrily. Reports got abroad which attributed the interruption of the spectacle to Savonarola, and voices were heard to enquire why he himself did not enter the fire, and prove beyond a doubt his miraculous power. The afternoon drew on apace; the clouds increased in density; the air turned cooler; and still the theological argument dragged its weary length along. Neither side would give way; and, profiting by the circumstance, which had probably been anticipated, the magistrates issued an order that the proposed fiery trial should not take place. The order was emphasized by a storm of rain which broke over the city, and drove the disappointed multitude to their homes.

Another ordeal was that of the "corned" (either from *corse*, *curse*, or *cor*, trial, and *maed*, a mouthful), or eating a cake, which the accused person, if guilty, would be unable, it was thought, to swallow. When Earl Godwin was feasting at Windsor, in 1052, with Edward the Confessor, the King, in the course of a warm debate, accused his powerful subject of having been accessory to the death of his brother Alfred. The Earl sprang to his feet to protest his innocence, and fell speechless to the ground. Some authorities affirm that he had re-

sorted to the corned in self-vindication, and, the bread choking him, fell a victim to the judgement of Heaven.

The ordeal of fire was occasionally employed to determine the orthodoxy or authenticity of certain writings. The Spanish ecclesiastics being divided in opinion as to the adoption of the Mozarabic or Roman liturgy, they agreed, after long and fruitless debate, to consign both to the flames, and to accept the one which survived the trial. It proved to be the Roman.

In 1284, recourse was had to this ordeal at Constantinople. The followers of Arsenius, the great Byzantine patriarch, for nearly half a century rent in twain the Greek Church. At length it was settled between the Arsenites and their adversaries that each should set down in writing a summary of its case, that the two statements should be exposed to the flames, and that if either escaped intact, it should be regarded as sanctioned by Divine Providence; but that if both were destroyed, the peace of the Church should be restored. The Emperor, Andronicus the Second, liberally defrayed the cost of the brazier, and would have exhausted the treasures of his empire to have reconciled the two factions. In his presence, and that of his Court, the fire was kindled, and two venerable personages deposited the rival documents in the flames. To the mortification of the ecclesiastical combatants, both were burnt to a cinder, and they were, therefore, compelled to keep the peace for a time.

In the ordeal of the Cross, "*crucis judicium*," which is supposed to have been of heathen origin, the accused person or his proxy held up the right arm, or both arms; psalms were sung during the trial, and the movement or lowering of the arms was considered an evidence of guilt. It was abolished by Louis the Pious, in 819, at the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, as "compromising the respect which men owe to the Passion of Christ."

BUSINESS SIGNS.

NOWADAYS, signboards are the outward tokens of the licensed victualler; but in former times they were the necessary appendages to all trades and occupations. They were the municipal landmarks, of old, to the postman, trader, or traveller.

Many of these commercial finger-posts had a strange origin. Some were the

armorial bearings of defunct nobility, adopted by a faithful henchman, as a sign of respect; others illustrated phases of Church history; and, not a few, misapplications of Holy Writ. Some of the most noted artists were employed to paint them, and frequently, with their iron supports, they cost several hundreds of pounds. The most costly signs were exhibited in Ludgate Hill and its immediate neighbourhood. Owing to the inordinate extent of their use, signboards were abolished in the City of London in the eighteenth century, and the custom of painting name and business or the shop front adopted.

These libelli, at times, displayed much incongruity in their formation, viz.: A Hare and Three Women; a Padlock and Anchor. The first indicating swiftness of despatch and carefulness in business, and the second declaring goods bought were firm in quality and the trader hoped for future custom.

One may account for this mixture in the following manner. Young men, on starting in business, usually added their late employer's sign to their own. Certain signs were common to various trades: drapers choosing the golden fleece, or holy lamb, and in some cases, the Virgin's head; fishmongers, St. Peter and three fishes; goldsmiths, the head of Dunstan; and smiths in general, Dunstan hammering the devil's nose on his anvil; cutlers hung out a stag or a likeness of St. Nicholas. Besides these certain tokens, tradesmen displayed the article of commerce they sold: the tin-smith, a dustpan; saddler, a whip or horse-collar; the fruiterer, various fruits, etc. Personal fancies, or other circumstances, were the cause of many peculiar emblems being displayed. Writers spoke of them, and painters, at times, placed them in their pictures.

Addison, in the "Spectator," writes of a perfumer having a goat's head as a sign; and a cutler, the French King's head.

Another writer, of the Stuart period, in his description of London, refers to a sign at Fleet Bridge representing "Nineveh, with Jonah and the whale."

Hogarth, in his plates of "Industry and Idleness," represents the sign of the drapers, West and Goodchild, as a lion rampant, with a cornucopia on either side. In that of "Noon," the cookshop is portrayed by the Baptist's head; and in the plate of "Night," of the like series, the barber's sign is not only a pole, but, likewise, a hand, drawing a tooth from a

patient's head, which appears to be in exquisite pain; and underneath is the legend: "Shaving, Bleeding, and Teeth drawn with a touch. Ecce Signum."

Shakespeare designs to notice the prevailing custom of signs, as appears in the following quotation from the play of Richard the Third (Act iii., Scene 5):

Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen!
Only for saying he would make his son
Heir to the Crown; meaning indeed his house,
Which, by the sign thereof, was termed so.

But, of all symbols, none is so ancient as the barber's pole; few have caused so much antiquarian research. According to the "Athenian Oracle," the ancient Romans were so benefited by the first barber who came to their city, that they erected a statue to his memory. Anciently barbers acted in a dual capacity as hair-dressers and surgeons. In Rome they were wont to hang out, at the end of their poles, basins, that weary and wounded travellers might observe them at a distance. The parti-coloured staff is said to indicate that surgery was carried on within, the colour stripe representing the fillet elegantly entwined round the patient's arm whilst he was phlebotomised. An illuminated missal, of the time of Edward the First, has a plate representing a patient, staff in hand and arm in fillet, undergoing phlebotomy.

Barbers proper, that is, hair-dressers, and barber-surgeons were distinguished by the colour of the bands on the poles; the former having a blue, and the latter, red. As far back as 1797, barbers and surgeons were compelled by statute to display their poles, the latter likewise affixing a gallipot and red rag at the end. The fabulist Gay, in his fable of the "Goat without a Beard," alluding to a barber's shop, speaks of the red rag pendent from the pole.

A sign common to oil shops was the "Good Woman," that is, a female minus the head, and is supposed to have been originally an oil-jar with a fanciful painting of a headless woman. This sign, minus the painting, is now exhibited by the modern oil-man, or, one should respectfully say, Italian warehouseman. Some antiquarians try and connect this with the story of Ali Baba; others, that woman is only good when her tongue is silenced.

The pawnbroker's sign, three balls—the crest, it is said, of the Medici, or the Lombardian money-lenders—is still common; jocularly said to betoken that it is two to one against the pledge being ever redeemed.

Ironmongers used, in many cases, to display a dog licking a porridge-pot.

Next to the sign of the barber, that of the chequers is the most ancient; such a sign being found in the ruins of Pompeii. Authorities differ as to its origin, some saying it denoted the game of "tables"—akin to draughts—was played within the hostel; others saying it referred to the table of the tax-collector, placed outside some central spot, where imposts were collected. From the diversity of colouring in the squares, it was sometimes corrupted into Red Lettuce, or Green Lattice. Writers in Elizabethan times often described an ale-house by the aforementioned name. Falstaff, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," says, "Your red-lettuce phrases." An old play has the following passage: "As well known by my wit as an ale-house by a red lettuce." The title of the "Green Lattice" was borne once by two public-houses, the one in Holborn, the other in Billingsgate, London. Another sign common to the licensed victualler was the "Ivy Bush," or "Bush;" hence the maxim, "Good wine needs no bush," as houses where good and wholesome beverages could be obtained needed no bush or sign. A writer in 1603 says, "Spied a bush at end of pole—the antient badge of an ale-house." A further quotation will show the generality of this sign in "Good Newes and Bad Newes." The host says:

I rather will take down my Bush and sign
Than live by means of riotous expense.

Publicans were not the only users of this emblem, but all persons displayed it on articles for sale, hence the fixing of a besom or birch-broom at the mast-head of a vessel on purchase. In Harris's "Drunkard's Cup" we meet with the following:

"If a house be not worth an ivie-bush, let him have his tooles about him; nutmegs, rosemary, tobacco, and other appurtenances, and he knows enough of puddle ale to make a cup of wine."

A wisp of straw was once the sign of an ale-house in Scotland and parts of England. In Staffordshire and Bucks, within the last fifty years, a bush was customarily hung at an ale-house door, or, as they are termed, "mug-houses" in the former, and "jerry-houses" in the latter. Prior to that period, beer-shops at provincial fairs and wakes displayed a green bunch, or branch, over the door.

The Rising Suns and Half-Moons are relics of paganism; the first representing Apollo, the second Diana. Butler, in his "Hudibras," makes mention of the lunar sign:

Tell me but what's the nat'ral cause,
Why on a sign no painter draws
The full moon ever but the half.

That some signs are heraldic, and doubtless adopted by the innkeeper as a compliment to his late master, is evident from the entry of a grant in the reign of Henry the Sixth: "Granted to John French or Frinsch Gintilman at that Ynne called 'Savage Ynne,' alias 'Bell on the Hoof.'"

In 1665, the Puritanical reformers had begun to change some of the pre-Reformation signs. Disliking such titles as the "Salutation of the Angel," or "Ynne of the Annunciation," "Katherine Wheel," "George and the Dragon," "Dunstan and the Devil;" they changed them into "Our Lady of the Shouldier and Citizen," the "Cat and Fiddle," "The Green Dragon," and the "Serpent."

A writer, ridiculing this public reformation, says: "They only want their Dragon to kill St. George and the Devil in the act of tweaking Dunstan's nose, and the reformation would be complete."

The strange sign, "In God is our Hope," was to be seen on the road between Cranford and Slough.

Various titles were adopted on account of the houses being the meeting-places of many guilds or companies. Foresters set up ale-houses called the "Green Man," the Vintners named their public's "The Swan with Two Nicks," corrupted into "The Swan with Two Necks," that being the badge of the company. The Archers adopted "The Bolt in Tun," the tun being used as a target, the bung acting as a bull's eye, the sign showing an arrow sticking in the bung-hole of a barrel.

An amusing title was "The Three Loggerheads," that is, two grotesque wooden heads with the legend "Here we Loggerheads three be," the reader making the third. What rebuke to legal profession was intended by the sign of "The Honest Lawyer," he being portrayed with his head under his arm to hinder him telling lies, we are not told; but the author had evidently at some time suffered at the hands of the limbs of the law.

At Keynsham, near Bath, one meets with the strange name of the "Lamb and Lark," intending we should go to

bed with the lamb, or rise with the lark. A wag has observed we should drink early, and finish likewise. The "Eagle and Child" refers to the rape of Ganymede—namely, the stealing of the hero by Jupiter.

A few were intended to be flattering to Royalty, as the "Bull and Gate," "Bull and Mouth," in compliment to Henry the Eighth, who took Boulogne in 1544; they were corruptions of the Gates of Boulogne, and the Harbour or Mouth of Boulogne. "Lamb and Flag" was the arms of the Knights Templars, and the crest of Catherine of Portugal. "Simon the Tanner," a name peculiar to public-houses in Bermondsey, where many tanners congregate.

A device, indicating the inexhaustible supply within, was the "Well and Bucket." "The Sun and Thirteen Cantons," symbolical of the States of Switzerland; "The Black Jack," from the custom of hanging an ancient leathern cup outside, so termed. "The Two Chairmen" calls back the days of the sedan chair.

In many country villages are to be found zoological signs, such as the "Pig and Whistle;" "Hog and Armour"—the rhinoceros; "The Gryphon, or Frilled Lizard"—a flying lizard; "Catherine Fidele," sometimes called "Cat and Fiddle;" "Goat and Compasses," a base rendering of the Puritanical "God encompasseth us."

Among the many rare tokens we find the "Blue Boar," "Oak and Saw," a family crest of an old South Bucks house; "The Case is Altered," in Watford, a toll-gate formerly occupying the site; "The Hand in Heart," or vice versâ, brings to mind the episode of Sir James Douglas, who, whilst fighting against the Moors in Spain, in heat of battle-fray flung the heart of Bruce before him—which he was carrying to Jerusalem—crying out:

Pass onward as thou wert wont,
Douglas will follow thee or die.

We close this paper with the unfamiliar sign of "The Talbot"—a species of ancient English hound—and "The Clapsed Hands," in the neighbourhood of the late Fleet Prison, this symbol pointing to a marriage-house within.

Modern custom of writing names on shop-fronts, advertising by bill-sticking, or pamphlets, or in newspapers, has swept the greater part of these now useless appendages away.

THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Count Paolo's Ring," "All Hallow's Eve," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR a moment, Paul caught his breath and stared at her in utter incredulity and surprise. The crowded room, the gay valse music, the flying figures that passed him, whirling round in time to the music, the buzz of voices, all grew dim and indistinct to him. He saw nothing but the pale face, with its solemn, despairing eyes; heard nothing but the low, tortured voice that had spoken those bewildering words.

"True! Are you mad, Doris?" he gasped.

Doris gave a faint smile.

"Sometimes I think I am," she said, quietly; "but it is true, Paul. She is living. She was not killed in the railway accident, as we thought; and three months ago she came back."

"Does Laurence know?"

"Not yet. I have kept it from him, so far; though sometimes I thought the strain would kill me," Doris went on in a dull, passionless voice. "I will keep it still, if I can. As long as I can I will spare him the shame and pain which the knowledge would cause him."

"And in the meantime it will kill you," Paul cried, passionately. "Oh, my poor Doris, you may well look pale and worn! Why did you not tell me? I might have saved you much suffering."

"I thought of doing so once; but then I thought that the fewer who knew, the better," Doris replied, in her dull voice; "but it does not matter. I should like you to know."

"Yes; you must tell me everything; and if there is any way out of the difficulty—and there must be, there shall be"—Paul cried with a stamp of his foot, "be sure I will find it. Take my arm, Doris. I will find a quiet corner where we can be undisturbed for a few minutes."

The quiet corner was found, after some little difficulty, in the conservatory, which was just at that moment almost deserted. Paul found Doris a seat in a dark nook, and, leaving her for a few minutes, came back with a tumbler of champagne, which he made her drink before he would allow her to speak.

"And now that you look a little less like

a ghost," he said, as she smiled and put down the empty glass, "tell me everything from the very beginning."

Doris obeyed. After all, it was a great relief to her—she did not know how great until now—to tell her trouble into Paul's sympathetic ears. She told him of Mrs. Ainalie's first visit; of their subsequent interviews, and of the large sums she had paid to ensure her silence.

"Laurence thinks I am growing frightfully extravagant," she said, with a faint smile. "He was looking over my bank-book the other day and teased me about the large cheques I have been drawing lately. He little knew for what purpose."

"He must know, and at once," Paul said quietly. "Why, you silly girl," as Doris started and gave him a piteous glance, "it must come out sooner or later. How much is your secret worth, do you think, now that it is in Lady Cecil's keeping? Not that," and he snapped his fingers lightly. "You might know that by the words we overheard to-night. He must be told. Of course he will at once take measures to get a divorce, and, while it is pending, you must separate. Why, you foolish girl, it will only be a question of a few weeks, or months, at most," he added, in a gentle, rallying tone. "You can go down to the Red House, or, better still, come to us in Devonshire. My sister came back from India two months ago, and is living with me, and she will be delighted to have you. And, as soon as the law business is over, you and Laurence can be married there."

Doris shook her head.

"But, oh, the shame of it, Paul!" she said. "You know how proud and sensitive Laurence is. Let us spare him as long as we can."

"Spare him, while you are the target for malicious words and looks; while you suffer," Paul cried. "I should be but a false friend to Laurence if I counselled that, Doris! Remember, the woman is right. In the eyes of the law she is still his wife. He must claim his release."

"But wait a little, Paul! I have thought lately, especially the last time I saw her"—and Doris's voice grew low and eager—"that there would be no need of a divorce; that death would bring Laurence's release! I thought so, and—oh, heaven forgive me! I was glad of it," Doris cried; "and if, by waiting a little I could spare Laurence pain, oh, I would not care what I suffered, or the cruel things the world said."

Paul looked at her with a great compassion in his eyes.

"Always Laurence! Never yourself, Doris," he said, half bitterly. "It is still the same."

And Doris answered, very quietly:

"Yes, it always will be, to the end of my life."

They were both silent for a while. Paul was musing bitterly over the inequalities of life, and over the puzzling problem of a woman's love. Here was Doris, lavishing upon Laurence, who was by no means a bad fellow in his way, though very far from being the hero Doris thought him, a perfect, unfaltering love and devotion which Paul would have given his very life to win, and which Laurence accepted gratefully, certainly, but yet very much as a matter of course.

"If Doris died to-morrow, I dare say after his days of mourning were over, he would console himself with some one else," Paul thought, savagely. "And if he died, she would go mourning all her days, and never give a thought to any other man! Living or dead, she would be faithful to him."

He was roused from his reverie by the touch of a little cold hand which stole into his.

"Paul," said Doris, and her grey eyes scanned his face earnestly, "you don't think any worse of me for what I have done, do you? Some people would say that I ought to have left him at once, directly I knew she was alive; but I—could not. He was dragged to despair and ruin by a woman's treachery and falseness, and I saved him, and made him what he is now"—and her eyes brightened, and her cheeks flushed, and she drew up her head proudly—"a man honoured and esteemed by all, famous above most men, happy, and loving, and beloved. I made him all this. Surely I have a right to call him mine; to claim him for my own."

"Who else could have a higher, stronger claim, dear Doris?" Paul cried. "Think worse of you! Why, my dear," and now he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it reverently, "I love and honour you more, if it were possible, than I did before; if possible, I envy Laurence his wife more than ever, and just because of this, dear Doris," and he looked at her gravely. "I ask you to put this matter into my hands, and to let me do as I think best. I will see this woman. What is her address?"

"Eleven, Sanson Gardens, Hampstead," Doris answered.

Paul wrote the address on his programme, and put it carefully in his pocket.

"I will see her at once. Why——" His voice changed, and he looked up quickly. "I declare here is Laurence coming to interrupt our tête-à-tête. Why, you greedy fellow, can't you spare your wife even to me, for half-an-hour, without coming to look after her?"

Laurence laughed. He looked very bright, and happy, and handsome, as he drew Doris's hand through his arm.

"I can't spare her to any one—not even to you. It is late, and time to go, for she is not strong; and I must take care of her."

"Yes, take care of her."

Paul repeated the words absently; he stood and looked after their retreating figures, and bit his moustache. How would Laurence bear the news, he wondered.

Again it was evening, and Doris was sitting alone in her drawing-room. A few days before an invitation to a gathering at Lady Verson's, where all the celebrities in art and literature, as well as the principal leaders of fashion, were to be present, had arrived. The invitation was for Laurence only; and he had frowned and fumed over it, and confounded the woman's impudence, and, declaring that he would not accept any invitation which did not include his wife, wrote a hasty refusal.

Now, Doris happened to know that at this party two or three great art patrons, whose friendship might be of great service to Laurence, were to be present, and she had smiled, and lightly tossed the refusal into the waste-paper basket, and, with some difficulty, had persuaded him to send an acceptance instead. But though she smiled and jested, she recognised the sting which lay hidden in the innocent sheet of paper, and her heart was very sad as she sat alone, thinking over many things.

By-and-by a hansom drove up to the door. The bell rang, and in another moment Paul Beaumont was announced. Doris had not seen him for nearly a week, not since the evening when, by chance, he had learned her secret; and she had thought his absence a little unkind. She looked up and smiled as he entered.

"Why, Paul, I thought you were to be at Lady Verson's to-night," she said, and glanced at his morning-coat and ungloved hands.

"So I was; but I was—prevented."

Paul spoke rather oddly, Doris thought. His eyes were very bright; there was an excited flush on his brown face; the hand that took her own trembled a little. He walked to the fireplace and leaned his broad back against the mantel-board, and looked down at her with a grave, yet triumphant smile. She returned his look with one of surprise.

"What is the matter with you?" she said. "You look very pleased about something. What is it?"

"Do I? Well, a man ought to look pleased in the happiest moment of his life!" Paul answered. "Dear, I have some news for you—good news," he added, as her colour wavered and her eyes dilated. "Now, promise to bear it quietly, and I will tell you. It is good news."

"What is it? Oh, tell me, Paul!" Doris cried.

"You won't faint, or go into hysterics, or do anything else equally insane, if I do? Well, then," and now he dropped his assumed lightness of manner, and bent over her chair and took her hand in his, "Doris, there is no need of a divorce suit. Laurence is spared the shame you dreaded. Death has set him free!" he said, very quietly. "She is dead!"

Doris started, and gazed at him with dilated eyes and with a fast-throbbing heart. "Oh, Paul—dead! When?"

"This afternoon. She was very ill last Thursday when I first saw her; and the doctor who was attending her told me she could not live more than a few days," Paul replied, gravely. "She had never recovered from some severe internal injury she received in that railway accident; and the life she has led has not been calculated to mend matters. She had everything she wanted, Doris—I took care of that—and she is to be buried on Friday."

Doris did not answer. She lay back in her chair very pale, and with closed eyes, from which the tears of relief were slowly stealing down her cheeks. She tried to speak to him and thank him; but only an inarticulate murmur, followed by more tears, came. Paul let her weep unchecked—tears would relieve her overtaxed brain, and do her good; and so he sat quietly down by the window and took no notice of her until gradually the sobs died away, and the tears ceased, and Doris, very pale and wan, but with something of the old, sweet serenity in her eyes, lifted her head, and looked at him with a faint smile.

"Don't think me very silly, Paul. If

you know how often during the last three months I have longed for the relief of tears, and dared not indulge in it, you would excuse these now. And don't think me very wicked either. I suppose it is wicked to feel glad that she is dead; but I do! I can't help it when I think what it means to Laurence and me," she added.

"I don't see how you could be anything else than glad," Paul answered, candidly; "and I am sure that Laurence— Why, here is Laurence," he added, as the door opened and Laurence came in.

He gave a quick glance at Doris's tear-stained face, a hasty exclamation, then he frowned and looked at Paul.

"What has he been saying to you, my love?" he said. "Is anything wrong?" And he crossed the room and put his hand on his wife's shoulder.

Paul laughed.

"Don't stand there glowering at me like a fair-faced Othello, Laurence," he said, good-humouredly. "I have just been telling your wife that this is the happiest day of my life. Don't you want to know the reason?"

"Yes." Laurence was too much taken up with his wife, to bestow much attention on Paul. "Of course I do."

"I don't know whether your wife ever told you that you and I were rivals!" Paul began. "No, I dare say not," as Laurence gave a half-surprised, half-amused look. "She is not the kind of woman who loves to parade her conquests; but it was so. I asked her to be my wife years ago, just after you left Chesham, and she refused me because of you. I asked her again, shortly after your marriage, and received the same answer, for the same reason. I dare say you have some idea how true and faithful she has been to you all her life; but you don't know it half as well as I do, Laurence, for you know nothing of all she has suffered during the last three months, for your sake, to spare you pain. Listen, and I will tell you the story of those three months," Paul added.

Laurence, standing by Doris's side, with her hand in his, listened in amazement, and horror, and relief, as Paul, in his curt, quiet way, told him all that had happened during the last three months, and spoke of his wife's return, of her death, and of all that Doris had suffered through Lady Cecil's malice; of the insults, and chilling looks and words she had borne so patiently for his sake, content herself to suffer, if only he might be spared. And

Laurence listened in silence, but with such a look of passionate love and adoration in the eyes that rested on his wife's face, that sent a flood of happy blushes there, a thrill of intense delight to her heart.

"I told you, just now," Paul went on, with a thrill of emotion in his deep voice, "that this was the happiest day of my life. So it is. There is no greater pleasure left for me now, than to know that the happiness of the woman whom I love and honour above all others—whom I shall love and honour, I warn you, Laurence, to the end of my life—is assured at last!"

But, long before he had finished his story, Laurence had thrown himself on his knees, by his wife's side, and had hidden his face on her knee, and was shaking from head to foot with suppressed emotion.

"And you suffered all this for me, Doris? Oh, what have I done to merit it? What is there in me to call forth such a perfect love?" he cried.

A week afterwards, Paul went to pay a long-deferred call on Lady Cecil Butler. The day was bright and sunny, and Paul, who was usually somewhat indifferent about his toilette, had dressed himself in a light suit, and wore new gloves, and a carnation in his buttonhole, and altogether looked such a perfect aristocrat, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, that Lady Cecil's cheeks flushed under her rouge, and her blue eyes brightened as he entered her drawing-room; and she thought, as she had often thought before, that he was the goodliest man and the most perfect gentleman her eyes had ever beheld.

She had long since—especially since that evening when he had heard her insulting words to Doris—given up all hopes of a renewed friendship, and her surprise and delight were great when he was announced.

"Why, Paul, what a swell you are," she said to him, by-and-by, as he stood near her, leaning against the mantel-piece, teacup in hand. "You look as if you were going, or had been, to a wedding!"

"So I have," said Paul, lazily. "I have been assisting at that most melancholy of all functions—a wedding; and, of course, I got myself up in the orthodox sacrificial garb."

"Whose wedding? Any one I know?"

"Two dear friends of yours, or, at least, two persons in whose welfare you took

a lively interest a week or two ago," Paul replied.

There came an odd smile, which Lady Cecil did not quite like or understand, into his eyes, as he looked down at her.

"I have been to Doris Cairnes's wedding," he went on, deliberately; "she was re-married this morning to Laurence Ainalie. The wedding took place from my cousin's—the Countess of Essington—house, where Doris has been staying a few days; Lady Essington, and her daughter, and I, were present at the ceremony!"

Lady Cecil's face flushed, and her brows contracted. This was checkmate with a vengeance, she felt! She might sneer at Doris as much and as often as she liked, but her sneers would be powerless to injure any one guarded by the shield of Lady Essington's friendship. Lady Essington, who, besides being a great leader of society, was known to be one of the most severely virtuous women in London; whose name had never been sullied by even a breath of scandal. Doris's position in society was quite assured now, Lady Cecil felt, with a sharp pang of rage and jealousy. She was beyond the reach of her malice.

"So it has all ended satisfactorily, and she is really his wife, at last!" he said, languidly. "What, by the way, has become of the first Mrs. Ainalie? Has she been obliging enough to die? I thought she looked very ill when I saw her, poor wretch!"

"Yes; she died a week ago," Paul answered, quietly.

"How very sweet of her! And so you have persuaded Lady Essington to throw the shield of her friendship over your protégée, Paul? I am afraid it will not avail her much. She may be Laurence Ainalie's wife, now; but every one knows what she has been during the last two years! I am afraid society will find it difficult to forget that! You know, one must draw the line somewhere."

There was a concentrated malice and spite in her voice which enraged Paul beyond endurance, or else—for he was a gentleman to the heart's core—he would never have said what he did, never forgot himself so far as to insult a woman. His eyes flashed, his face grew hard and set, as he looked at her from beneath his bent brows.

"Must you?" he said, with a sneer.

"I should have thought that you, of all people, Lady Cecil, would have found it difficult to define the position of that line, or to say where a wife's faithfulness to her husband ends, and infidelity begins! Why, not so very long ago—true wife though you may be, now—if I had held up my little finger and said 'Come,' you would have left husband and child willingly! Perhaps you may have forgotten that; but, even if my memory was not more retentive, some letters of yours would serve to remind me of it!"

Lady Cecil started, and grew ghastly white under her rouge. All the beauty vanished suddenly out of her face, and left it haggard and white with a ghastly terror. How could she have forgotten those letters which, in a moment of madness, she had written to Paul?

"Paul—you have not kept them—oh, surely you would not be so dishonourable as to use them against me," she gasped. "I will do—anything you like! I will call on her—retract all I have said——"

She looked at him imploringly, and clasped her hands on his arm. Paul pushed them gently away. He felt ashamed of himself for thus torturing her; but the remembrance of the suffering she had caused Doris hardened his heart.

"She does not need your friendship," he said, quietly; "but let there be peace between us. We are not likely to see much of each other for the future, so, for the sake of our old friendship, we will forget the past. Let there be peace. As for the letters, I burnt them, long ago."

Paul was right when he said that he and Lady Cecil were not likely to see much of each other in the future. She never chanced to be at the Hall during his visits to the Red House, and as, year by year, his visits to town grew shorter and less frequent, and he grew fonder of his own beautiful home—which his sister and her daughter made so pleasant to him—it was but rarely that they met.

But all this happened long ago. There is another master at Oaklands now, and Doris's eldest son and his wife reign at the Red House; and for all the principal actors in this little story—Doris and Laurence, and Paul and Lady Cecil—life's fitful fever is over, and they are all quietly asleep, and very few people remember, and fewer still care, anything about "The Story of Doris Cairnes."

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A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

"HERE we must part, my friends," said the priest, resting his hand on the stile which divided the high road from a foot-way running across fields. "This must be the 'short cut' of which the innkeeper spoke. It will be easy enough for me, with only this light bag to carry, to make the rest of my journey on foot."

The speaker was a tall, dark man, between fifty and sixty years of age, with aquiline features, and clear, penetrating grey eyes; the persons whom he addressed were a man and a young girl. The former was standing beside a dog-cart, with his hands still grasping reins and whip; his healthy, bronzed face, and his appearance generally, seemed to denote that he belonged to the small-farmer class. The girl, who was standing beside the priest on the foot-way, bore a rather more refined appearance. She was small and slight in figure, her face looked worn and anxious, its pallor being thrown into greater relief by the deep crape she wore; her large, grey eyes had a forlorn, far-away look in them; her hair was of a beautiful, though colourless fairness.

"I wish we could be of more service to you, Father Elliot," said the young man; "we owe you a heavy debt of gratitude——"

He broke off abruptly, giving a furtive glance towards the girl.

"Thanks, my good friend," said the Father, cheerily; "I was delighted to be

able to break my long journey at your house. I hope times will soon be better for you. There's something egregiously wrong in the state of a country when a farm, worked as yours has been, can't pay its own expenses and yield a comfortable income to two plain-living people like you and your sister."

Then he turned to the girl:

"Where was it you applied for a situation as maid? I don't think you mentioned the name of the people or the house."

"The lady is Lady Joan Gaskell, wife of Mr. John Gaskell, the millionaire coal-owner, of Longridge Castle," said the girl.

Here a sudden change of expression swept over the Father's face; his lips parted, as if about to speak, but no words escaped them.

"Longridge Castle is just behind that clump of trees," she went on; "but the trees hide it so that you can't see it till you are close up to it."

The Father had by this time recovered himself.

"Ah, well," he said, "if you succeed in obtaining the situation, I shall see you on Sundays at mass, for St. Elizabeth's is only a mile and a half distant from the Castle."

He turned as he finished speaking and crossed the stile, then, resting his arms on its topmost rail, bent forward, and for a moment keenly scrutinised the pale, sorrowful face which fronted him.

The young man led his horse and cart forward a little. He knew that the priest's last words were to be spoken now, and they were not words to be thrown on the empty air.

The Father smiled kindly at him.

"Don't lose heart, Ralph," he said.

"Be diligent—remember, you can put conscience even into driving a plough—put your best work into everything you do, and, sooner or later, a blessing must follow."

Then he turned to the girl.

"And you, my child, whether your lot be cast in Longridge Castle or elsewhere, be zealous in the performance of your religious duties. Thank Heaven that nothing more is required of you than loving trust and child-like obedience, and make no effort to discover that which, providentially no doubt, has been hidden from you."

His last sentence was said with a slow emphasis. The girl sharply turned her face away from him as if she shrank from the scrutiny of his keen though kindly eyes. Her fingers twisting nervously one in the other showed that she was greatly agitated.

"Once more, good-bye, my children both," said the priest, after a moment's pause.

He stretched his hands towards them as he pronounced his blessing; then turned, and began rapidly to make his way along the footway through the fields.

The brother and sister had bowed their heads reverently.

"Come, Lucy," said the man, turning his horse's head and preparing to set off once more along the dusty high road.

Lucy did not reply. She stood motionless in the blazing sunshine, shading her eyes with her hands, and watching the retreating figure of the priest.

"Come, Lucy," called her brother again, and this time a little impatiently, "we shan't be back any too soon if we set off at once. I've a hundred and one things to see after when I get home."

A bend in the footpath he was following hid the priest from her view, and Lucy, letting her veil fall over her face, rejoined her brother.

Father Elliot steadily pursued his road. The surrounding country was not particularly picturesque. It was flat, as if a gigantic steam-roller had passed over it, and but scantily wooded. The only point of interest in the landscape was the clump of distant elms, behind which Lucy had said stood Longridge Castle.

As the Father drew near to the clump of not very ancient trees, he could catch glimpses of the frontage of the newly-built, many-towered edifice.

"It is fatality," he thought. "Here am

I, exiled from London and the work I was doing there, and thrown, as it were, into the arms of these Gaskells once more. My superiors tell me, forsooth, they are sending me out of the way of temptation. 'Through pride,' the Cardinal wrote, 'the angels fell. Your pride in your powers of oratory and the large and intellectual congregations which you draw, is leading you to preach doctrines other than those which have been taught by the Church in all ages. Go now and minister to the poor and ignorant colliers and cottagers, and, by plain teaching—not the preaching of doctrines which spring from the exercise of a subtle intellect—win souls to the Church.' Yes, those were his words. I know them by heart. The exercise of a subtle intellect! Is it that, I wonder, or the exercise of clear vision and common sense which leads a man, after staring for years at the problems of life, to cry out from his pulpit, 'My children, purgatory is present, not to come; this world is not our first start in existence—here we are sent for our sins——'"

Here the Father suddenly paused, passing his hand over his brow. Thoughts such as these required curb and rein.

"Ah, well," those thoughts presently resumed, "submission to my superiors is one of the first of my duties, and I submit. They little know how valueless to me is the praise or blame of the multitude. All things are to me shadows and hollow mockeries of what might have been!" Here his eye for a moment rested on the façade of the Castle as it gleamed white in the afternoon sun, between the shadowy trees. "Thirty years," he went on, bitterly, "and I have not been able to kill the memory of what 'might have been'! Thirty years of battling with the ghosts of that past, and then I am sent as it were to banquet with them—to entertain, and be entertained by them! Joan, Joan, I wonder if your memory is clear and strong as mine is to-day! I wonder if, when we meet, you will shake hands calmly as with an utter stranger, or if you will start up and cry aloud, as you did on the day I cursed you for breaking faith with me, 'Go away, Vaughan, go away, and never let me in this life look upon your face again'!"

These were the priest's thoughts as he made his way across the fields towards the cottage which represented the Parsonage of St. Elizabeth's Church. At this point, however, his visions of the past seemed

suddenly to goad his footsteps into a speed prohibitive of thought.

A countryman at that moment swinging back the gate of an adjoining field, in order to drive home his cows for milking, stood, open-mouthed, gazing at the tall, dark gentleman approaching at such a rapid pace.

"Be 'ee goan to th' merry-makin'?" he asked in broad Yorkshire dialect, in response to the Father's passing nod and greeting.

"I'm making for St. Elizabeth's Parsonage—Father Bradley's house; I dare say you know it," said the Father, resuming his usual calm, frankly-courteous manner, which always seemed to open hearts towards him. "What merry-making is taking place to-day? Where is it?"

"Wa-ay down yonder," answered the man, jerking his head towards the Castle which had conjured up such a tumult of memories in the Father's mind. "Th' old master's turned ninety to-day, and there isn't a soul far or near but what's to be the better for his living so nigh upon a hunderd; so Muster John—that's his son—says."

"What!" cried the priest; "is old Mr. Gaskell still alive?"

He paused a moment. "Joan, Joan," his thoughts ran during that pause, "you've had to wait long enough for the good things for which you sold yourself!" Then aloud to the man he said:

"How far do you make it from here to the Castle?"

"A short half-mile as the crow flies. But the merry-makin' is i' the fields you'll come upon just after you've passed the heath; that's about a quarter-mile from here."

And then the man went on to say that the whole country for miles round had turned out to do honour to the nonagenarian's birthday; that the village was deserted; that, after dark, bonfires were to be lighted, and fireworks let off; that there was to be a supper for the collier lads, and a dance for them afterwards; in a word, the birthday celebrations were to out-rival those which had taken place some seven years ago, when the young master had come of age.

All this Father Elliot listened to attentively, saying never a word until "the young master" was mentioned. Then he put a question as to who this young master was.

"He's Muster Herrick, the son of

Muster John and Lady Joan," the man explained. "Muster John married nigh upon thirty year ago the Lady Joan Herrick—she came of grand people down South, somewhere. She was poor enough she was, and she's nae sich a kindly body as——"

"Good day, my friend," here interrupted the Father, brusquely. "Your cows are straying—see. I'm right for St. Elizabeth's Parsonage, you said?"

The man went after his cows; the Father went on his way once more, his brain filled now with so many phantoms of the past that the country through which he passed was a blank to him.

He seemed to see himself once more in the pretty Devonshire village, where his father had been rector as long as he could remember. He could see, also, as vividly as if days, not decades of years, had since passed; his constant playmate and companion by his side, the Lady Joan Herrick, only daughter of the Earl of Southmoor. Now they were scampering over breezy meors together on their rough-coated little ponies; anon, they would be bending over their books side by side in his father's study; or, he would be angling in the Southmoor trout stream, while she, on the bank, sat listening to his ambitious hopes and projects to win name and fame for himself in the Church by his learning and oratory. He could picture himself, also, a little later on, a young fellow of twenty, starting on his college career, and Lady Joan, a handsome girl of fifteen, bidding him God-speed. The scene changed, and he seemed to see himself, four years after, returning from college and about to enter the ministry, standing hand-in-hand with Joan, praying her to wait for him till he could make a home and position in life which he might fitly ask her to share, and hearing in reply her vehement promises of unwavering constancy.

Last scene of all, he could picture himself, some three months after this, alone, face to face with Joan, hearing from her own lips the story of her betrothal to John Gaskell, the only son of the millionaire coal-owner. He could hear her calm, passionless voice trying to prove to him how much better it would be for him to begin his career unfettered by a wife, and how unsuited she was for being the wife of a poor man. He could hear, too, his own vehement denunciations of her falseness and worldly wisdom; and then her one bitter cry—startled out of her, as it were,

by his angry words—"Go away, Vaughan, go away, and never in this life let me look upon your face again."

Well, they never had looked upon each other's face again. She had left her Devonshire home to take her place among her husband's wealthy, if parvenu, relatives; and he, after drifting aimlessly about the world for years, had joined the Roman Church, and had qualified for the priesthood. And then life, like a great ocean, had rolled in between the two.

Here a sudden break in the path which the Father was following compelled him to give a truce to his memories, and consider which road it behoved him to take.

The country through which he had passed had gradually been growing flatter and less verdant, proclaiming in its general aspect the propinquity of the coal-country. He was standing now on the edge of a wide heath—not the wildly-beautiful expanse of purple heather and golden gorse which is frequently associated with the name, but a bleak, stony, treeless waste, with here a stunted juniper bush, there a straggling bramble. On the left it was bounded by a low, scrubby hedge, on the right it stretched away endlessly to where, against a night-sky, the sullen, red flare of furnaces and forge-fires would show. A second thought told him that his way lay in a direct line across the very middle of this waste.

Straight ahead of him Longridge Castle showed plainly enough now, and distinct sounds of cheering and shouting proclaimed that he was nearing the fields where the birthday festivities were taking place.

Half-way across the heath, Father Elliot paused to note a deep pit, possibly a shaft which had been sunk in search of coal, and which was protected only by the slightest and most inadequate of hand-rails. The grass growing up its sides, the tangle of nettles and weeds which covered the mounds of earth thrown up beside it, showed that many a spring had passed since it had been dug. Prompted by a boyish instinct, the Father took up a stone and threw it into the pit. The seconds which elapsed before it sounded the bottom told of the formidable depth of the hole.

"It would be an ugly business to cross this heath on a dark night," thought the Father, as he once more went on his way.

This led him now along a narrow road with high hedges on either side. After five o'clock in the afternoon, towards the end of

August, the sun's rays begin to slant, and shadows to lengthen. This road looked cool and shady by comparison with the treeless heath. Through the breaks of the hedge on one side he could catch a glimpse of bright-coloured flags and white tents in a not very distant field. The sounds of a military band greeted his ear, together with a hum and buzz of voices as of many people assembled.

"In the midst of that crowd," he thought, "will stand Joan with her young son, her elderly husband, her ancient father-in-law. I wonder, if I suddenly presented myself among them all, if she would turn pale and shrink from me as a ghost at her banquet, or would she come forward and greet me in that stately way of hers I used to know so well? I can't fancy Joan without her stateliness. I could as soon fancy her without her voice! That will ring in my ears when I lie on my death-bed—soft, deep, musical, and slow in speech, the voice of a woman who should have had a heart. Yet Heaven, in place of a heart, planted a stone in her bosom!"

Sounds of footsteps on the other side of the hedge, almost at his elbow, at that moment arrested his attention. Through the intervening greenery, bushy here, scanty there, he could catch a glimpse of the small, slight figure of a young girl approaching with rapid steps. She was evidently making for a gate which, about twenty yards further on, led from the field into the road.

The Father reached this gate just at the moment that the girl was passing through it.

Her face attracted him strangely. It was of a type he knew well enough. Scores of times he had seen it, painted by different hands; now as that of baby cherubs on the panels of triptychs; anon as that of ascending and descending angels on some gigantic altar-piece. It was round, child-like, with a tiny cupid's bow for a mouth, and such brilliant gold on the hair, such forget-me-not blue in the eyes, and such rosy tints on cheeks and lips it seemed as if the sun must be shining full upon it, in spite of the protecting shade of a big sun-hat. It seemed a face formed for happiness, innocence, and a perpetual round of childish pleasures! and lo! there were traces of tears on either cheek.

The Father was touched. He accosted the young girl.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I am a stranger here; will you kindly tell me if I

am in the right road for St. Elizabeth's Church? I am the newly-appointed priest. I take Father Bradley's place there."

The girl's manner matched her face, it was frank yet shy, as a child's can be at one and the same moment. The sound of tears in her voice jarred upon the Father like a false note in a sweet, gay melody.

"I am going towards St. Elizabeth's now," she answered. "I will show you the way with pleasure."

CHAPTER II.

SOUNDS of hearty and prolonged cheering fell upon Father Elliot's ear, as, under the guidance of his young companion, he made his way along the road towards St. Elizabeth's.

"It's the health-drinking," the girl explained. "They do it heartily. They think there never was such a master as old Mr. Gaskell, although, I suppose, no one there can remember him at his best."

"There never was such a master!" Those words, or their equivalent in broad Yorkshire, went the rounds among the collier lads, as, with throats hoarse from their shouting, they put down their empty tankards.

This health-drinking was the event of the day, and it was drunk, one fashion or another, at the same moment, by every member of the Gaskell family, and every man, woman, and child on the Gaskell estate. Immediately after the ceremony had been gone through, old Mr. Gaskell was to withdraw from the festivities, farther excitement being deemed injurious to him at his advanced age.

In the field where this health-drinking took place, Gaskells of three generations—father, son, and grandson—stood side by side. There, immediately in front of a bright-coloured silk pavilion, which had been specially erected for him in the midst of the meadow, stood the old man, supported on one side by his son John—a fine, soldierly man of fifty-five—on the other, by his grandson, Herrick. A frail, shrunken figure—with pallid, wrinkled face, and scant, silver hair—he showed between these two stalwart men.

Herrick owned to as many inches in height as his father, although to considerably less in width; an agile, muscular young fellow he was, with straight, clean-cut features, an abundance of dark-brown hair, and full-pupilled, grey eyes. There was no need to proclaim his relationship

to the tall, stately lady who stood a little distance apart, on his left hand. The most careless observer would have said, "mother and son, not a doubt," when once they had seen the two faces in profile.

In voice, in manner, in graceful walk, and easy carriage of the head and shoulders, the likeness between the two was not less remarkable.

"I can't picture Joan without her stateliness," Father Elliot had said to himself, when trying to draw a fancy-portrait of his old love as time had left her after thirty years of wear and tear. He did not stand alone; all who had ever known her could as lief have pictured a star without its light as Lady Joan without that "grand manner" of hers which kept alike friends and foes at a ceremonious distance, and which, if she had been dressed in homespun, and had been compelled to feed off wooden platters, would still have proclaimed her every inch the aristocrat.

In Herrick this stateliness had been somewhat modified by education and circumstances, but still it was there. Though he worked as hard as his father in the management of the colliery, and of the estate generally, there was not a collier lad or farm labourer on the land who would have approached him in the easy, off-handed manner in which they approached his father, sturdy democrats though they were to their very marrow.

With physique and manner, however, the likeness to his mother came to an end. A veritable Southmoor he might be in appearance, but in heart he was a Gaskell. His interests and hopes in life were identical with those of his father and grandfather; and he cared as little for the accidents of birth and rank as possible.

Now as Lady Joan watched his face kindling into sympathy with the bright, ruddy faces around him, and heard his clear voice joining in what seemed to her coarse and vulgar cheering, she said to herself, bitterly:

"He has some of the best blood of England in his veins, and he is at one with such a crowd as that."

The cheering had scarcely died away, and the hum and buzz of broad north-country dialect begun, when Herrick, turning to Lady Joan, hurriedly asked:

"Mother, where is Lois? Is she tired? Has she gone indoors to rest?"

Lady Joan's brows contracted into a frown.

"Lois!" she repeated, coldly.

"Yes, Lois White, the young lady I introduced to you and left in your charge while I acted as umpire in the next field."

"I beg your pardon. The introduction was so hurried I did not catch the young lady's name. She left some little time ago. She said she must get back to her pupila. She is nursery governess somewhere in the neighbourhood is she not?"

The young man did not notice her concluding sentences.

"Left," he repeated, blankly. "You let her go without telling me! I drove her here; of course I intended driving her back to Summerhill. I don't understand it," and he walked hurriedly away in the direction of the stables as he finished speaking, leaving his mother to conjecture that he meant there and then either to drive or ride after the young lady in question.

Before, however, he could carry out his intention, a note, brought over by one of the smart young pages at Summerhill, was put into his hand.

It ran as follows:

"I have gone home with a bad headache. Come and see me to-morrow morning. "L. W."

CHAPTER III.

LADY JOAN stood watching the retreating figure of her son, the frown on her brow deepening. Her husband's voice, loud, ringing, cheery, suddenly interrupted the train of her angry thoughts. He was returning thanks for old Mr. Gaskell.

"My father wishes me to thank you, my friends," he said, "for the hearty manner in which you have drunk his health. He bids me say that such a day as this is worth living ninety years to see, and to the last hour of his life it will live in his memory. One with you in heart he has ever been, and one with you in heart he hopes to be to the end; he can never forget that where the Castle now stands there once stood a little farm-house in which he was born and reared. Finally, he bids me say: 'God bless every one of you, and give you, one and all, lives as happy and prosperous as his has been.'"

Prolonged and hearty cheering followed the close of the speech. As it died away John Gaskell whispered a word to his father; an order was then given, and a bijou pony chaise was brought round. A little, grey, apple-faced man came forward fussily. He was old Dr. Scott, the village

practitioner, to whom the Gaskells paid a good yearly income for his daily attendance on the nonagenarian. He on one side, John Gaskell on the other, assisted the old gentleman into the pony carriage which stood waiting to take him back to the house.

Lady Joan's lip curled slightly.

"It would have been far less trouble to have taken him up in their arms and have lifted him in," she said to herself. "To think that the opinions and whims of a man in this stage of incapacity should be law in a household, and that men like John and Herrick should bend to it! It is simply incomprehensible!"

A message brought to her by a servant a minute later accentuated the bitterness of the thought.

"Mr. Gaskell wishes to know, my lady," said the man, "if you have given directions for the presentation picture to be at once hung in the drawing-room, so that the subscribers may have the pleasure of seeing it on the walls before they leave."

This "presentation picture" was a large painting of the identical farm-house to which John Gaskell had just alluded, and which had stood on the site of the present castle before the lucky finding of coal on the land had brought gold to the family coffers, and had turned a pretty pastoral district into a grimy, manufacturing one.

The painting had been made, on a considerably enlarged scale, from a small water-colour sketch of the old house, taken before it was pulled down, and had been presented as a birthday offering to old Mr. Gaskell by the colliery workmen.

The look on Lady Joan's face as the servant delivered his message might have been understood to say:

"I heartily wish the picture were behind the fire."

She did not, however, give expression to the thought. To "kick against pricks," to her way of thinking, was objectionable, less for the pain it might bring than for the loss of dignity it involved. So she replied merely:

"If it is to be placed there, no doubt your master has already given the necessary orders." And mentally she added: "Henceforth the drawing-room will become unpleasant to me by reason of the plebeian reminiscences that picture will perpetuate."

It was not that Lady Joan could, by any chance, ever have been guilty of the essentially plebeian offence of endeavouring to

disguise the mushroom-like origin of the Gaskell family. On the contrary, she was in the daily habit of laying stress upon it in her correspondence with her own well-born relatives. All she asked was, that in her own home, in the rooms in which she was compelled to pass her daily life, the fact should not be perpetually flourished before her eyes as a thing wherein to glory.

That very evening there was to be a dinner-party at the Castle. Certain guests would be there whom nought but the patrician presence of Lady Joan could have tempted within the newly-built walls. The enormous painting, hung in a conspicuous position, would set flowing a stream of talk as to the luck and money-making qualifications of the Gaskell family, a stream whose tide she knew well enough neither Herrick nor her husband would make the slightest effort to turn.

This dinner had already been a sufficient cause of annoyance to her, in that it had been fixed at a ridiculously early hour, in order that old Mr. Gaskell, who dared not attempt to sit down to table, might see and shake hands with certain of the guests before he retired to his room for the night. It was hard to have its annoyances doubled and trebled in this fashion.

Annoyances such as these were of almost daily occurrence in the Castle, and Lady Joan knew that so long as old Mr. Gaskell had breath in his body there was no likelihood of their coming to an end.

In heart, she bitterly rebelled against the supremacy to which John and Herrick so willingly bent their necks.

"If I had known," she would sometimes say to herself, "that for close upon thirty years I should be condemned to play a strictly subordinate part in the Gaskell household, that my notions on important matters would be persistently ignored, and that this old man would live on to keep alive in the country the recollection of the newness of the gold which built the Castle and supplied its luxuries, I might have thought twice before I married John Gaskell."

But, though thoughts such as these ran as a steady under-current to the surface of her life, her manner towards the old man expressed nothing but a stately, calm indifference.

That stately calm of manner, however, had gone nearer to a collapse on the day of the birthday festivities than it ever had before. Perhaps Herrick's eccentric con-

duct, in forcing upon her notice a young lady whose existence she had hitherto steadily ignored, might have been held responsible for the fact.

Lady Joan's maid, as she assisted her mistress to undress that night, thought she had never before seen her look so like the harassed, hampered mistress of a large household, fretted by many cares and responsibilities, so unlike the stately lady who kept all trivial and uninteresting matters—and people—at a ceremonious distance.

The girl thought she might never get a better opportunity for preferring a request she had just then very much at heart, and seized it accordingly.

She had, however, to repeat her request once and again, before its full import reached Lady Joan's preoccupied mind.

"Oh, you would like me to see the young person who wishes to come as maid!" at length said "my lady," indifferently. "It seems to me you are in a great hurry to leave."

The girl blushed, and began hesitatingly to explain:

"I told you, my lady, that Robert wanted to get married at once, now that he has been promised one of the new cottages, and——"

Lady Joan cut short the plebeian details.

"Is this young person who wishes to come—I forget her name—likely to suit me? You know my requirements."

"Oh yes, my lady. Lucy Harwood is her name. She is highly recommended, and she is neat, and pale, and thin, and quiet-looking, and doesn't speak broad Yorkshire; she comes from Devonshire."

The girl had hurried through her speech, anxious to get to her final words, which she knew would considerably enhance the possible attractions of the new maid in Lady Joan's eyes.

"From Devonshire!" Lady Joan repeated. "What part of Devonshire?"

"Her father, my lady, at one time lived within a few miles of Southmoor. He is dead now; and her brother, who has a farm near Wrexford, can't make it pay, so she is obliged to go out and get her own living. Will you see her, my lady?"

"Harwood," repeated Lady Joan, slowly, "and her father lived within a few miles of Southmoor. I can't recall the name. Yes, I will see her to-morrow morning directly after breakfast."

And then she dismissed the whole

matter from her thoughts; for, to her way of thinking, a maid was not a creature like herself, who could love or hate, rejoice or be sad, but just a detail of daily life, needful, but uninteresting, like the clocks which wanted winding up, or the fires which needed replenishing.

CONNUBIAL BLISS AND BACON.

PROBABLY few old English customs are better known, even now, than that of the "Dunmow Flitch," which, it is supposed, was first given by Robert Fitzwalter, a favourite of King John, when he received the Dunmow Priory, some time about the beginning of the thirteenth century. He, however, is not allowed by all to have this distinguished honour; for some there are who incline to the belief that the monks of the Priory, who resided there before Fitzwalter's time, were the first to inaugurate the custom, and intended it more as a joke than as a serious matter. Be that as it may, the custom did undoubtedly exist, and has been handed down in poem and prose from one generation to another, the later generations having the shadow of the substance that sometimes fall to the lot of their forefathers of loving, domesticated temperament.

Mr. G. A. Walpole, in his "New and Complete British Traveller," published, I believe, early in the eighteenth century—the title-page is missing from my copy—says the custom began in the reign of Henry the Third, and, quoting from the "late Mr. Hearne of Oxford," says:

"Robert Fitzwalter, Earl of Oxford, became a great benefactor of this place (Dunmow), and instituted a custom that if any man, within a year and a day of his marriage, did not repent or have any difference with his wife, during the first twelve calendar months, he was to kneel down before the Prior on two sharp-pointed stones, and swear to the truth of the following oath (given in full elsewhere) as administered to him by the Steward of the Priory, which, if he did, a gammon of bacon was given to him."

The "Book of Days," arguing that it originated as a joke, says:

"What makes it more remarkable is it rose in connection with a religious house, the Priory of Dunmow, showing that the men who then devoted themselves to prayers, could, occasionally, make play out of the comicalities of human nature. The

subject of the jest here was the notable liability of the married state to trivial janglements and difficulties, not by any means detracting from its general approveableness as a mode of life for a pair of mutually suitable persons, but yet something sufficiently tangible and real to vary what might otherwise be a too smooth surface of affairs; and, anyhow, a favourite subject of comment, mirthful and sad, for the bystanders, according to the feeling with which they might be inclined to view the misfortunes of their neighbours. How it should have occurred to a set of celibate monks to establish a perennial jest regarding matrimony, we need not enquire, for we should get no answer. It only appears that they did so. Taking it upon themselves to assume that perfect harmony between married persons for any considerable length of time was a thing of the greatest rarity, they ordered, and made their order known, that if any pair could, after a twelvemonth after matrimony, come forward and make oath at Dunmow, that during the whole time they had never had a quarrel, never regretted their marriage, and if open again to an engagement, would make exactly that they had made, they should be rewarded with a flitch of bacon. It is dubiously said that the order originated with Robert Fitzwalter, a favourite of King John, who revived the Dunmow Priory about the beginning of the thirteenth century; but we do not in truth see him in any way concerned in the matter, beyond his being a patron of the Priory, and as we find the Priors alone acting in it afterwards, it seems a more reasonable belief that the joke from the first was theirs."

There is yet another authority, Dr. Brewer, who, however, goes even further back, and attributes the foundation to "Juga, a noble lady, in 1111, and restored by Robert de Fitzwalter, in 1244."

The earliest mention of the Dunmow Flitch, in any work, is, I believe, in the Lansd. MS., 416 (about 1445), a metrical paraphrase of the Ten Commandments, now in the Bodleian Library, in which the following reference occurs:

I can fynd no man now that wille enquire
The partyte wais unto Dunmow;
For they repent hem within a yere,
And many within a weke, and sonner, men trow;
That cawsith the wais to be rowgh and over grow,
That no man fynd may path or gap.

The Dunmow bacon is also alluded to in the "Visions of Pierce Plowman," and

in Chaucer's prologue to the "Wife of Bath":

The bacon was not fet for hem, I trow,
That some men heve at Essex, in Dunmow.

So much for the various authorities as to the institution of the "prize"; now, as to the ceremony and means of obtaining it. I have detailed the form of application already. While the claimants were kneeling on the sharp-pointed stones in the churchyard, solemn chanting and rites were performed by the inhabitants of the Convent. After this, the following oath was administered by the Steward:

You do swear by custom of confession
That you ne'er made nuptial transgression;
Nor since you were married man and wife,
By household brawls, or contentious strife,
Or otherwise, in bed or at board,
Offended each other in deed or word;
Or since the parish clerk said "Amen,"
Wish'd yourselves unmarried again;
Or in a twelve month and a day
Repented not in thought anyway;
But continu'd true in thought and desire,
As when you join'd hands in holy quire.

During the time the oath was being administered, the man and his wife were surrounded by all the people, not only in the village, but also in the neighbourhood, who, with the Prior and monks walked in procession round the churchyard, after which the Steward repeated to them the following words:

If to these conditions, without all fear,
Of your own accord you will freely swear,
A whole gammon of bacon you shall receive,
And bear it hence with love and good leave;
For this is our custom, at Dunmow well known,
Tho' the pleasure be ours, the bacon's your own.

The stones on which the aspirants knelt were still shown in Mr. Brand's time. The parties were, after taking the oath, taken upon men's shoulders, and carried first about the Priory Churchyard, and, after, through the town, the Friars and brethren, and all the townsfolk, young and old, following them with shouts and acclamations, with their bacon before them. In later days the lucky couple were chaired through the village. The old chair is still to be seen at Dunmow.

Before passing on to detail the known instances of the awarding of the fitch, there is a pretty story I should like to introduce:

In the time of Henry the Third, the story says, a young man and a girl, in the plain dress of the English yeomanry, presented themselves one morning before the Prior of Dunmow, and demanded his blessing on their marriage. The good

churchman, pleased with the youth's respectful tone, and the blooming face of his bride-elect, readily consented. As the last words of the blessing were spoken, a brawny servant of the Priory came tramping past, carrying on his broad shoulders a fitch of bacon that might have suited the table of Harold Hardrada himself.

"Take yonder fitch to mend your wedding cheer, my children," said the kindly Prior, "and remember the Prior of Dunmow."

The words appeared to have a transforming power, for the seeming yeoman rose to his feet, before the Prior's startled eyes, with the bearing of a King, and throwing back his head, haughtily shook out from beneath his coarse, flat cap a profusion of long, curled locks, such as no English farmer had ever worn.

"Prior," said he, in a clear, musical voice, "in requital of thy courtesy, I hereby assign and give to thee in this manor land enough to bring thee two hundred marks a year, on condition that, whenever any bride and bridegroom shall come hither to kneel upon these stones, where we have knelt this day, and shall swear that for a year and a day they have been true lovers, even as we are now, they shall receive ever such a fitch of bacon as this which thou hast given us."

The Prior stared, as well he might, and asked, doubtfully:

"Who art thou that speakest thus, my son? If thou be jesting with me, bethink thee that it is not seemly to make sport of the Church's servants."

"I jest not, worthy Prior," answered the young man, proudly. "He to whom thou hast given thy blessing as a nameless yeoman, is Sir Reginald Fitzwalter, Lord of the Manor, and all that lies upon it. The title-deeds of my grant to thee and thine shall be in thy hands by this hour on the morrow."

As he promised, so he fulfilled. The title-deeds to the Priory and surrounding land were handed to the Prior on the morrow, and, says the ancient chronicler, originated the giving of the Dunmow Fitch.

Personally, I place little reliance on these pretty legends of the past. They are very nice reading, and served a useful purpose in the days of long since, and are only valuable now as a relic of undoubted antiquity. The custom may be the survival of one of great antiquity, for hanging up fitches of bacon was practised by the

Romana. Swine, also, were held in great veneration in the North; and there is a record that the heathen Prussians offered periodically a fitch of bacon to Percunos, their mighty god.

New I will pass on to the instances of its gift. The first recorded application for the fitch was made on April the seventeenth, 1445, by Richard Wright, labourer, of Badeburgh, near the city of Norwich, and the bacon was, after proof, delivered to him by John Cannon, Prior of the Convent.

On Lady Day, 1467, it was claimed by Stephen Samuel, husbandman, of Ashton, in Essex, and delivered to him by Roger Ralecot, at that time Prior of the Convent.

In 1510, one Thomas le Fuller—or, more probably, Thomas the fuller—of Coggershall, in the County of Essex, came to Dunmow and claimed the bacon, which was delivered to him by John Taylor, the Prior, with all the ancient formalities. This is the last time it was claimed before the Reformation, as appears by the record published by Mr. Hearne, the original of which is now in the Herald's Office.

After the Reformation, though the custom continued, the ceremony changed; for, whereas formerly the applicants were accompanied by monks, subsequently they were only attended by the Steward, officers, and tenants of the Manor, accompanied by crowds of spectators. From the Reformation to 1701, there is a gap, and then we come to what may be termed the authentic presentations of the bacon. On the 27th of June in that year, William Paraley and his wife—the husband a butcher of Much Easton, Essex—and Mr. Reynolds, steward to Sir Charles Barrington, of Hatfield, Broad Oaks, both applied for and obtained the Dunmow Fitch. The jury, on this occasion, was composed of spinsters. The record of this ceremony is thus placed on the Roll of the Manor Court of Dunmow:

"DUNMOW At a Court Baron of the NUPER PRIORY. Right Worshipful Sir Thomas May, Knight, there holden upon Friday, the 27th day June, in the 13th year of the reign of our sovereign lord William III., by grace of God of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc., and in the year of God 1701, before Thomas Wheeler, Gentleman, Steward there.

"HOMAGE" { Elizabeth Beaumont, spinster.
Henrietta Beaumont, spinster.
Annabella Beaumont, spinster.
Jane Beaumont, spinster.
Mary Wheeler, spinster. } JURY.

"Be it remembered that at this Court it is found and presented by the homage aforesaid, that John Reynolds, of Hatfield Regis, alias Hatfield Broad Oak, in the County of Essex, Gent., and Anne, his wife, have been married for the space of ten years past, and upwards, and it is likewise found, presented, and adjudged by the homage aforesaid that the said J. Reynolds, and Anne his wife, by means of their quiet and peaceable, tender and loving cohabitation for the space of time aforesaid, as appears by reference to the said homage, are fit to receive the ancient and accustomed oath, whereby to entitle themselves to have the bacon of Dunmow delivered unto them according to the custom of the Manor.

"Whereupon at the Court, in full open Court, came the said John Reynolds and Anne his wife, in their proper persons, and humbly prayed that they might be admitted to take the oath aforesaid. Whereupon the said Steward, with the Jury, suitors, and other officers of the Court proceeded with the usual solemnity to the ancient and accustomed place for the administration of the oath, and receiving the bacon aforesaid; that is to say, to the two great stones lying near the church door, within the said Manor, when the said John Reynolds and Anne his wife, kneeling down on the aforesaid stones, the said Steward did administer unto them the above-mentioned oath. Being both lawfully sworn, the said Steward delivered to them the gammon of bacon, with the usual solemnity.

"At the same time William Paraley, of Much Easton, in the County of Essex, and Jane his wife, being married for the space of three years last past and upwards, by means of their quiet, peaceable, loving, and tender cohabitation for the said space of time, came and demanded the said bacon, and had it delivered to them according to the aforesaid order.

"THOMAS WHEELER, Steward."

On Thursday, the twentieth of June, 1751, at a Court of the Manor, the fitch was claimed by one John Shakeshanks, woolcomber, Watersfield, Essex, and Anne his wife, and it was delivered to them by the Steward. Mr. Brand says:

"I have a large print, now become ex-

ceedingly rare, entitled 'an exact perspective view of Dunmow, late the Priory, in the County of Essex, with a representation of the ceremony and procession in that Manor, on Tuesday, the twentieth of June, 1751, when Thomas Shakeshanks, in the County aforesaid, weaver, and Ann his wife, came to demand, and did actually receive a gammon of bacon, having first kneeled upon two bare stones, within the church door, and taken the oath, etc. N.B.—Before the dissolution of monasteries it does not appear, by searching the most ancient records, to have been demanded above three times, and including this, just as often since. Taken on the spot and engraved by David Ogborne.' I may add to the foregoing the fact that Shakeshanks realised a considerable sum of money by selling slices of the well-won bacon among the five thousand or more spectators who assembled when he made his successful claim.

The fitch was again successfully claimed by a man and his wife in 1763, but whose names are not recorded, and, after this, appears to have ceased as a custom. Mr. Walpole says:

"The Earl of Sutherland and his lady, who both died at Bath in 1766, lived in so happy a manner that had they recovered from that fatal sickness which carried them both into eternity, they intended to have gone to Dunmow, and claimed the bacon. But when at this town a few years ago we were informed that this custom had been suppressed by Mr. Crawley, the Lord of the Manor, who being perfectly satisfied that it had been wrongfully claimed, and was always productive of idleness and riotings, was warranted to do so by the nature of the original grant."

In 1772, one John Gildar and his wife presented themselves; but were unable to press their claims, for want of opportunity, on the Lord of the Manor. According to Mr. Brand, "It is stated in a newspaper of the year 1772, that on the twelfth of June that year, John and Susan Gildar, of the parish of Tarling, in Essex, made their public entry into Dunmow, escorted by a great concourse of people, and demanded the gammon of bacon, according to the notice given previously, declaring themselves ready to take the usual oath; but, to the great disappointment of the happy couple and their numerous attendants, the Priory gates were found fast nailed, and all admission refused, in pursuance of

the express orders of the Lord of the Manor."

Gough, in his edition of "Camden's Britannia," 1809, ii, 54, mentions that the custom is now abolished, on account of the abuse of it in these loose-principled times.

In 1851, however, this custom seems to have been revived by the villagers, for a man named Harrols, and his wife, who, having applied to the Lord of the Manor, and been refused, were accorded a fitch by the villagers, who made the application the occasion of a fête.

After this, the Saffron Walden and Dunmow Agricultural Society took the matter up, and, in 1837, as appears from the "John Bull" of October the eighth, awarded the bacon to an applicant who proved his claim. "The Chelmsford Chronicle," again, of January the twenty-fifth, 1838, says: "The anniversary of the Dunmow Agricultural Society was held, when the fitch of bacon was distributed."

In 1855, Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist, revived the custom; and on the nineteenth of July of that year, Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, of Chipping Ongar, and the Chevalier de Chatelain and his English wife carried off a fitch each. This took place in the Town Hall at Dunmow.

Once again, and for the last time, the fitch was awarded in 1860; probably with this we have heard the last of the ceremony, except in antiquarian works, as a relic of the past.

An imitation of the custom took place at Harrogate, on the twenty-fifth of June, 1764. On this day, according to the "Annals of Yorkshire" (1860), "an excellent dinner was given at 'The Green Dragon,' Harrogate, by twenty-one of the neighbouring gentry, to Mr. and Mrs. Liddal, on their taking the 'Fitch of Bacon Oath,' inserted in the six hundred and seventh number of the 'Spectator,' and appointed to be taken by such happy couples as wish to be rewarded for having lived one year and a day, or more, in wedlock, without strife or wishing the 'silken cord' untied."

For one hundred years the Abbots of St. Melaine, in Bretagne, bestowed a similar prize for connubial contentment; and at the Abbey of Weir hung a fitch of bacon with the following lines:

Is there to be found a married man
That in veritie declare can
That his marriage him doth not rue,
That he has no fear of his wife for a shrew,
He may this bacon for himself down hew.

Almost equally historic with the Dun-

now fitch—though the records of it have not been kept—was the Whichenovre fitch. Sir Philip de Somerville held the Manor of Whichenovre, or, as it is given in all old documents, "Whichenour," from the Earls of Lancaster; half the fees to be remitted, as well as half the fines, on condition that he kept a fitch of bacon in his hall at all times—Lent alone excepted—ready for delivery to every man or woman married, after a year and a day of the marriage be passed; and to be given to every man of religion: Archbishop, Prior, or other religious; and to every Priest after the year and day of their probation finished, or of their dignity received. There is not the least doubt, I believe, that either this was copied from Dunmow, or that Dunmow was copied from this; but, which is the oldest home of the custom it is impossible to say.

From an old number of the "Spectator," Dr. Plott's "History of Staffordshire," and other sources, it appears that Sir Philip Somerville held the Manors of Whichenovre, Seirescot, Ridware, Netherton, and Cowlee, all in the County of Stafford, of the Earls of Lancaster, by this memorable service. "The said Philip shall find, maintain, and sustain one bacon fitch hanging in his hall at Whichenovre, ready arrayed at all times of the year but in Lent, to be given to every man or woman married, after the day and the year of their marriage be past in form following:

"Whensoever that any one such before married will come to enquire for the bacon, in their own person, they shall come to the Bailiff or the Porter of the Lordship of Whichenovre, and shall say to them in manner as ensueth: 'Bailiff (or Porter) I do you to know that I am come for myself to demand one Bacon Flyke hanging in the hall of the Lord of the Manor of Whichenour, after the form thereunto belonging.'

"After which relation the Bailiff or Porter shall assign a day to him, upon promise by his faith to return, and with him to bring twain of his neighbours. And in the meantime the said Bailiff shall take with him twain of the freeholders of the Lordship of Whichenovre, and they shall go to the Manor of Rudlow, belonging to Robert Knightleye, or his Bailiff, commanding him to be ready at Whichenovre, the day appointed, at prime of day, with his carriage, that is to say a horse and a saddle, a sacke and a picke, for to convey the said bacon and corn a journey out of

the County of Stafford at his cestage. And then the said Bailiff shall, with the said freeholders, summon all the tenants of the said Manor to be ready at the day appointed at Whichenovre, for to do and perform the services which they owe to the bacon. And at the day assigned all such as owe service to the bacon shall be ready at the gate of the Manor of Whichenovre from the sun rising to noon, attending and awaiting for the coming of the one who fetcheth the bacon. And when he is come there shall be delivered to him and his fellow chaplets, and to all those who shall be there to do their services due to the Baron. And they shall lead the said demandant, with trumps and tabours, and other manner of minstrelsy, to the hall door, where he shall find the Lord of Whichenovre, or his Steward, ready to deliver the bacon in this manner: He shall enquire of him which demandeth the bacon if he have brought twain of his neighbours with him; which must answer, 'They be here ready.' And then the Steward shall cause these two neighbours to swear if the said demandant be a wedded man, or have been a wedded man; and if since his marriage one year and a day be past; and if he be a free man or a villein. And if his said neighbours make oath that he hath for him all these points rehearsed, then shall the bacon be taken down and brought to the hall door, and shall there be laid upon the quarter of wheat, and upon one other of rye. And he that demandeth the bacon shall kneel upon his knee, and shall hold his right hand upon a book, which book shall be laid upon the bacon and the corn, and shall make oath in this manner:

"'Here ye, Sir Philip de Somerville, Lord of Whichenovre, Mayntayner and gyver of this baconne, that I, A—, sith I wedded B—, my wife, and sythe I hadd hyer in my keepyng, and at my wylle, by a year and a day after our marriage, I wold not have chaunged her for none other; farer ne fouler; richer ne pourer; ne for none other descended of greater lynage; sleepyng nee wakyng, at noo time. And if the seyd B. were sole and I sole I wold take heyr to be my wyfe before all the wymmen of the world, and what condicones soever they be good or evylle, as help me God and his Seyntes, and this flesh and all fleshes.'"

After this, the neighbours took an oath that the applicant had sworn that only which was true. If it were shown by the

man and his neighbours that he was a freeman, the Steward delivered to him half a quarter of wheat and a cheese; and if he were a villein, that is to say, an ordinary labourer on the soil, he was to have only half a quarter of rye, without the cheese, which went to the more fortunate farmer or freeman. This done, "then shall Knyghtleye, the Lord of Rudlow, be called for to carry all these things before rehearsed, and the said corn shall be laid on one horse, and the bacon above it; and he to whom the bacon appertaineth shall ascend upon his horse, and shall take the cheese before him if he have a horse: and if he have none the Lord of Whichenovre shall cause him to have one horse and saddle, to such time as he be passed his lordship; and so shall they depart the Manor of Whichenovre with the corn and the bacon before him that hath it, with trumpets, tabourets, and other manner of minstrelsy. And all the free tenants of Whichenovre shall conduct him to be passed the Lordship of Whichenovre. And then shall return, except him to whom appertaineth to make the carriage and journey without the County of Stafford, at the costs of their Lord of Whichenovre."

Both at Dunmow and at Whichenovre it was customary, after according the fitch, to spend the remainder of the day in merriment. Indeed it was, to all intents and purposes, turned into a gala-day, with sports of all kinds, music, feasting, and dancing. The awarding of the Dunmow Fitch appears to have been conditional, as to its continuation, having a forfeiture clause. Under this clause, the Lord of the Manor, rightly or wrongly, refused to continue the custom. Not so the Lord of Whichenovre, he had no choice but to award the fitch and "trimmings" if they were demanded. If he neglected to comply with the request, properly made and supported, of the person who claimed the bacon, the wheat, and the cheese, he was liable to be proceeded against by law, and fined one hundred shillings—a considerable sum in those days.

Such, then, is the history of the custom which has given the title to this article. It is dead, perhaps happily so; for, to-day, it would be almost an impossibility to have such a celebration without the rough element being introduced, and putting to flight all possibility of rural merriment. Mr. Harrison Ainsworth discovered this when he attempted to resuscitate the

custom. The few occasions on which the fitches were claimed and granted seem to point to the conclusion that marriage was as much a success with our forefathers as it is with us, and that the couple who lived together in complete harmony for three hundred and sixty-six days was as great a rarity.

A LONDON POLICE-COURT.

To make the acquaintance of a police-court is, at some time or other, the common lot of most of those who bear the burden of life within the limits of the great metropolis. It is not necessary to belong to the criminal classes, whose knowledge of the subject—like Mr. Sam Weller's of London in general—is extensive and peculiar; nor either to be a victim of the predatory race, although, in that case, the experience is likely to be remembered. For there are many other ways in which the jurisdiction of the police-court may be brought home to you.

Have you left home on some wintry morning without providing for the clearance of snow from the strip of pavement in front of your dwelling? Has your chimney caught fire, and have the services of the fire brigade been zealously administered to put it out? Has your little dog run out unmuzzled into the street, and been run in by the active officer on the beat? Have you, in fine, offended in any way, knowingly or unknowingly, against the written or unwritten law, whether civil, municipal, or criminal, you have a fair chance of enjoying an evil quarter of an hour about the precincts of a London police-court.

The police-court is not usually to be sought in busy thoroughfares and well-frequented streets. It is, in most cases, rather difficult to find, and boasts of little outward embellishment. In a quiet, dowdy street, the plain, inconspicuous building may be passed without any particular notice. Sometimes, indeed, the quietude may be broken by the loud, passionate cries of some female, furious at being temporarily deprived of her mate:

"What, my Bill to 'ave three months' hard for mugging that wretched scoundrel Joe! Oh, let me get at him!"

And Joe stands a chance of putting in a bad time, if he should encounter wild-eyed Bess in her present mood. But these clamours soon die away in the distance, as discreet friends hurry the girl away from

the dangerous neighbourhood, where her riotous demeanour might involve her in the same fate as the beloved one. And the street resumes its accustomed quiet, people slipping in and out of the portals of the police-court in a quiet, undemonstrative way.

Yet, if some case is going on which excites public interest—such as a prize-fighting prosecution, or the sequel of a gambling club raid—then there will be a rush and a crowd that will startle the neighbourhood from its propriety, and task all the energies of the burly constables on duty to prevent the whole court being carried by a rush.

But, arriving at the police-court about ten a.m., the hour at which business usually commences, there will be found, perhaps, a number of people, chiefly women, clustered about in the lobby, and pressing upon the policeman in charge of the inner door; people of chirpy and chaffy demeanour, and respectable, if homely attire, who seem quite free from the nervous misery which attends an unaccustomed visit to a court of justice, whether as plaintiff or defendant. And these jocular people may prove to be a number of careless matrons and maidens who have lost or mislaid certain valuable securities known as pawn-tickets—a mischance which renders necessary a statutory declaration before a magistrate. And when these are disposed of, a knot of people still remain who are passed into the court one by one, by the attendants. These are applicants for summonses; neighbours, perhaps, who have ceased to be neighbourly, and have come to open warfare; servants who have complaints against former employers; people who have been beaten, and are not content. With these there may be a few who have come for "advice," it may be upon a matrimonial dispute, or on some knotty question of lodging-house ethics; while there are, perhaps, one or two females of eccentric costume and deportment who seize every occasion of having a word or two with the magistrate in reference to some treasured grievance.

When all these applicants have been admitted, and ranged in order, a little time will elapse during which they will have an opportunity of studying the inferior aspect of a police-court: the bench, with perhaps a few ornamental festoons of drapery overhead; but everything else plain and of strictly utilitarian arrange-

ment. The chief clerk is below, arranging his papers and dockets; the solicitors' pew is occupied by a single representative of the profession; while the box reserved for the fourth estate contains a solitary reporter, who seems to be thinking of anything but reporting on his own account, as he sits absorbed in the morning news-sheet.

Indeed, of all that passes in a police-court, a very small portion finds its way to the public press. Only if your case should chance to present anything unusual, grotesque, sentimental, or amusing, it will be picked up as so much treasure-trove by the vigilant reporter, and, multiplied by the ingenious flimry, will form a paragraph perhaps in every morning paper, and thus disseminate your name and fame to the four quarters of the globe. With all this there is a gentle buzz of conversation; the public exchange confidences as to the merits of their cases; police officers murmur discreetly to officials; when, suddenly, there is a little stir in the court, the usher calls out "silence!" and the magistrate makes his appearance from his private room, and takes his seat with business-like alacrity on the bench of justice.

The police have the first turn, as might be expected; but the list of summonses they require for various infractions of the law is soon gone through, and then the general public has its turn. Each applicant steps up to the witness-box, states his or her case; the magistrate puts a question or two, and then grants a summons or refuses it. If the summons is granted, the applicant passes into an adjoining office, pays two shillings, and, having ascertained on what day the case will come on, has nothing more to do in the matter till then, as the police undertake the duty of serving these summonses. Then follow the applications for advice, and sometimes for relief—for each police-court has a poor-box, which is replenished from time to time by gifts from the charitably-disposed, who have a well-founded confidence that their contributions will be distributed only to deserving and pressing cases.

When all this light and preliminary business is disposed of, the real, grim, serious work of the police-court begins. The charge-sheet, a document of portentous size, and often containing a formidable catalogue of offenders, is handed in by the police, and the hearing of the night-charges begins.

And the prisoners—whence come they? Probably from many different quarters, and by various means of transit. Some may have walked, under the charge of police, from a neighbouring police-station; or a cab may have brought some prisoner of higher pretensions than the ordinary. But the most have arrived some time before the opening of the court, driven up in the spacious, but not individually roomy, police-van. There has been a general gaol delivery of all the police-cells throughout the metropolis—such a delivery as occurs every workaday morning, when omnibuses, trains, and trams are crammed with smart, well-draped, and cheerful-looking young men, and, in these latter days, with a considerable sprinkling of young women, who may answer to the same description, hurrying, with hearts more or less light, to their daily employment. There are not many light hearts in the police-van, probably, although a reckless joviality is often assumed by its more seasoned passengers, and songs and choruses, with a dismal kind of gaiety about them, often enliven the long and dreary passage.

A certain number of police-courts, indeed, are in direct communication with adjacent police-stations—six of them, to be exact, out of a total of sixteen—and in these cases, the prisoners are brought direct from the police-cells to the dock of the court. But when the first batch of prisoners has been delivered, there is still work for "Black Maria"—the half-affectionate sobriquet of the police-omnibus, although she is not exactly black, but as dark a green as can be painted—for the "remands" have to be brought up from the various prisons, from Holloway, Pentonville, or Millbank. And there is a good deal of "remanding" under the police system of prosecution; and an unfortunate prisoner—presumably innocent—may be jolted about for some hours, as his conveyance deposits passengers at one police-court or another, before he arrives at his destination, and may spend a long day in the police-court cells, only to appear for a moment before a magistrate, while some piece of formal evidence is given to justify a "remand." To the seasoned offender this is a rather agreeable diversion of the monotony of prison life, he enjoys the ribald songs of the police-van, the coarse jokes and highly-seasoned language of the police-court cells with the companionship of birds of a congenial feather. But to the prisoner

who is as yet not inoculated with the criminal taint, the experience is sad and depressing enough.

It is now eleven a.m., and the business of the police-court is in full swing. The night charges are on, and on a Monday morning these charges are rather heavy. Saturday night, with wages paid, and drink in plenty to excite the quarrelsome, brings a good many to spend the Sunday in the weary confinement of the police-cells. And the lobby of the police-court is well packed with a miscellaneous crowd—witnesses, friends of prisoners who have come to see how they get out of their scrapes, people who are waiting to surrender to their bail. Here are shabbily-dressed women with babies, wearied and depressed; a coster's bride, in smart hat and ostrich feather, and brilliant shawl; a knot of sturdy but predacious-looking fellows whispering among themselves, well and warmly clad in corduroys and velveteens; poor starving creatures in rags and tatters, and wild-looking females in silks and satins, all frayed and faded.

It is a dreary, drizzling day, well suited to the occasion; the stone-paved passage is damp, and smeared with mud from the trampling, weary feet which have passed to and fro, and the long, wooden bench by the wall is filled from end to end. Half-way up the passage is the entrance to the court, enclosed within a wooden screen, and jealously guarded by a burly constable. The court is nominally a public one, but practical considerations prescribe the rule, "No admittance except on business." At the extreme end of the passage another door opens into the interior regions of the court; and here are gathered a number of women and youths who watch anxiously for the opening of the door, and hold hurried conferences with the warder. These, we are told, are mostly the friends of prisoners on remand, who hope for the opportunity of communicating with them; and some are provided with baskets or basins or pocket-handkerchiefs containing provisions, for an untried prisoner is permitted to have his meals from the outside world if he has money to pay for them, or friends willing to provide them. If he has neither, and is detained in the police-cells till the afternoon, he is entitled to a meal, cost not exceeding fourpence, at the public expense. But the choky feeling of one awaiting examination is generally meal enough for him, and the allowance is seldom claimed.

Next to the prisoner's door is the warrant-room, where uniformed policemen transact the business relating to the issue and execution of those peremptory documents. And beyond this there is nothing to be seen of the economy of the police-court by the weary expectants in the lobby. Women huddle together on the benches and try to keep their babies warm in the folds of old worn shawls; men hunch up their shoulders and stick their hands in their pockets. Now and then a name is called by the usher, and repeated in stentorian tones by the stalwart policeman. The people called are generally those who do not happen to be there. The friend of overnight, who valiantly promised to bear witness on behalf of the prisoner, is generally found wanting in the cold atmosphere of the morning's reflection.

But now the doorkeeper thinks he can find room for one or two more, and the interior of the court is revealed, with the magistrate on the bench, a prisoner in the dock, a witness in the box, and the proceedings going on with a slow deliberation that shows something serious to be in progress. The summary cases are disposed of quickly enough; but this is an Old Bailey business, and the clerk of the court is getting the evidence into the depositions, that bulky bundle of papers which will accompany the prisoner before the Grand Jury, which will be spread before the Judge as he sits on the awful judgement-bench, and finally endorsed with the finding of the Jury, will be buried for all time in the legal archives of the country. The case, indeed, is serious enough. There has been a fight with knives in the alums, and one of the combatants has been desperately wounded, and is now dying in the hospital. His antagonist is here in the dock, a dark, powerful young fellow, stolid enough, and seemingly almost unmoved, as he listens to the slowly-enunciated evidence that is accumulating against him. "Have you any question to ask this witness?" says the magistrate, as a policeman finishes his story. "We begun with fists and we finished with knives, that's all I got to say," he murmurs, doggedly; and, in effect, it is all that he has on his mind. And when he is remanded he turns away with a look of relief on his face, and returns with alacrity to his cell.

The next case is one of picking a pocket. The prisoner, a strong, burly young fellow, not at all of the Artful Dodger class, nor

belonging to the sleek, slippery class of thieves who wind in and about a crowd like so many eels. Our prisoner evidently belongs to the heavy-handed, rather than the light-fingered gentry; and such is the prosecutor's experience, a respectable, amiable-looking country manufacturer, who complains of having been unceremoniously hustled as well as robbed. That the hustling profession is a profitable one is shown by the result of the search by the police of the prisoner's pockets, which contained, besides five pounds in gold—which happens, curiously enough, to be the exact sum the prosecutor lost—nearly two pounds' worth of silver and copper.

While this is going on there is a little stir of interest and expectation among a little knot of young men, who are leaning over the barrier of what is called the public part of the court. They are of the same build and general appearance as the prisoner, and probably belong, not exactly to the criminal class, but to that border region which unhappily seems to be growing more extensive in these latter days, whose denizens turn their hands indifferently to honest labour or to deeds of violence, with a general preference for the latter. The cause of this interest is presently manifest when a prison official comes forward to prove a previous conviction against the honest youth in the dock. Upon this the solicitor, who has been defending the prisoner, holds a hurried conference with his client, and announces that, by his advice, the prisoner will plead guilty, in order that the matter may be settled by the magistrate. "Six months' hard labour," is the result of this advice, which was probably wise enough. For although there might have been a slender chance of acquittal before a Jury, who are not allowed to know anything about "previous convictions," yet the sentence, if found guilty, would have been much heavier for previous convictions—and half-a-dozen more might have turned up at the Sessions—which count for a good deal in the allotment of punishment.

"And what about the money?" asks the now-convicted prisoner. "Is he to have it all?" indicating the prosecutor, whom he evidently considers to be a very unworthy character. The magistrate orders the gold taken from the prosecutor to be restored to him. The rest, the silver and bronze, is the property of the thief, who leaves the court with a hop, skip, and jump, seemingly consoled by the prospect

of starting in business with a little capital at the end of his period of retirement. And yet, perhaps, we do the thief injustice, who may have tender feelings, like anybody else. Possibly one of those patient women with a baby, who waits in the lobby, may be the prisoner's wife, and the money may be meant for her, to keep body and soul together till she can find employment.

A string of cases follow of no particular interest, and some are dismissed rejoicing, and others go, bewailing fine or imprisonment, back to the cells. Again appears a wild, reckless, passionate girl in tawdry, ragged garments, who bursts into loud lamentations as she stands before the magistrate. She has been "put back" for some petty theft, being young, and hitherto unconvicted, to see if some benevolent lady will take charge of her in a Home. The Home is ready if the girl is willing. But no! she loudly and passionately declares that she will not go to any Home. And then the girl's mother is sent for, who is waiting outside—an eminently respectable woman in appearance, who might be housekeeper in a nobleman's family—and mother and daughter exchange looks with the width of the court between them—the decorous-looking woman in black silk, and the wild, unkempt, and draggled creature in the dock. The mother is for the Home, too—one wonders what sort of a home she made for this wild, erring daughter of hers. But the girl is firm enough, amidst her tears, with a decided negative.

"Then there is nothing for it but a prison," says the magistrate, severely.

And at the prospect, the girl's resolution breaks down.

"Oh, I will be good!" she weeps forth like a froward child.

And so the incident terminates to everybody's satisfaction. And we will hope that the young woman will come under firm and capable hands.

After this, "remands" come in thick and fast; prisoners appear and disappear. People who have been "put back" are, perhaps, finally discharged with a caution; others get small fines, which they pay, and they, too, go their way rejoicing. At last the charge sheet is disposed of; it flutters from the hands of the magistrate to those of the chief clerk. And that is a sign that the morning's business is finished, and there is a general clearance of the court as the magistrate disappears into his

private room. It is only a break in the day's proceedings. The court will sit again at two, and continue till the business then in hand is disposed of: and that will be business of a more private character. To-day may be devoted to the School Board; and parents and children, school visitors and managers will be in the respective positions of defendants and plaintiffs. Another afternoon will be given to private summonses, the squabbles, grievances, and offences which the police have not taken up. Cabmen and omnibus conductors may have a sitting to themselves. And, after the luncheon hour, the lobby will be filled by a more orderly and respectable crowd than that which usually awaits the disposal of the night charges.

But the luncheon hour may afford us a good opportunity for examining the interior economy of a police-court, which, in this case, happens to be one of modern construction, and among the most convenient of its kind. To the right of the public court is the private room of the magistrate, and the office where the clerical business of the court is conducted. The other side reveals another phase of the police-court: it is a gaol as well as a court, a gaol in which no prisoners spend the night, but which has its gaoler, who is responsible for the safety of the prisoners while under his care. A long passage is lined with a row of cells, which are mostly occupied at the present time, each cell holding four or five prisoners. It is not a gloomy place by any means, and the prisoners, a presumably innocent crew—although, perhaps, they do not look it—are not altogether silent or brooding, but seem to cultivate a jocose and cheerful spirit. And such cells as are empty are clean and sweet, with sufficient light and ventilation. The walls are done in white glazed bricks, and the cells warmed with hot-water pipes. And there is plenty of work going on in the way of enlarging and beautifying the present accommodation for prisoners. Opposite the cells is the waiting-room, so called, a room divided into compartments like the old-fashioned chop-house. For the ordinary prisoners from the police-courts, are not placed in cells, or put in charge of the gaoler. Each takes his seat in one of the reserved compartments, and the constable whose captive he may be takes up his position in the central passage. Then, as the cases are taken, the prisoners are ranged along the passage with their attendant policemen, who see

their charges safely into the dock, and then are quit of them altogether, except in so far as they may have to appear as witnesses in the case. From the dock, the choice is, liberty or the police-court cell. Even those who have the option of paying a fine must go to the cells till the fine is paid, unless they can discharge it on the spot.

On the floor above there is a similar arrangement of cells, passages, and waiting-room, for the use of female prisoners; and here, too, everything is being renovated and improved—the result of a Commission appointed several years ago to enquire into the accommodation provided for untried prisoners at police-courts. Coming downstairs again, the passage from the cells leads into a roomy courtyard, surrounded by high walls, all the windows looking out on which are strongly barred, while a formidable pair of gates, closed by heavy bars, will presently give admittance to the police-van, and will then be carefully closed till the van has taken up its load. In a general way, the van will arrive at about half-past two, and carry off the bulk of the prisoners detained in the cells. But for any who may be expecting release on bail, or on the payment of fine, or who may be subsequently committed, "Black Maria" calls again as late as seven o'clock, after which nothing further goes; and those who cannot find bail in money must be driven off to prison. And with the clanging of the gate behind the last batch of prisoners, the police-court is free, till next morning, of the labours and responsibilities of its position.

ASTLEY'S AND THE "CIRQUE."

WHEN I first visited the equestrian establishment on the "Surrey side," its principal attraction was, unquestionably, Andrew Ducrow, whose extraordinary feats of horsemanship far surpassed whatever marvels of the kind the frequenters of that popular theatre had previously witnessed. His father—Peter Ducrow, a native of Bruges and an acrobat of some celebrity—appeared in London as the Flemish Hercules, in 1793, in which year Andrew was born. The latter commenced his career as a pantomimist, and after a promising début at Astley's, accompanied the other members of his family to Holland, and from thence to Paris, where, having adopted the equestrian line of busi-

ness, he was engaged at Franconi's Cirque. In 1824, he and his stud of horses greatly contributed to the success of "Cortez," a spectacular drama produced at Covent Garden by the manager Bunn; and a few months later we find him at Astley's, where he speedily became a favourite, and in the double act of "Cupid and Zephyr," performed by himself and his wife, and above all, by his great feat in riding six horses at the same time, as the "Courier of St. Petersburg," drew overflowing audiences.

In 1831, Ducrow and West, then joint lessees of Astley's, produced "Mazeppa," an emotional spectacle which has often since been revived, and invariably with success; the additional attraction, moreover, of the admirably-trained "Pegasus" flying over the backs of three horses, and performing other equally remarkable feats, proved a constant source of delight to the public, and materially influenced the receipts of the theatre.

I well remember Ducrow as the Indian Hunter, and as the personator of Grecian statues after antique models, an exhibition displaying his shapely figure and graceful attitudes to the greatest advantage; as an equestrian, his coolness equalled his daring, and a curious instance of sang-froid shown by him in a very different line of business is related by Mr. Frost, in his "Circus Life and Circus Celebrities," to which comprehensive and amusing work I am indebted for several of the above particulars.

"One morning, during the season of 1833, he was on the stage, in his dressing-gown and slippers, to witness the first rehearsal of a new feat by the German rope-walker, Cline. The rope was stretched from the stage to the gallery, and the performer was to ascend it and return. Cline was a little nervous; perhaps the rope had been arranged more in accordance with Ducrow's ideas than with his own. Whatever the cause, he hesitated to ascend the rope, when Ducrow snatched the balancing-pole from his hand, and walked up the rope in his slippers, his dressing-gown flapping about his legs in the draught from the stage in a manner that caused his ascent to be watched with no small amount of anxiety, though he did not appear to feel the slightest trepidation himself."

Ducrow's first wife, who had been associated with him in his early triumphs, died in 1836. He subsequently married

that most graceful equestrian and tight-rope performer, Miss Woolford. He died in January, 1842.

Whenever the receipts at Astley's showed any sign of falling off, the manager had no difficulty in restoring the equilibrium by the revival either of "The Battle of Waterloo," or of "Mazeppa." Both were safe "draws"; the latter especially so. People were never tired of admiring the "wild, untamed steed" careering across the stage, and bearing its living burden over the steppes of the Ukraine. The last representative of the hero I remember seeing was Adah Isaacs Menken, in 1868. She was a native of New Orleans, and, besides possessing considerable attractions, had attained a certain celebrity in America, and afterwards in Paris, both as dancer and actress; and, being an excellent linguist, had even, it is said, translated the *Iliad* in her thirteenth year. Notwithstanding an enormous amount of puffing, however, her appearance as Mazeppa by no means increased her artistic reputation; and, although she drew large houses, the exhibition, "a combination of 'poses plastiques,' and dramatic spectacle," was more repulsive than agreeable. She subsequently published a small volume of poems, bearing the title of "Infelicia," and adorned with a prettily-engraved portrait of herself. This little book has become a bibliographical rarity, probably on account of the authorship of some of the verses having been ascribed—whether rightly or wrongly I am unable to say—to an eminent poet of the day.

Some years before the French Revolution, Philip Astley opened a circus in the Faubourg du Temple, where varied entertainments were given, consisting of equestrian exercises and feats of strength and agility. On his departure from Paris to London, the establishment fell into the hands of Laurent Franconi, who transferred it to a new building on the site of the present *Rue de la Paix*. He then resigned the management to his two sons, by whom the manège was transported to a theatre erected under their superintendence in the *Rue Monthabor*, where pantomimes were performed, in which horses were invariably introduced, and often played the principal parts. In 1809 the brothers Franconi quitted the *Rue Monthabor*, to take possession of their old theatre in the Faubourg du Temple, where the pantomimic talent of Madame Minette Franconi and the equestrian skill of other members of the

family, proved extremely attractive, and ensured the success of the speculation.

In 1826, the *Cirque Olympique*, as it was then called, was entirely destroyed by fire; and a site having been chosen for the erection of a new theatre on the Boulevard du Temple, it was opened in the ensuing year. From that period the novelties produced were chiefly military spectacles, most of them referring to the career of Napoleon, such as "L'Empire" and "Murat," the latter of which, as particularly appealing to popular sympathy, was frequently revived.

One of the successors to the brothers Franconi in the management of this theatre, either from a constant deficiency in the receipts, or by his own extravagance, was invariably hard up for ready cash, and, as far as he could, turned a deaf ear to any fresh claim on his purse. One day, a "figurant" in his company, of the name of Berlingot, came to him, and on the plea of long and faithful service, solicited an increase of salary. The manager, who perfectly knew the sort of man he had to deal with, replied in the gravest tone he could muster: "Monsieur Berlingot, looking at the current receipts, I find it impossible to augment your salary, but I will do more for you, much more. Though it is out of my power to accede to your request, I will at least satisfy your ambition. Hitherto, you have ranked among the subordinate members of my company, and have consequently been excluded from the 'foyer' (green-room). From this day, you are an actor, and have free admittance everywhere. Go, and without fear, call Monsieur Edmond Galland comrade; speak familiarly to Madame Gantier; I authorise you to do so. I hope, Monsieur Berlingot, that you will appreciate the special favour conferred on you." Away went Berlingot, marvellously flattered by his dignified position, and at least a head taller in his own estimation than before. He soon found, however, that in one important point he was worse off than ever; for, whereas the "figurants" received their salaries on the first of every month, the actors were not paid until the seventh, so that he was forced to live on credit for a week.

It is, however, more with the *Cirque of the Champs Elysées* that we have to do. This very favourite place of entertainment, where performances are given from May to October, was first opened to the public in the summer of 1838, under the management

of M. Dejean, and has ever since enjoyed an uninterrupted and well-merited popularity. From the reign of Louis Philippe to the present day, every equestrian and acrobatic celebrity has, in turn, appeared there.

When I first visited it in 1844, the representatives of "la haute école" were Baucher and that fearless Amazon Caroline Loyo. The former, one of the best French riders of his time, and author of a much-esteemed work on equitation, displayed alternately the cleverness and perfect docility of his highly-trained "Partizan" and "Topaze"; while his fascinating colleague—a remarkably handsome brunette—was applauded to the echo for her skilful management of the fiery "Rutler." During one London season she was engaged at Vauxhall, where she obtained a success equal to her deserts.

Other ladies of the company, each excellent in her peculiar line, were the lightly-bounding Palmyre Annato, the dashing Madame Lejars, and the very graceful Camille Leroux. These were admirably seconded by the intrepid riders Cinizelli, young Ducrow, and Théodore Loyal. Adolphe Franconi, who had grown too stout and unwieldy for active work, was ring-master of the Cirque for many years. This last member of an illustrious family, eight of whom had successively figured in the arena, died in 1855.

As time went on, the old favourites gradually disappeared, and were replaced by a new generation of equestrian and acrobatic notabilities, little if at all inferior to their predecessors: Léotard on the flying trapeze, Bridges and his pretty wife, Adams in the "Life of a Soldier," and his charming "sposina," alike unrivalled on the tight-rope and in the saddle, formed an ensemble that no other establishment of the kind could bring together. There may be some few playgoers still living who remember the inimitable man-monkey Mazurier; but even they could hardly fail to appreciate the performance of his successor, Montero, in the touching scene of "Jocko"; nothing within my recollection has ever surpassed it. Two English clowns, Kemp and Boswell, were comical enough in their way; but, with the remembrance of Auriol still fresh in my memory, I am afraid that I scarcely relished their drolleries as much as those among the spectators, less difficult to please, evidently did.

"What is lighter than a feather? Dust.

Than dust? The wind. Than the wind? Auriol."

Such is the eulogium prefixed to a biographical notice of one of the most popular favourites the Cirque has ever possessed; and, making due allowance for the pardonable enthusiasm of the writer, I feel more than half disposed to agree with him. Auriol was indeed a marvel of lightness, elasticity, and grace, and thoroughly original in all he did. He could walk on the tops of an array of wine-bottles without in the slightest degree displacing or even shaking one of them; and could vault over twelve horses flanked by soldiers with upraised bayonets, each of whom discharged his gun during the leap. His most extraordinary feat, however, which for neatness and precision could not possibly be excelled, was called in the bills "Les Pantoufles." Taking off his alippers, he placed them on the ground a little apart from each other. Then, after turning a somersault in the air, he alighted exactly above the alippers, into which his feet found their way, as it were, mechanically, and apparently without a hair's breadth deviation.

His daughter, a dancer of more vigour than grace, married the pantomimist Flexmore, who appeared at the Paris Vaudeville as the "Dancing Scotchman," some forty years ago. Auriol himself, after a long and triumphant career at the Cirque, died in 1852.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vallant,"
"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLII. ANOTHER SON-IN-LAW.

WHEN the carriage had gone about a mile towards Greystone, Mr. Kestell pulled the string and said he would get down.

"Hunter, just drive on and leave this note at the office. I think I shall walk home. I am not very well."

"Shall I drive you back first, sir?"

"Oh, no. A little air will do me good. The air is fresh after the storm."

"Yes, sir, it was a very sudden storm. They prophesied it in the papers for to-day; but, like everything as comes from 'Merica, it's more showy than good. 'Merica's the curse of the age, sir, with its cheap machinery and its water-weed, not to mention its storms, sir."

Mr. Kestell smiled and nodded his head. The footman shut the door, got up on the box, and the carriage drove off.

Mr. Kestell walked slowly back along the road; then, as if afraid that he might meet some one—though not many persons were to be met herabouts—he turned off into a path which led to higher lands, and from whence, making a circuit, he could descend into the road by the Pools.

It was a day that looked like autumn, perhaps because of the rain which had fallen in the night. There was a slight haze over everything, softening the shadow and sunshine of spring. By-and-by, when this was dispersed, it would be hot.

The bare trees were beautiful in their delicate outline, and did not look sad or dreary among the firs. Winter never really looked sad at Rushbrook, because of its ever-green woods and its rich carpet of heather. The robins were chirping with undisguised cheerfulness; there was a thrush seeking for building material by the last Pool when Mr. Kestell stepped on to the road.

Spring, that so often stirs the young blood to build beautiful castles in the air, and which, to the old, brings a dreamy, happy foretaste of the heavenly rest and beauty, only made this man inexpressibly sad as he paused by the tangled hedge where the dog-mercury shot upwards from the moist bank, and the speedwell peeped out with its blue eye like the first herald of summer flowers. Heaven defend the old from sorrowful back-looking; such are the avenues of remorse, though repentance stands by the way-side.

Mr. Kestell walked over the grassy path which separated the two highest Pools which were farthest away from Rushbrook. There had been an old lock here, in times gone by, by which these two Pools could be drained one into the other. Now the communication was cut off, but the old wood-work remained.

Mr. Kestell leant against it, and gazed down in the water. It was very deep, so deep that here and there the surface looked inky black. How calm and peaceful it was; it seemed to comfort and quiet the still shaken nerves, set vibrating by the morning's passionate feelings; for anger, like a pendulum, returns from whence it started; he who gives it its impetus will himself feel the rebound.

If Amice had suffered, Mr. Kestell had endured agony.

Now he was, as was often the case, arguing with himself.

"What a fool I was to be so easily roused—fool, fool! Did I not resolve only the other day that nothing should again take me off my guard. Strange that philosophy cannot be more easily learnt. 'Les malheurs des malheurs sont ceux qui n'arrivent jamais,' some Frenchman said, and he embodied in these words a tremendous truth. I have gone through a critical period, but it is over now. Nothing really remains that can bring up the past with certainty. Vicary will have enough to do with finding his own subsistence. I can't pity him; he was blind to his own interests.

"Why does he mistake his own good fortune? What will he gain by struggling with an imaginary wrong? He cannot know, and he imagines wild theories. Why waste his life, his youth? Poor fool! he will think differently when he comes to be old. Old, yes, I am getting old. Ah, how seldom one likes to acknowledge that old age has come. Manu says, 'Let not a man desire life; let him not desire death.' Does any man really desire death?"

Mr. Kestell moved slightly, and looked farther down into the black water.

"Does he? What will death do for man? Will it bury his secrets for ever, or will he be beyond the reach of discovery? Ah, who knows whether death will bring oblivion? Shall we see our private thoughts, our secrets handled ruthlessly by the living, and yet not be able to interpose one word, not give one explanation to soften down their estimate of us. Poor people, many of the living are stupid, they cannot clearly trace the minute steps which bring about such unfortunate results. And yet, perhaps, more often than not, indeed, the original mistake has been so slight, so pardonable, as to be a mere nothing compared with the result. But why trouble oneself about the future, the present only is sure—the present; there is yet time; and time is everything. Sound sleep is like death. The brain is stilled then, stilled. Dr. Pierquin saw the vermicular motion during a dreamy period, and said that, in sound sleep, the brain is quiescent. Death must, therefore, be devoid of thought. It is with matter in motion that we think. Stillness is without ideas. How strangely calm the water is to-day. All thought at rest upon it, one might say; not a ruffle, not a movement—Ah, what was that!"

The strange stillness was broken by a step through the brushwood behind him. Mr. Kestell did not stir, he did not even look round, till a voice called out :

"Mr. Kestell ! It isn't often one can find the man one wants. This is luck."

It was Walter Akister.

There was a look of supreme content over his usually dark and morose features.

Mr. Kestell let go his hold of the wooden beam, and held out his hand to the young man.

"You must wonder at my unusual presence here. I cannot remember when I gave myself the pleasure of a morning stroll."

Walter cared nothing about Mr. Kestell's walks, he was too full of his own concerns.

"I am very glad, anyhow, that you are here. Mr. Kestell, I was wondering when I could see you to-day ; but I would much rather see you out here. I want to speak to you about——"

"About Elva ?" said Mr. Kestell, hastily, seeing Akister paused. The old man was quite himself again, and the kindly look returned to his eyes. "My dear fellow, I think I can guess your meaning. Indeed, yours has been a very faithful affection, very unlike——"

"Don't mention that scoundrel. I do not wish to be a murderer ; but I was sorely tempted to leave him to his fate on Christmas Day. He is gone, gone for good, and I am heartily glad of it. If I have your leave, sir, I hope in time that Elva——"

Mr. Kestell eagerly grasped Walter's hand.

"Your father is a very old friend, Walter, and we have known you for years. I would not force my children's inclination ; but if Elva could forget that short, sad, unaccountable episode, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see her your wife."

"If she can forget," said Walter, gloomily, "that is the question. You should have forced an explanation from him, sir. He should have been horsewhipped."

Evidently the savage tone grated on the old man, for he said, very gently :

"At my age, Akister, one has to restrain one's natural impulses. Besides, Fenner never gave me the chance. I have made careful enquiries, and I can hear nothing of him. He went abroad, and left no address."

"And Elva does not know ?"

"She is entirely ignorant——"

Walter kept his own counsel.

"May I tell Elva it is your wish ?"

"By all means. Nay, more, I will tell her so myself, Akister. I will do everything to forward your wishes. Elva is young. My greatest happiness will be to see her get over this sad trouble."

Walter shook the hand held out to him ; and, without further conversation, he turned away and plunged again into the upland forest and disappeared.

"It must be soon," said Mr. Kestell to himself, "very soon. In that case, all might still be well. Poor child, it will be better for her in the future. Walter is not the man to care for anything but her. If Fenner had been like that——ah !"

Then he fell to musing again about Elva, till——though it was by no means hot——heads of perspiration stood on his brow, and it was painful to see the way in which the nerves started forward and had the appearance of being knotted and swollen.

"Such a small thing——such a small thing," he said, looking once more at the black water ; "if I had to begin again, should I do otherwise ? They can see my account-books and judge for themselves. I have spent the whole, and more than the whole on them, and now they are ungrateful."

He did not know how long he stayed here, only he guessed by the way the mist had all cleared away, and the sun had come forth in all its brilliancy, that it was getting on towards the early lunch time. He would not look at his watch, having a faint idea of saying that he did not know the time, and this care, to keep to the literal truth, made him smile at himself.

"One cannot be too particular," he said, aloud, and with these almost puerile thoughts he walked home along the road by the Pools. On the bridge he saw Elva. She was looking out towards the high road, and did not see him till he called her.

"Elva ! Well, darling ?"

"Papa, how did you come here ? Why, you will be in time for lunch. That is nice, for I am all alone."

"What is the time, dear ? I never looked at my watch. How is your mother ?"

"Why that's just it, papa. She is fast asleep now, and Ellen is with her. I came to see if Amice had sent a telegram. I told her to let me know if a nurse were coming."

What, that again ! Must he always have everything against him !

"A nurse! What do you mean?"

"Oh, you know, papa. Amice has taken Symce away to her brother, and how we are to manage I don't know I am sure. Amice said you knew all about it."

"I—I know?" he stammered.

How much did Elva know?

"Yes. Have you forgotten? She told you. Amice said so. She is so particular."

"Well."

Mr. Kestell spoke dreamily, and Elva looked at him anxiously. Lately her father had seemed sometimes not to understand quickly what was said.

"It seems Vicary is in trouble, and Symce feels she must go. She cried very much, poor girl; but it is better, of course, to be on the safe side. One would be sorry if she were unhappy here."

Mr. Kestell waved his hand slightly, as if the subject were of no importance.

"Elva, I have just met Walter Akister."

Elva blushed painfully.

"Did he speak to you, too, papa?"

"Yes, to me, too, darling."

"But you said nothing!"

"I said it was the dearest wish of my life; and, darling, I have, I may have, very few more years to live."

"How can you speak so? No, no, love is not for me; it cannot be after—what has taken place."

"My poor child! But do not fancy that a young heart can never recover. Sad and terrible as was the ordeal, surely you cannot think of him now in any light but one that is unfavourable."

"Papa, don't speak of it. Sometimes I feel as if I must hate him, as if I do hate him; but then at other times all the old feeling comes back. Papa, papa!"

The flood-gate of reserve was open, and Elva gave way.

"Hush, darling," he said, in a voice of infinite tenderness, "this distresses me extremely."

Elva tried to quiet herself but failed.

"It is a living death. I would do anything to get out of it. If I only knew—if I had some reason. I would not mind then, papa; indeed, I would try and bear it. I do now. I have been brave; I have tried new occupations, new interests, and all of it is like dust in my mouth; it all revolts me. I want only to know—just to know. Papa, you have had such a happy life. You have always had the one you loved near you. You cannot tell what it is. It

is like a great madness coming down upon me. I go about saying the same thing over and over again. Let me know. Never mind what the reason may be, let me know it."

"Hush, hush, darling," he said, and leaning against the bridge, he put his trembling arm round her. "Don't say that. It may be that—that if you knew—if we knew—you might wish your present ignorance back again. Try some other remedy; try, Elva, for my sake, to love the man who has loved you so long and so faithfully."

"Papa, papa, do you wish it? No, no, I cannot."

"My child, do you know—no, you cannot know—how much I suffer, and have suffered, for you? If I could clear this up, I would; but as it must remain a mystery, will it not be a great comfort to me to see you the wife of a man who loves you devotedly? How can I die, and feel that the child who is so dear to me has no one to turn to for comfort, no one to—"

"Please don't speak like that, papa, you will live a long time, and I shall at least feel that if I have lost his love, I have been able to give you more, if that is possible."

Mr. Kestell shook his head.

"I feel that any day I may be—that something may happen to me. Indeed, Elva, this terrible uncertainty about you may hasten this result. To know you happily married would—yes, I feel sure would add years to my life."

"Papa!"

"Yes, darling; I do not suppose it, even, I am sure of it. Your troubles are undermining my health, my peace of mind."

Elva drew a long breath. How terrible of her father to put it thus; he could not know, he could not understand what he was asking of her.

"But, papa, I do not love him. How can I promise to do so? Besides—"

And in her heart she cried out: "Hoel, Hoel, only tell me, and then I could judge whether it were wicked of me, even for my father's sake, to think of such a thing."

"No, dearest, yours is a true, noble nature, I do not expect you to change easily. But when love is gone, there are many softer feelings which, on the whole—who knows?—may make us happier than passionate love. It is not a love marriage that is always the happiest."

"But yours, papa—look at that."

There was a slight contraction of the muscles about his mouth.

"Mine has been no common love, certainly."

"I want to be like you. But Walter, papa, he is so easily angry; I am sure we could never agree."

"He loves you, dear. Think of that! Will not that counterbalance some few infirmities of nature? Are there many men who would come forward, as he has done, and, careless of what is said, at once declare that he loves you and will marry you now at once?"

Elva drew herself up proudly.

"Whatever people say, papa, about us—about me and you—is pure gossip. At least, Kestell of Greystone's daughter has nothing to be ashamed of, except for others."

"Yes, for others; but, dearest, about Walter. Will you not listen to my pleading for him?"

"For yourself, papa. It will be for you if I do it. Only, if—if— And yet how can I? If I do, you must teach me to hate him—Hoel—always; not now and then, but always. As the wife of another, how can I have that other feeling?"

"As the wife of another, Kestell of Greystone's daughter will do her duty," he said, proudly; then, suddenly, a faint flush covered his face.

"Will you think of it, dear—for my sake?"

There was a long pause. A terrible struggle went on in Elva's heart. At last she said:

"For your sake, papa. I love you so very much."

"And you will do this for me?"

There came the booming sound of a gong across the bridge, and both stood upright.

Elva felt like a hunted animal. She had fancied herself so safe, taking care of her father; and now he himself was pleading so earnestly against himself.

"If you were Walter's wife you would live here. Yes, child, at Rushbrook; we need then never part—till death."

"I cannot decide now," she said, almost angrily.

"Then to-night, to-night, my darling, give me your answer; believe me—your father—when I say that that other love is dead, dead, and it can never return; and this one is a true affection, I know it is, a true love; no obstacle will deter Walter Akister. I can understand that sort of love; the other was very different."

"Yes, yes," said Elva to herself, "oh, so different, he was my love; he might have had faults, but he was noble, and great, and brave, and gentle. Hoel—Hoel!"

Aloud she could only whisper:

"I cannot promise anything; but I will tell you my answer to-night."

Amice was gone, Mr. Kestell slowly took that in, and she had carried off Symee. What would his wife say? He hardly dared ask this question, and feared to go upstairs.

"I will have lunch, first, with you, dearest," he said to Elva; and Elva, forcing herself to eat something, tried not to show any feeling before the servants. Yet there was a strange hush everywhere. This was at last broken by the arrival of a fly containing a trained nurse—a pretty, bright young woman.

"Go and introduce her to your mother, Elva," said Mr. Kestell, and Elva, glad to get away, did so.

After a little time the old man nerved himself to follow, and, to his surprise, a new and brighter look was on his wife's face.

"My dear Josiah, what a comfort to have a pleasanter face about me. Symee has given me the blues lately. This Hodson is quite a relief."

So, after all his scheming to keep Symee, he discovered she was not regretted.

When Amice came back she found no one spoke a word about her absence, except Elva, who clung to her.

"Amice, my own sister, when you hear something, do not think badly of me. It is for papa's sake."

Amice did not understand, her mind was full of what she had seen in town.

That evening, Elva said, as her father's arm was round her:

"Papa, for your sake, I will, for your sake; but—tell him yourself, I cannot."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the morning after the birthday festivities Lady Joan sat at her writing-table in her boudoir with a very sore heart.

For one thing, her husband, instead of riding over to Wrexford, the centre of the colliery district, according to his wont immediately after breakfast, had remained closeted with his father for nearly two hours. That two hours' talk with the old man Lady Joan knew, from experience, meant mischief; in other words, the concoction and development of some scheme of an essentially plebeian nature.

For another, Herrick had not presented himself at the breakfast-table; and, instead, had left a message with the butler that he had gone over to Summerhill to breakfast. That meant that he had no intention of paying the slightest regard to his mother's wishes in his choice of a wife.

Hitherto, Herrick had shown himself singularly unsusceptible to feminine attractions, and, on this slender foundation, Lady Joan had built a castle sky-high. Her brother, the present Earl of Southmoor, had but one child—a daughter—who shortly would leave her school, at Brussels, and make her *début* in society. To this young lady, in default of heirs male, Southmoor, with its dilapidated mansion and acres run to waste, would descend. Now, what in life could be more suitable than that Herrick should marry this cousin of his and, with the wealth that must even-

tually be his, restore and beautify the old place, and settle down there among his mother's people?

And this cherished plan of hers, which had been growing and gathering strength as the years went by and Herrick remained fancy free, was to be all in a moment swept away by a girl who had come—Heaven only knew whence—to officiate in the family of a wealthy iron-master in the neighbourhood as nursery governess!

The room in which Lady Joan was seated was perhaps the only one in the Castle that showed no touch of the Gaskell hand in its furnishing and arrangement. It was redolent of another atmosphere. She had selected it on account of a view it commanded, beyond the newly-planted trees in the park, of a little glade—a tangle of bracken and bramble backed by a copse of hazel and wild plum—which vividly recalled to her the wild Devon scenery surrounding Southmoor. She had crowded into the room abundant reminiscences of her old home. Over the carved oak mantelpiece hung the portrait of her dear old grandfather, the seventh Earl of Southmoor. Side by side, on the opposite wall, hung the likenesses of Lady Joan's father and mother, both of whom had died in her early childhood. Around the room hung other family portraits, copied from those in the great gallery at Southmoor, by Lady Joan's own hand.

It would, however, have been rash to conclude from these evidences of her skill that Lady Joan was a devotee of any one branch of art. That davenport, pushed close to the grand piano, held the score of an unfinished opera. The writing-table at which she sat contained the beginnings, or endings, or middles of at least a dozen essays on subjects which, from time to

time, had engaged her attention. The bookcases, in various corners of the room, proclaimed what those subjects were. They covered a wide range: political economy, social science, modern religious thought, were all abundantly represented in those well-filled shelves.

A casual observer entering the room and glancing round, might have expatiated upon the high intellectual gifts and varied artistic tastes of its occupier. A deeper thinker, possibly, would have surveyed it from another point of view, and found in it evidences of a mind restless and ill-at-ease; of a life which had, somehow, missed its mark.

It was further characteristic of Lady Joan that, although the writing-table at which she sat contained, in an inner drawer, many prized relics of the dear Devon days—so many, in fact, that they seemed to make an atmosphere all their own in the room, and she never sat down to that table without being conscious in a subtle sort of way of what it held—yet among them all was there not a single memento of Vaughan Elliot and his early love-making.

"You must make your choice, Joan, and make it finally, with no whining after-regrets," her grandfather, the old Earl, had said to her when John Gaskell had made his offer of marriage. "If you want to marry Elliot, marry him and be a country parson's wife. You know what that means—there are many typical examples in the neighbourhood. If you marry John Gaskell, you will have all the luxuries in life you desire, and, when the old man is dead, your influence with your husband no doubt will be paramount. You can make him shake off his plebeian associations, and live where and how you please. There is no third choice for you. I am too poor to give you a season in town, and as you know, when I die, everything here must go to your brother."

So Lady Joan had made her choice, and had been as resolute as her grandfather had wished her to be in excluding all "whining after-regrets" from the scheme of her life.

After that passionate final interview with Vaughan Elliot, in which he had seen fit to conduct himself for all the world like a man with a heart in his body, she had said to herself: "This man must go utterly out of my life now—as utterly as I, no doubt, shall go out of his." For thirty years she had held to her resolve, and though John

Gaskell, no doubt, might have had abundant reason to complain of his wife's coldness and want of sympathy, never for an instant had she given him cause for jealous distrust.

Yet, although Vaughan Elliot and his passionate love had ceased even in memory to be more to her than last year's blighted crop of summer roses, Fate, throwing her shuttle hither and thither, had cast the threads of his life athwart the warp of hers. Here, to her very doors, the man had come, silently as any Nemesis "shod in wool;" and by-and-by, so Fate had decreed, he was to knock and ask for admission.

CHAPTER V.

LADY JOAN found her correspondence that morning uphill work. While her pen "presented compliments" to Lady This or Mrs. That, and accepted or refused this or that invitation to dinner or "at home," her thoughts rang painful changes on Herrick and his ill-advised love-making. It was something of a relief when her maid came, with many humble apologies, to ask if "my lady" would be pleased to see Lucy Harwood, the would-be new maid, who waited below.

The engagement of her maid was always a matter of first importance with Lady Joan, and one that she delegated to no one else. Her standard, as regarded the maid's acquirements, was a high one, and involved not only skilled knowledge of her duties, but exceptional refinement of manner and appearance.

When Lucy Harwood was shown into the room, Lady Joan's eye, as it lifted, saw that her standard in these latter respects was reached. Before, however, she had talked with the girl five minutes, other things, beside her pleasing appearance and gentle voice, had impressed her—the hurried, nervous manner, the deep sadness of tone, and the wandering, far-away look in the eyes of the young woman.

The nervousness of manner Lady Joan thought natural enough. No doubt it was an ordeal for a girl in her station to be suddenly shown into the presence of a great lady; the sadness also, she thought, might be accounted for by the black dress the girl wore; but that far-away, wandering look in the eye, puzzled her. Only once before in her life did she remember to have seen such a look, and that was in the eyes of a girl charged before her husband, in his official capacity as a local magistrate,

with attempting suicide. She closely questioned Lucy as to her bringing up and present surroundings.

The girl's replies were simple and straightforward enough. Her father, she said, had lived as butler at a rectory within a few miles of Southmoor—Elliot was the name of the Rector.

Lady Joan slightly smiled.

"I knew him quite well," she said, easily, as if the name conjured up no bitter reminiscences. "And your mother is dead?" she added, glancing at the girl's deep black.

The girl's lip quivered; she did not reply.

Lady Joan, desirous to avoid a display of emotion, resumed her questioning at another point.

"You were born and educated at Southmoor, I suppose?" she asked.

"I was born at Southmoor, my lady," answered Lucy, "but was sent away when I was very young to live with an aunt in London, and only occasionally went home. When I was about fifteen, my father broke up his home in Southmoor and took a farm, the one my brother has now, near Wrexford. When my aunt died I came home to Wrexford; then my father died——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Lady Joan, for the story had but a scanty interest for her when it drifted into the details of the girl's private affairs.

Then she concluded arrangements. Lucy might come for a week on trial, be initiated into her duties by the present maid, and if she gave entire satisfaction, Lady Joan would engage her permanently. If she liked, now that she was at the Castle, she might remain, and one of the grooms would drive over to the farm and fetch what she might require for a week's stay.

This offer Lucy gratefully accepted. As she left the room John Gaskell's firm, brisk footsteps were heard in approach.

"I'm late," he said, as he came in. "Joan, did you wonder what had become of me? I fear I can't get back from Wrexford now much before dinner."

As a rule, John or Herrick, or sometimes both, were in the habit of rising from the breakfast-table and setting off straight for Wrexford, where every matter, small or great, which concerned the working of the colliery received their individual attention. Millionaires they might be—these Gaskells of three generations—but that,

to their way of thinking, was no reason why they should neglect the mill which ground out the gold, so long as their names continued to be connected with it.

Lady Joan looked up from the writing-table, where she was rearranging her correspondence.

"Not till dinner!" she repeated, a little absently, meanwhile trying to get her thoughts together, and decide whether she should at once consult her husband respecting Herrick's foolish love-making, or whether she should defer so doing till his return in the evening, when business matters would be off his mind, and he would be able to give her a more undivided attention.

"I'm afraid not," her husband continued. "My father and I had so many things to talk about, that I hardly knew where to break off. By the way, Joan, he's not looking at all as I should like him to look. I'm afraid yesterday was a little too much for him."

He paused, waiting for a reply from his wife.

Although John Gaskell and his wife were both past middle life, they still made a handsome couple. Tall as she was, he stood at least half a head taller; and though his features might lack the aristocratic curves and lines which hers owned—notably those of the upper lip and nostril—there was yet in his face a frankness of expression, a straightforward look from his blue eyes right at the person he chanced to address, which abundantly compensated for the deficiency.

His manner of addressing his wife was perhaps a trifle more ceremonious than is that of most men after a married life of close upon thirty years. John Gaskell, however, before he had been wedded a year, had discovered upon what footing he and his wife must live, if "peace were to dwell within their walls," and, like the sensible north-countryman that he was, had looked the fact in the face, and had shaped his course accordingly.

"I think it was a little too much for every one," said Lady Joan, coldly, for the keeping of this ninetieth birthday with such effusion had seemed to her a ridiculous business throughout.

"Well, it was too much for him, at any rate," interrupted John, knowing that he and his wife looked at this matter from different points of view, "and I shall be glad if you'll go in once or twice while I'm away and see how he is getting on.

Where's Herrick? I've not seen him this morning."

"Ah, I wanted to speak to you about Herrick," said Lady Joan, feeling how impossible it was to neglect this opportunity for mentioning the subject which had caused her such disquietude.

But her husband interrupted her again, feeling that a lengthy discussion threatened now.

"When I come back, Joan, will do for that. After dinner I will tell you exactly what I think about Herrick and his love-making. Just at this moment I've a good many things in my head—small matters, perhaps—matters of detail, most of them, but till they're got rid of, my mind is not free to attend to other things. Now, good-bye till dinner-time." He turned towards the door as he finished speaking, then paused a moment, with his hand on the handle. "Oh, by the way, Joan, I may as well give you a hint as to the matter my father and I were discussing this morning; we've rather a big scheme on hand just now. My father has always insisted that the coal-seam dips under there"—here he pointed to the little glade crowned by the hazel copse—"and he wants to buy up that slice of land, and a little bit that skirts the heath, and sink a shaft. It'll bring the colliery business rather close to our doors; but, of course, the inconvenience to us will be slight compared with the money it will bring into the district; it'll be the making of Longridge."

Lady Joan drew a long breath. So, then, the little hazel copse, which recalled the wild Devon scenery, was to be uprooted, a coal-shaft sunk, and the whole nasty, grimy colliery business was to be brought to their very doors! And this at the suggestion of the feeble old man who couldn't walk across the room without help! Was the greed of these Gaskells for money-making never to be satisfied?

She drew her lips tightly together, but never a word escaped them.

John Gaskell's mind, however, was so full of other things that he did not see the look which clouded her face. His eyes were fixed, like hers, on the glade and hazel copse, and in fancy he saw the wood cleared away, the shaft sunk, truck lines laid down; in a word, the whole country around for miles astir and at work.

He noted her silence, however, and said to himself:

"As usual, she sees things from another point of view, and is too honest—or too

proud—to affect a sympathy she does not feel."

Aloud he said:

"Good-bye again, Joan. Don't forget to look after my father and attend to all his wishes while I'm away."

This was how John Gaskell left his home on that bright August morning. Stalwart, cheery, his heart full of kindly thought for his wife and aged father; his brain teeming with visions of the increased prosperity which would flow into the district so soon as his "big scheme" began to work.

CHAPTER VI.

"At last I get you to myself," said Herrick, drawing a long breath. "Now tell me, Lois, what on earth made you run away, as you did yesterday, without saying a word to me?"

Lois, hanging her head like a naughty child expecting a good scolding, answered confusedly:

"I was frightened, and so I ran away—I didn't think about what I was doing—I ran away just because I was frightened."

It was no wonder that Herrick should say "At last!" Although he had arrived at Summerhill before breakfast, in that most irregular household, had come to an end, yet it was not until after luncheon that he could get five minutes' quiet talk with Lois.

Lois White not only officiated as nursery-governess to Mrs. Leyton's seven small children, but acted generally as that lady little woman's factotum and representative on every possible occasion. And this was no sinecure in a household where, though wealth abounded, order was at a discount. Summerhill was now full of guests, and Lois was everywhere in request. Herrick, naturally enough, chafed under a condition of things he intended to bring to an end as speedily as possible; but, for the time being, he was obliged to submit to seeing Lois at the beck and call of every one except himself.

Mrs. Leyton, so far as it was in her to look with favour on anything disconnected with herself and her own immediate pleasures, was disposed to view with a friendly eye Herrick's love-making to her pretty governess. She had bitterly resented Lady Joan's slight in not calling at Summerhill, when Josiah Leyton, buying an old house that chanced to be in the market and lavishing his gold upon it, made a

bid for county society. To put no bar to Herrick's intercourse with Lois seemed to her an easy way of paying off this debt. "For if," as she confided to her maid, with whom she was on very familiar terms, "anything should come of it, that proud woman will be taken down a peg."

Herrick's passion for Lois had been of remarkably rapid growth. The first time he had seen her in church, his eye, wandering from his mother's statuesque and inscrutable features, was struck by the girl's mobile and childlike beauty.

He had made vigorous efforts to induce Lady Joan to show some sort of civility to the new arrivals; but, failing lamentably, had taken matters into his own hands, and had got himself invited to certain social gatherings, at which he knew they would be present. Being a young man of strong will and very decided opinions, he, naturally enough, preferred the society of women in whom these characteristics were kept well in abeyance. Also, naturally enough, since he owned to close upon six feet of stature, and in face was dark and pallid, he had a strong predilection for the society of the petite and the blonde. Lois White fulfilled all his requirements in these respects, and his love-making to the little governess had been ardent and persistent accordingly. Neighbours, after a time, had begun to talk; and their talk had even reached Lady Joan's ears. She, however, had at first thought it wiser to disregard these rumours, and had not even thought it necessary to mention them to her husband, saying to herself, that this must be a flirtation—nothing more—on Herrick's part, that, if no stress were laid upon it, must die a natural death.

Later on, however, her opinion had had to be modified, for Herrick, in her presence, had made one or two remarks which could not be altogether ignored; such as: "I think it is nearly time I settled down as a married man;" or, "Father, you were younger than I am, when you married, weren't you?"

Lady Joan's fears, however, had not risen to danger point until the morning of the birthday festivities, when Herrick, as he rose from the breakfast-table, had said:

"Mother, this afternoon, I am going to introduce to you a young lady with whom I hope you'll fall in love on the spot. I shan't say any more till you've seen her."

Lois had, with difficulty, been induced to allow Herrick to drive her over to the

Castle. "I want them to see your beautiful face, my darling, and to hear your sweet voice; and then, one and all, they'll say, 'Herrick, you're a lucky fellow, get married at once,'" he had had to say over and over again, before she had yielded.

On arriving at the Castle, he had taken her straight to the pavilion, beneath which sat old Mr. Gaskell, and had introduced her to him as his "darling little wife that was to be." Whereupon, the old man had taken both Lois's hands in his, and had bidden "God bless her," in his kindest tone. Then Herrick had intended introducing her to his mother; but, before he could find Lady Joan, he had come upon his father in the thickest of the crowd, endeavouring to adjudicate upon the rival claims of two competitors in a "consolation race."

"Here, Herrick, come and help as umpire," he had cried, catching sight of his son. "You're wanted here, there, everywhere."

Upon this, Herrick had gone through a hurried introduction of Lois to his father, from whom, amid so many distractions, little more than a nod and a smile could be expected. Then, promising to return speedily, he had, very much against her will, taken Lois into the adjoining meadow, where Lady Joan was distributing sundry gifts to the old people, and, introducing her with special emphasis, had left her in his mother's charge, while he returned to the village athletes. Lady Joan had at once developed so arctic a manner that poor little Lois could almost have fancied herself in latitude eighty degrees north, in spite of the blazing sun which poured down on them.

"I was frightened, and I ran away," was all the account she could give to Herrick of what followed, as side by side they strolled under the big branching oaks and beeches with which the park at Summerhill abounded.

The explanation was not to Herrick's mind entirely satisfactory. For a minute there fell a silence between the two. Then he said:

"Lois, will you tell me, word for word, what my mother said that scared you so?"

"Said! Oh, she said nothing at all!" answered Lois, readily enough.

"Nothing! And yet you were scared!"

"Oh, yes; her silence was so dreadful, I felt it—felt in a moment that she didn't like me. Oh, and now I think of

it, she did say something. I made a remark about it being so fortunate that the day was fine for the sports, and she said: 'I beg your pardon.'

Herrick's grave look gave place to one of amusement.

"And that scared you!" he cried. Then he added, not knowing what a prophetic undertone rang in his light words: "Is that the way in which you mean to get through life, Lois, fleeing like a little bird to covert at the first alarm? It is lucky for you you'll have me to look after you, or I don't know what would happen."

How like a child in disgrace she looked as she walked on beside him in silence, her head drooping so low that her big sun-hat hid her face from him! She was dressed in a simple white frock tied with broad sash ribbons. In her hand—the one that Herrick left free—she carried a child's spade and a large bunch of wild flowers. These she had been laden with as she came out of the house by little four-year-old Daisy Leyton, with the injunction that "Loydie"—as she most disrespectfully styled her governess—would remember to make the Adonis garden under the big beech-tree as she had promised to do more than a week ago.

Right into the heart of a "regal red poppy" there fell a big, round tear.

Herrick's arm was round her in a moment, and her big sun-hat, pressed against his shoulder, suffered in shape accordingly.

"My darling, what is it?" he cried. "What have I said—what have I done? Tell me."

When Lois found her voice, her words came all in a rush:

"Oh, Herrick! I see it all now—I did not understand it at first when—when—you spoke to me. But yesterday, as I stood beside your mother, I seemed to feel what she thought, and to see things with her eyes—and that was why I wanted you to come to-day—that I might tell you—"

But she was not allowed to finish her sentence, for Herrick's lips kissed her to silence, and the sun-hat suffered in shape again.

"I beg your pardon, Lois," he said, presently, as she straightened her hat, "but I knew you were going to talk nonsense, and took measures accordingly. My poor child! You are trembling from head to foot. Come and sit down under this beech, and if you don't mind,

we'll just quietly talk this matter out together."

Under the spreading shade of this beech there were one or two wicker seats. Lois declined the one which Herrick placed for her, and kneeling down on the turf, began to make Daisy's Adonis garden. It was an easy way of keeping her face turned from Herrick, for she was still bent on saying the words he had so summarily cut short, and it seemed to her easier to say them with her face thus hidden from him.

He flung himself on the ground beside her, handing her the flowers as she planted them.

A pretty scene it made—these lovers planting their Adonis garden—in the wide expanse of russet-green sward, broken only by the black blots of shadows cast by the oaks and beeches. The stillness around them was that of early autumn, when Nature—always a strict economist of her wondrous forces—bids bird-notes to cease, while she flings her glorious reds and yellows across creation.

"In spring I called upon you to open your ears," she seems to say; "now I say open your eyes, stand still, and admire!"

Herrick broke the stillness.

"You said just now, Lois," he began, gently, as he handed her a purple foxglove, "that, when you stood beside my mother, all in a moment you seemed to see things with her eyes, and to feel as she felt. Will you mind, now that you are beside me, seeing things with my eyes, and feeling as I feel? I assure you it will be much more satisfactory to me if you will."

Lois's face turned brightly towards him; she was half-smiling now, though her eyes still glistened with tears.

"Your mother is older than you——" she began.

"Naturally," interrupted Herrick.

"And, of course, knows better than you do what is likely to make your happiness," she said. But she said it in a wavering tone, as if she were quite willing to be convinced to the contrary.

"Pardon me, I can't admit that. My mother has no more conception of what would constitute my happiness, than she has of what would make the happiness of any one of the collier lads over at Wrexford. However, if you are going in for the wisdom which age brings with it, I'll tell you what my father said yesterday when I wished him good-night. 'Herrick,'

he said, 'I like the look of that little girl you brought over to-day. You must let us see more of her.'

"Did he say that?" broke in Lois, impetuously.

"Ay. And he's five or six years older than my mother; so of course, in your eyes, he knows better than she. And there's the dear old grandfather, he's forty years older than my mother—think of that—and he said: 'Thank Heaven I've seen your wife before I go, Herrick. Now I know your happiness is secure——'" he broke off, exclaiming: "What, darling, tears again! Why, you're watering your flowers!"

In very truth the girl's tears were falling like a summer rain among the already drooping blossoms.

But still, like a child who won't forego repeating some speech which it has mastered with difficulty, Lois set herself to say the words which Herrick was so loth to hear.

"What I wanted to tell you, Herrick, was that—if—if, on thinking things over, you thought that—that you'd been hasty in—in asking me to marry you——"

Again she was not allowed to finish her sentence. She was planting a thick border of heather round her miniature garden. Herrick laid both his hands on hers, stopped her work, interrupted her speech.

"My darling," he said, and his voice now quivered a little, "I know exactly what you are wishing to say, and I beg of you beforehand not to say it. Remember, I'm not a feather-headed boy who tumbles into love one day and out of it the next. I knew perfectly well what I was doing when I asked you to marry me, and I say to you now what I said to you then, that if only you love me, not father, not mother, nothing in all creation, nothing in this world, or in any other, shall ever come between us."

For a moment after he finished speaking the great stillness around them once more made itself felt. Then suddenly, sharply, breaking in upon it, came the sound of a tolling bell.

It seemed to come inopportunistly. They started and looked at each other.

"Oh, I know," cried Lois, presently, "it's St. Elizabeth's bell. I met the new priest yesterday, and he told me he was going to start afternoon and other services, and I should hear the bell going at all sorts of hours. I had a long talk with

him. I fancy you would like him, he seems such a nice man."

"Does he?" answered Herrick, indifferently, not knowing what a factor in his life's history this priest was to be.

A BOAT-RACE SKETCH.

THE wonder is, where all the people come from who are scurrying down towards the river, with their dark or light-blue ribbons fluttering in the breeze. There are more of them than ever, one would say, although we are told that the boat-race is no longer the great function that it used to be in the days when columns of picturesque description occupied the front pages of the daily journals. And this is no Saturday affair either, when more or less of a holiday is the rule; but a solid, business-like Wednesday, when the world in general is supposed to be engrossed in its daily occupations.

Certainly, a considerable portion of the crowd is composed of those to whom life seems to be one long holiday; gangs of lads and young men, mostly of loose and patchy attire, who march along in little bands, whooping and yelling as they go. But these noisy youths mostly stream off along the tow-paths, where an improvised fair is going on, with cocoa-nut shies, shooting galleries, and all the latest spring novelties in the way of popular amusement.

Certainly there is less congestion, perhaps, at certain favourite spots than there used to be in the old days of Plancus and his merry men; but that is owing chiefly to the new Hammersmith Bridge, which is now open to the actual moment when the boats have started, although the police have all their work out to keep the dense throng continually passing along. The old bridge, it will be remembered, was considered so frail that it was closed for all traffic for three or four hours before and after the race; and, for people living on the Middlesex shore, it was the business of a whole day to go and see the boat-race with any comfort from the other side.

But we have crossed the new Hammersmith Bridge—more sturdy, but less graceful, than its predecessor—and now the pressure is relieved of elbows and iron-heeled boots, for the multitude keep to the river-side, where the tow-path is already dark with thick clusters of people. We

are for Barnes Bridge — the railway bridge that is—and so through Castelnau, that curiously-named region of villas, and then by a pleasant way across the green, where the pond is, and the ducks, and the old-fashioned houses that look out upon the scene.

There are great works going on at Barnes, of the main-drainage order, with great banks of soil and huge chasms covered with planks, all barring the way to carriage traffic, which is sent round the other way. In Barnes High Street we are in the thick of the crush again. All London, you might think—had you not seen a considerable portion of it going elsewhere—was marching solidly down to the river; or on drags, four-horsed omnibuses, costers' barrows, coal-carts, spring vans, and every other description of vehicle was being carried at a foot's pace in the same direction.

Along the river-front there is the same general crush—that pleasant river-front, with its comely, red-brick houses—and the same, as far as one can see, in either direction, while every opening reveals the sight of more people hurrying along to join the general throng. Further on there is a row of carriages drawn up, and vehicles of all kinds, brewers' drays, coal-carts, drags, and shandrydans, all crowded with spectators, while lines of people, three or four deep, are drawn up on the very edge of the river-bank. Between the lines it is possible to squeeze along without much difficulty, while negro minstrels, acrobats, and street performers of all kinds contrive to secure a pitch here and there in the middle of the throng. An amiable-looking young man is distributing tracts among the preoccupied crowd. "Never you refuse a track, sonny," says a turfy-looking man to a young companion who has rejected the proffered leaflet with some disdain. "I've picked a winner out of a track before now."

It only requires a little patience to get near the front rank of a long array of spectators, and here is the river at last, looking brown and turbid enough, and rather lumpy by reason of the strong breeze, and pretty low among the mud-banks, the tide being low, and having made no sign as yet, the wind, which is blowing the contrary way, having much the best of it. The jolly young watermen, who are bucketing up the river to find places somewhere higher up, find the business a toil rather than a pleasure,

and the steam launches have the best of it, especially those craft from below bridge, with jolly skippers on board, and dock-masters and their wives and daughters, the craft that are accustomed to rough, windy reaches, and think nothing of them. There are tugs, too, that have hauled big ships along before now, and that now have got a barge or two at their tail; the barges, as smart as paint can make them, with chairs and tables on board, and all kinds of refreshment in the chief cabin. Now a smart little yacht steams quietly along, or a Conservancy steamer, which has an air of business about it, but which perhaps only means pleasure after all. Or the City banner is displayed, or a pennant with the magic word "Police"; for the guardians of the shore, and the Conservators of the river, alike are fond of a trip afloat on boat-race day.

Not that the traffic on the river is all one way; down come steamer after steamer laden with up-country people, which are looking for berths lower down. And there are steamers, too, which are run as so many advertising stations, and whose business it is to be in evidence constantly, up or down. By-and-by, when the flood-tide is fairly on the move, the flotilla of row-boats increases in volume. If any of the various crews happens to have a shade of blue upon the blades of the oars, immense is the ironic cheering and mocking laughter that greets its progress.

Where we stand is the centre of a crescent-like bend of the river—the headland far down the river being somewhere opposite Thorneycroft's torpedo works—with Chiswick meadows stretching green, and rather sloppy-looking, on the other side of the stream. On this side, the line of shore is black with people all along, and a considerable number have found their way to the green banks on the other side. The other way, Mortlake presents itself, with its houses and breweries, and the "Ship," conspicuous with its flags, its frontage darkened with human beings; and opposite is the barge that forms the winning-post, with a background of willows and osiers. The iron railway bridge, too, is a conspicuous feature close at hand, about the supports of which a number of nimble and adventurous people have perched themselves. Presently train after train draws upon the bridge, and discharges its load of passengers, till when the last one has drawn off, the bridge itself is fairly crowded with spectators.

Already there is an artist on the top of one of the pillars, sketching in the surroundings of the scene; and elsewhere photographers have got their cameras in position. In fact, we are all here, except the rival crews, and although the cry is still "they come," yet, still they don't come.

Altogether, there is a fair amount of din to occupy the waiting crowd: cheers, and laughter, and loud hootings, as some belated craft—occupying the rôle of the stray dog on the racecourse—is pulled along erratically by an unpractised crew; and between whiles rise the hoarse songs of the minstrels, the twanging of the banjo, the patter of the public performer. Along the rails are drawn up two or three drags full of undergraduates, who, in faultless Bond Street attire, show the University colour in lovely "button-holes" of violets, and who manifest the inherent high spirits of youth by keeping up a hideous discord on their long coach-horns, while a bugle and a trombone make themselves heard at intervals. Next to the drags is a clump of coal-carts, filled with jolly coalmen, "Shillin' a hundred, coal," all in their Sunday best, and vying with practised lung with the horrid noises of their neighboura.

But, suddenly, all noises cease. There is perfect stillness for a moment; even the breeze has fallen light, and the ripple of the water is hardly heard. Then cheers and clamour sound faintly in the distance, and out of the haze and rippling gleam of the far distance comes an indistinct and moving mass, which presently resolves itself into two glittering tracks, where dripping oars flash swiftly to and fro, with a background of steamers and launches, seemingly piled one on the top of the other, as if two gleaming, silvery fish were pursued by an army of dolphins, tritons, sea monsters, with a whale or two thrown in.

But a general roar of wild excitement rises as it is seen that the race is a close one; and the boats shoot under the bridge, Oxford three parts of a length in front, but Cambridge not done with yet, but, with a desperate effort, drawing up foot by foot.

And so, with frantic cries of encouragement from every side, they pass out of sight, swallowed up in the crowd of following craft. Loud has been the uproar among the under-grads, shrieks, cries, personal adjunctions to individual members of the straining crews. And now the crowd relaxes, without dispersing, and every one

awaits in breathless interest the hoisting of the flag which shall declare the issue of the race.

One does not see why the crowd, chiefly composed of Londoners, who have, few of them, ever had the remotest connection with the Universities, should feel such a vital interest in the result; but thus it is. And the interest is not confined to the crowd actually present. All London, with the greater part of England, and that considerable portion of the round world that still flies the old flag, are waiting anxiously for tidings of the event. And, as far as London is concerned, anxiety will be everywhere satisfied in half an hour's time, not so much by the evening papers and special editions—although these are smart enough about the business—but by means of a kind of personal magnetism: the news transmitted orally, or by signs among engine-drivers, omnibus conductors, cabmen, letter-carriers. So that, in many a quiet suburb far away, where the only signs of the contest are in the light and dark-blue flags that flutter in the back gardens, or the ribbons in the housemaid's cap, people will know "who has won" as soon almost as we do.

Meantime, veterans discuss their experiences of former races, though all agree that this contest of 1890 will prove "a record" for the even, ding-dong nature of the contest all through; for the beauty of the weather—some one recalls the race of 1872, which was rowed in a snowstorm—and for the comfort and good-humour of the crowd, combined with its immense extent, the whole four miles of foreshore being thickly planted with human beings.

And what a contrast between the scene presented in 1845, when the race was first rowed over its present course! The first race between the two Universities, by the way, was rowed at Henley in 1829, and then not another till 1836, when the old Westminster to Putney course was used, and the affair became intermittently an annual. The boats used then were strong, sea-going craft, oak-built and copper-fastened. Outrigged boats were first brought out in 1846, but were of much heavier construction than now; for it was not till 1857 that the keel-less, cigar-shaped racing eight, as we now know it, came into existence. And then with sliding seats, adopted in 1873, we have the modern racing craft complete; and it is difficult to see how she can be made slimmer, swifter, or more cranky.

Now the general impression among the crowd—especially among the female portion of it—is that Cambridge ought to win, in order to make the two Universities exactly even in their wins and losses; an equable settlement which Fate interferes with on the present occasion, for the dark-blue flag is presently seen to be the uppermost, and there is frantic rejoicing among the under-grads of that persuasion. They shout, they roar, they cheer themselves hoarse; they dance with joy, flourish umbrellas like tomahawks, and generally seem to have gone stark staring mad with joy and exultation. Oxford's horn is elevated now, anyhow, and it blows a fearful blast, while Cambridge on the bugle can only sound a mournful "retreat."

There is still plenty to be seen on the river, which is nearly covered with floating craft. Advertising steamers buzz about, and the full tide creaming with crimson hues as the sun declines redly among the mists, bears to and fro the argosies loaded with those who take their pleasure upon the waters from far and near, whether from the regions of Limehouse, or Albert Dock, or Tilbury, or the furthest South-end, or from pleasant Richmond, or ancient Kingston, or from the thousand and one villas, hovels, or palaces that line old Thames's banks from here to Marlow, famous in the annals of barges. All are homeward bound by this time, and the crowd on shore begins to give signs of disintegration. Those who are on the bridge are taken up in trains, and depart, like souls who belong to another sphere; everybody's carriage is stopping the way; coachmen are struggling to lead their horses through the crowd; people dart under horses' legs, and beneath waggons, and storm the spring-vans on either side, in their anxiety to get away. Here are country parsons among the rout, with their broad felt hats and rosy cheeks; old oars, promoted to shovel-hats and gaiters, beam through their spectacles upon the crowd, which they are happily out of. The nice old-fashioned houses turn out their temporary denizens. Here are houses where nice, old-fashioned, hospitable riverains used to live, who kept open house on boat-race day. But, alas! they are almost all gone now, and a commercial spirit reigns; windows and balconies are appraised at so much a head, and people put boards across their summer-houses and hen-coops, and reap a more or less bountiful harvest of half-crowns.

And as people spread themselves out a little, and find room to give play to their lungs, what a babel of voices and cries meets the ear! The newsboys fling themselves into the battle with their "Result of Lincolnshire Handicap!" and find their harvest among the crowd, where sporting proclivities are not unknown. Alphonse is there, too, in a wonderful check suit, "tout à fait Anglais," who has studied the manners of England, and is explaining them effusively to a less instructed companion. Germany is represented by its bakers, of whom a solid majority, taking London over, put in an appearance at the boat-race. And there is a Scandinavian element from the Commercial Docks; and we have China, and Japan, and the real African sable brother; all mixed up pell-mell with carriages and horses in a slowly-moving column, horse, foot, and artillery, that stretches out for miles and miles, till it adds its quota to the crowd and din of London streets.

MINERVA'S BOON.

THEY stood by their mother's chariot, the Argives
young and fair,
With the laurel wreath, the athlete's prize, set on
their clustering hair;
They stood by their mother's chariot, as proud and
calm she came,
To pay her vows at Heré's shrine, the stately Spar-
tan dame.

No oxen yoked to draw her! Must she fain at
home abide?
Out laughed each stalwart hero, as he stood on
either side;
And for forty measured furlongs of the winding
mountain road,
Young Cleobis and Bitó drew on their honoured
load.

Loud shouted all the multitude, as in her tearful
joy,
The mother from her chariot smiled on each bright
glowing boy;
As on to Heré's altar in her matron pride she
passed,
Mid waving flags, and chanted song, and ringing
trumpet blast.

And kneeling at the shrine, ablaze with many a
glittering gem,
"Look on my sons," the mother prayed, "great
goddess, give to them
The boon, the best and brightest that in omniscient
love,
To his mortals, at his daughter's word, comes from
immortal Jove."

And, legend says, great Heré looked down with her
large, clear eyes,
And listened to the mother's prayer, and took her
sacrifice;
And when the solemn festival had passed in song
away,
Asleep beside her altar steps the fresh-crowned
athletes lay.

Asleep; while on each fair, proud face the moon-beams, stealing down,
Touched softly either young red mouth, touched soft each laurel crown;
While the mother knelt beside them, and checked her sobbing breath,
For Jove, in quiet sleep, had sent his choicest blessing—Death.

In the Temple raised in Delphos two honoured statues stand,
For the story of the granted boon flew through the startled land;
And Cleobis and Biton smile through the ages there,
From sorrow, sin, and failure saved by the mother's prayer.

IN THE FOLKS' WOOD.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

IN the summer of 1876, Fate and a state of feeling which I can only describe paradoxically as one of apathetic restlessness, took me into the depths of the country for a few weeks.

"A long and listless boy," like Tennyson's hero, like him, too, I was "late left an orphan," though not by any means of "the squire."

My father, a scholar and recluse, had recently closed a blameless career by a death befitting the calm dignity of his life; leaving me, a shy and studious lad, a dreamer of dreams, alone in a world where dreams are at a discount, and for whose strife the rarefied atmosphere of our silent intercourse had ill fitted me.

My mother had died too early for me to distinguish between vague, infantine memories of her and my knowledge of what her smiling portrait—painted before her marriage—showed her to have been.

If my father had ever formed any plans for my entering a profession, I was ignorant of his intentions. He never spoke of them to me, at least; and I am inclined to think that he felt he could leave no better heritage to his only child than the old book-crammed house, with its traditions of learned leisure and scholarly retirement, which had so amply fulfilled his own ideal.

But under the shy reserve of the long-limbed, awkward lad—upon whom I look back now, across the years that have passed, with a half-pathetic wonder if he indeed were I—strange new forces were beginning to assert their right to live; and, after the first few weeks of bewildered newness succeeding the gentle old scholar's death, the mingled feelings I have spoken of inclined my awakening spirit towards change—change of some sort—and the drowsy air of the summer amongst the

closely-packed houses (for the father and son had lived their lonely life in the heart of the largest city in the world) grew stifling.

In this mood, it chanced that an advertisement, printed amongst others on the outside sheet of a scientific journal, caught my weary eye; and within half an hour my answer was written and posted.

The advertisement ran thus:

"Comfortable rooms, with board, in a country house, in the midst of the most beautiful scenery in——"

No; I will not tell the name of that loveliest of counties, or give even the slightest clue to help the ravages of tourists. Let that spot—where first I truly lived—remain sacred in one memory. Even to me it seems dreamlike now. There are moments when I doubt if I could find my way to it, whether it really exists at all, except in the remembrance of the dream I dreamed—and awoke from—there.

The advertisement went on to speak of moderate terms, of the station from which the house could be reached, and so on; and ended with a recommendation of the place as especially suitable for an artist or a gentleman reading for examination.

Now, I was, unfortunately, neither of these things; but, nevertheless, the idea of the "comfortable rooms" in that country house took my fancy amazingly, and I must own—since I was at heart, under my reserved and shy demeanour, a very fanciful and imaginative lad—that the name of the place itself was a strong element in the attraction. "For particulars, apply to Miss Denison, Folks' Field," had a ring of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" about it which was very taking; and, since I had lived all my life in Titania's Court, this same name proved one of the most powerful elements in my instant determination to become the summer occupant of the rooms at Folks' Field.

It was a lovely day, late in June, when, all preliminaries arranged, and with expectation—half apprehensive, half pleasureable—in my breast, I alighted at the station in the small town—whose name I do not intend to tell—and looked for the "trap" which Miss Denison's letter had informed me would be in readiness to convey me to Folks' Field, a distance of six or more miles.

There was only one carriage in waiting, so even my diffidence was equal to asking its driver if I were right in sup-

posing it to be intended for my—Mr. Stephen Erakine's—conveyance to Folks' Field; and, on an affirmative grunt, I mounted to his side, and we began a leisurely progress through what—having since travelled over half the world—I still think scenery as beautiful, of its kind, as eyes could desire.

The "trap" was of ancient build; the horse had seen better—and far younger—days; the man matched both, and had a gruffness all his own; but there was an occasional glint of something related to sympathy in his small blue eye, as it peered from his wrinkled, weather-beaten face, at what he doubtless thought my unhealthy pallor and fragility, that gave me courage to ask him a question or two about the country we passed through.

Presently we turned into a road—or rather a track, half turf, half earth—that wound through a wood that seemed to me the most beautiful sight I had ever seen. The massed trees; the intense blue of the June sky; the warm fragrance of the fir-scented air; even the bumps and jolts of the carriage as it lumbered along the rutty, grass-grown track; are as vivid in my memory to-day as they were then in actual fact.

A rusty gate came in sight; my driver dismounted heavily, opened it, and we jogged on through more trees; past a great sheet of water where the moor-hens perked their little heads as they swam hurriedly away; along a short avenue that seemed a mere clearing in the woods; until at last we stopped at the door of a low, irregularly-built house, with creeper-covered walls, and a look of neatness—not to say primness—about it, which was greatly at variance with the neglected air of the surrounding garden and out-houses.

An old woman, who was as neat as the house, and who, I learned later, was the wife of my gruff driver, opened the door and greeted me with an old-fashioned curtsy, while behind her appeared a lady whom I assumed—correctly—to be Miss Denison herself.

My hostess was a largely-made woman, of somewhat gaunt figure, who looked about fifty, and who must have been handsome in her youth. Her hair, under its neat cap, was very grey, and there was a worn and anxious expression in her grey eyes, which somewhat belied the great cheerfulness of her cordial welcome to me.

Probably I did not see all this at the

first glance; after events stamped it on my memory.

"I hope we shall be able to make you comfortable, Mr. Erakine," she said; "you must promise to tell me if you want anything, and I will do my best to please you. It is the first time we have taken a boarder, so you will know that if anything is not quite to your liking, it is my inexperience, not my will, that is at fault."

I stammered some sort of profession of faith in her powers; and, to turn the conversation, expressed my delight at the beauty of the place, the woods, and the pond—lake—I did not know which to call it.

"The Folks' Mere, it is called," she said; "and the wood, the Folks' Wood. The names have come down from the days when they were thought to be the haunts of the fairies—the Good Folks."

"It is a lovely name," I said, fervently. "I hope I may catch a sight of the fairies that haunt them still."

"Ah!" she said, and sighed, with the anxious look plain in her eyes.

I felt rebuffed, for it was something motherly and sympathetic in her that had drawn me on.

"I will show you your room," she went on; "and then, perhaps, you would like to take a stroll about the place before supper. My father likes to keep to his old habits, so I hope you will not mind humouring him by dining early."

Of course I hastened to assure her that my dinner hour was a matter of supreme indifference to me; and after making acquaintance with my bed-chamber—a cheerful, bright room, with spotless drapery and windows looking across the garden into the depths of the wood—I made my way out of the house and along the avenue by which we had driven.

Presently I turned in amongst the trees, wandering here and there, intoxicated with the beauty and the fragrance, and regardless of the direction I took.

Suddenly, a little ahead of me, I caught sight of a figure lightly winding its way amongst the trunks—a slight, airy figure, in white garments, that seemed to trip over the ground without sound of foot-fall.

"The fairy of the woods!" I whispered to my heart, "Titania herself!"

But the airy figure stopped short in a green ring, where felled trees had made a clearing, and seated itself on a fallen

trunk; and then I perceived that it was a human being, a girl; but of so ethereal and delicate a form that a less fanciful beholder than I might well have been excused for taking her for the guardian sylph of the woods.

She raised her head and gazed intently at the branches above her, evidently quite unaware of my presence; and then I saw plainly the soft, pale fairness of her oval face under its crown of dusky hair, and the azure of her dilated eyes. As I looked—not knowing whether to make my presence known to her or not—a strange, sweet smile crept over her face, and she began to speak softly, her outstretched hands waving gently.

I turned, intending to creep away unseen; but my foot trod a rotten bough, and at its crackling she started, caught sight of me, and in a moment had risen, and was flitting once more through the trees in what I imagined to be the direction of the house.

My pulses throbbed. Could she be an inmate of Folks' Field? Miss Denison had mentioned no one but her father.

The wonder gave me a thrill. Life grew interesting all at once, and my purposed sojourn amongst the woods an adventure in Fairyland.

I followed the flying nymph at a respectful distance; but I saw her no more.

At eight o'clock—the hour which, as I had been informed, was appointed for supper—I descended to the pleasant room, where a substantial meal was laid with a neatness and spotless cleanliness that spoke of Miss Denison's personal supervision, to find my hostess and her father awaiting me.

"Father," said Miss Denison, "this is Mr. Erskine;" and I received a frigid bow from one of the handsomest, as well as the sternest-looking old men, I have ever met.

Mr. Denison of Folks' Field was six feet two in height, and bore his seventy odd years upon shoulders that put my slight, stooping ones to shame; while he carried his haughty head, with its mass of silver hair, with the pride of an acknowledged monarch of the earth. His garments—like his garden and out-buildings—told of age and rigid economy; but he wore them as though they had been royal robes.

I had been on the point of putting out my hand as Miss Denison introduced me; but at the sight of that freezing bow I withdrew it, with shame and confusion in

my breast; it was as if I had offered to shake hands on being presented at Court.

Mr. Denison led the way to the table, where I sat at his daughter's right hand. The table was laid for four, and, before I had begun to eat, I had become aware that both my companions glanced at the unoccupied place opposite me with varied expressions.

Miss Denison's faded face showed a hot flush on each cheek-bone, and I saw her anxious eye wander from the empty chair to her father more than once as she talked to me. Mr. Denison had cast one stern look at that side of the table as he took his seat; but he ate his meal in unbroken silence.

The door opened softly, and a girl slipped into the room, and timidly approached the table.

It was my woodland nymph in her white gown, looking lovelier, if possible, now with a faint flush on her pale cheek and her blue eyes cast down.

Mr. Denison looked up angrily.

"How late you are, Sylvia, dear!" exclaimed Miss Denison, hurriedly, but with evident relief from anxiety in her voice. "You forgot we had a visitor. This is Mr. Erskine. Mr. Erskine, my niece, Miss Sylvia Denison."

There was a second's pause before the last word, which came out with a hint of defiance, that I somehow connected with a movement as of anger Mr. Denison had made as his daughter spoke.

Miss Sylvia acknowledged my bow—the very best I could manage—with a timid little inclination of her pretty head, and a heightened colour, and, slipping into her chair, began to eat her supper in a dainty, bird-like fashion.

She did not look at me again; and since she sat in perfect silence, I did not venture to make any mention of our previous meeting in the woods. Miss Denison and I kept up a desultory conversation, until her father, having finished his meal, rose, and, with a "Good evening, Mr. Erskine," as awful as his first greeting of me, left the room.

"My father spends the evening in his own sitting-room," explained my hostess. "You will get used to our ways in time."

I assured her earnestly that she must not consider me in such matters. In fact, I felt infinitely relieved that the terrible old man should prefer spending his evenings alone, and so leave me to revel in the company of the beautiful Sylvia, her aunt's

presence being, to my youthful diffidence, quite other than a drawback.

"Sylvia, darling, why did you stay out so late?" Miss Denison was saying, with an anxiety in her voice that would not brook waiting for my absence to express itself. "You know your grandfather dislikes unpunctuality so much."

"A warning for me," I thought, determining not unnecessarily to rouse my host's wrath.

"Oh, Aunt Rachel, it was so lovely! I forgot. And then——" she looked shyly across at me.

"I came upon Miss Denison in the woods, before supper," I explained; "I am afraid I startled her, for she ran away at the sight of me."

"Silly child!" laughed her aunt; but the anxious look was strong in her eyes. "You won't be afraid of Mr. Erskine again?"

The girl looked at me and smiled.

"No," she said, like a child.

"I'm not a very terrible person," I said, and then wished I had not, for Sylvia's eyes went to the door by which her grandfather had left the room, as if my words suggested comparisons.

We went into the drawing-room then—a long, low-pitched room, with faded furniture, and a scent of pot-pourri, where a wood-fire burned in the grate—pleasant and friendly, in spite of June weather and wide-open windows; and then Sylvia grew bolder and talked a little, with the awakening confidence of a reassured child.

Ah! how lovely she looked; the fire-light caressing her soft cheek and dancing in her eyes; the slender hands clasping and unclasping each other, as she imparted to me some of the secrets of the woods she seemed to know by heart.

Miss Denison sat and knitted and listened, putting in a word now and again, but leaving the burden of the talk on us two young people.

"I thought you were the fairy of the woods yourself, to-night, Miss Sylvia," I said once, jestingly.

She fixed her eyes on me with a strangely intent expression.

"Didn't you see——?" she began.

"Sylvia, dear, come and hold this skein for me," put in Miss Denison; "and, Mr. Erskine, may I trouble you to put another log on the fire? You will find the basket by the side of the fireplace."

At ten o'clock Sylvia rose and kissed her aunt affectionately. Then she held

out her slim hand to me. "Good night," she said, in her soft, even voice; "will show you the woods, to-morrow."

"My niece is not very strong," Miss Denison was saying, when my eyes came back from following the girl's light figure to the door, as she passed out. "That is why I—why her grandfather and I—don't like her to be wandering in the woods so late."

Delighted—if abashed at finding myself discussing this beautiful nymph with her aunt and apparent guardian, for I concluded she must be an orphan—I was emboldened to murmur, "She is so lovely;" and stopped short, affrighted at my own boldness.

Miss Denison looked at me gravely for a moment, with eyes that seemed to be searching my very soul, and made me think she must be offended.

"Yes," she said at last, with a sigh, "she is lovely. Mr. Erskine, I don't often make mistakes about character, and I think you are both kind-hearted and trustworthy——"

She paused, and I blushed hotly as I stammered out that I hoped so.

"Sylvia leads a dull and contracted life here," she continued. "It is not good for her—for any girl—to live the narrow life she lives. It will be such a great help to her if you will take a little trouble to divert her mind from—to amuse her; to talk to her a little about the outside world, the world away from this weary—this wood."

The anxious look was very strong on her face as she spoke.

"Trouble!" What could it be but pleasure and delight to amuse or interest this fairy maiden of the woods? What sweeter reward could diffident youth desire than to bring the smiles to her eye, the laugh to her lips?

"It will be the greatest pleasure to me, Miss Denison, I assure you, if Miss Sylvia will allow me to be of the very slightest service or diversion to her in any way," I declared grandiloquently, but none the less sincerely; and Miss Denison bade me good-night with kindness that seemed almost like gratitude, and dismissed me to slumbers in my lavender-scented sheets that were haunted by visions of the woods and this white-robed Dryad.

When I woke next morning, my eyes opened on the unfamiliar room with a sense that I must still be dreaming, and I should presently awake to find myself in

my well-known chamber in London; and, even as I dressed, vague fears beset me lest the fairy of the evening before were at best but the heroine of an especially vivid dream, so that my heart gave a palpable leap when, on entering the breakfast-room, I saw her sitting demurely at the table, looking in the bright morning light no less lovely, though something less ethereal, than under last night's glamour.

Miss Denison greeted me with smiling cordiality, while her father's cold "Good morning," expressed as little of that virtue as words could manage.

But what mattered an old man's coldness to a young dreamer, before whose eyes the first blissful vision of young love was unfolding itself?

THE DOWNFALL OF THE ZEBRA.

THERE is only too much reason to fear that one of the most beautiful animals in the world is rapidly becoming extinct. Sportsmen and travellers concur in reporting that the zebra of South Africa is now more and more difficult to find, and is, like the aboriginal races of primitive lands, disappearing before the march of civilisation. And, unlike "the noble savage," the agile zebra has ever resolutely refused to be tamed. In spite of Pastor Robinson, and the amazing capabilities of the immaculate Swiss Family, it is more than doubtful if this phantom of fleetness and grace has ever been crossed by mortal horseman.

The name zebra is applied, in a promiscuous kind of way, to three striped species of the section *Asinus* of the genus *Equidæ*. These, like the ass, are all distinguished from the true *Equus*, in having a long tail tufted at the end, by callosities on the inner side of the fore legs only, and by uttering a bray instead of a neigh. The three striped *Equidæ*, classified by naturalists, are the quagga (*Equus Quagga*); Burchell's Zebra (*Equus Burchellii*); and the *Equus Zebra*, which is the true zebra. All three are natives of Africa, and are found nowhere else. Both the quagga and Burchell's zebra are inhabitants of the plains, while the true zebra is found only on the mountains.

Yet, though its habitat is so restricted and so distant, the zebra was known to the ancients. It figures far back in history, and was the hippotigris of the Romans. It was very rare, however, even in their

time, and is only once mentioned as present in Imperial Rome in the circus of the Emperor Caracalla. This is the more remarkable because it is believed that the true zebra was once a native of Abyssinia; and the name itself is supposed to be of Abyssinian origin.

The Dutch found it, of course, when they settled at the Cape; and, perhaps, in their early records, there may be mention of the "wilde paard," or "wilde esel," as they indifferently called it.

The Jesuit Tachard seems to have been the first to bring back to Europe, or, at all events, to publish, a full description of the wonderful animal, which he calls Zembra. He even gave a woodcut, which proves that he never saw one himself, and took his description either from a skin or from hearsay. The stripings are correctly enough given, but the colours are fabulous and the head impossible.

This was about the middle of the seventeenth century; and twenty or thirty years later another traveller—Ten Rhyn—returned with a more accurate account.

Still later, viz., about 1705 or 1710, Kolben, who spent some years at the Cape, wrote of the zebra as one of the most beautiful, well-shaped, and lively creatures he had ever seen. Yet, he cannot have ever seen one at all to judge by the woodcut he gives, which is almost as uncouth as that of Tachard. His description, however, tallies with the true zebra, not with the quagga:

"His legs are slender and well-proportioned, his hair soft and sleek. There runs along the ridge of his back, from mane to tail, a black list, from which, on each side, proceed streaks of white, blue, and chestnut colour, meeting in circles under his belly. His head and ears, mane and tail, are also adorned with small streaks of the same colours. He is so swift that no horse can keep up with him; and, as he is so hard to be taken, he bears a very great price."

So very great a price, that, according to one historian, the Great Mogul once gave two thousand ducats for a zebra; and, according to another, the Emperor of China presented the Dutch Governor of Batavia, in return for one, with ten thousand taels of silver, and thirty night-gowns, valued in all at one hundred and sixty thousand crowns. But then Emperors—especially of China—are proverbially lavish, and are often made to pay largely in excess of market rates.

Mr. H. A. Bryden, in his book about sport in South Africa, "Kloof and Karoo"—to which we here express our grateful indebtedness for many of the facts for this article—gives a photograph of a mature true zebra, which he saw caught in the Sneeberg mountains in 1887. Comparing with this, it seems that the first real portrait of the true zebra was published in Brook's Natural History in 1760. The portrait was taken from a living specimen at Kew, belonging to the then Prince of Wales, but does not tally with the letter-press, which is descriptive of Burchell's zebra.

That caught and photographed in the Sneeberg mountains, near Graaf Reinet, in 1887, is believed to be the only mature true zebra ever captured, and, certainly, ever photographed. What is believed to be a new variety of the true zebra was, however, discovered a few years ago in Shoa, in North Africa. A specimen was sent home to President Grévy by the King of Shoa, and was for a short time in the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, where it was photographed. This variety has been named "*Equus Grévyi*," and while differing in a few points from the South African animal, it appears to be really of the same family.

Except for this newly-discovered variety, the true zebra has been found only in the most remote and rugged ranges of Cape Colony—such as the Sneeberg, the Witteberg, the Zwartberg, and Winterbock mountains. It never seeks the plains where roam, or used to roam, the zebra of Burchell, and the quagga, or quacha, of the Boers and Hottentots. The quagga has become extinct within the last twenty years, and Burchell's zebra has not been met with south of the Orange River for a very much longer period.

Mr. Bryden, it should be mentioned, made most diligent inquiry after the quagga when he was in South Africa, and he could not find that it has been seen south of the Orange River since about 1860 or 1865. In the Orange Free State it roamed for a few years longer, but is now quite extinct there also. Mr. F. C. Selous, the well-known African traveller, says that he has not heard of a quagga for years, and believes that it is now completely exterminated.

Burchell's zebra, which is often confused by travellers and sportsmen with the true quagga, must still be lingering somewhere in the interior, for skins even yet occa-

sionally find their way to East African ports. There is one variety yet which Mr. Selous says is still "fairly common" in Central Africa. It ranges even north of the equator, while the quagga never seems to have ranged north of the Vaal River.

The following is a pen-and-ink portrait of the now extinct quagga, according to Cornwallis Harris. The adult male stood four feet six inches high at the withers, and measured eight feet six inches in extreme length. Form compact; barrel round; limbs robust, clean, and sinewy; head light and bony, of a bay colour, with longitudinal and narrow transversal stripes, forming linear triangular figures between the eyes and mouth. The muzzle was black; ears and tail strictly equine; crest very high, arched and surmounted by a full standing mane, looking as if it had been hagged, banded alternately brown and white. The colour of the neck and upper parts of the body a dark brown, fading off gradually to white behind and underneath. The upper portions of the body were banded and brindled with dark brown stripes, clearly defined on the neck, but gradually getting fainter until lost behind the shoulder in spots and blotches. The dorsal line was black and broad, widening over the crupper, and the legs were white, with bare spots inside above the knees.

Such was the quagga, whose courage and ferocity in the wild state were renowned, but who was the only one of the zebra family capable of domestication. The Boers in old times often used him about their kraals, and the late Sheriff Parkins used to drive a pair in his phaeton about London. It is to the Boers, however, that we must trace the downfall of the quagga. They began at first to shoot them as food for their slaves, in order to save their own flocks and herds; and afterwards they slaughtered them for their hides, when it was discovered that their skins brought a high price in the hide-market. The plains of the Orange Free State are littered with the bones of countless animals ruthlessly destroyed for their skins alone.

Only two specimens of the quagga were ever in the Zoological Gardens, and both are long since dead. The beautiful creature will soon be lost to memory, as it already is to the Karoo.

Burchell's zebra, which may still be seen in the Zoological Gardens, has, or had, a much wider range than either the quagga

or the true zebra. Although the commonest, it is the most beautiful of the group, being more equine than the other two, and more richly and attractively coloured than the true zebra.

Burchell's zebra was called by the Boers the "bonte quagga" (spotted quagga), which has led to some confusion of the species. Its markings, however, are much fuller than those of the true quagga. Its ears and tail are of the equine type; its body is sienna colour, with brown striping, and it frequents the plains only.

The true zebra (*Equus Zebra*) is now the only member of the family remaining in Cape Colony; but the troops are becoming fewer and fewer, and the date of its total extermination does not seem far distant. His body is of a beautiful silvery white, with the black markings evenly distributed, and extending to every part except the stomach and the inside of the thighs. The legs are beautifully ribanded in black and white; the head, which is light and clean, is marked in brown, except on the ears, which are again black and white, and on the muzzle, which is a rich bay colour. The ears and tail are, unlike the quagga and Burchell's, distinctly asinine. In height, too, he is smaller than his relatives, averaging only some twelve hands at the shoulder.

In one thing the true zebra has been distinguished above his relations, viz., in his untameable ferocity. There are traditions that the older Boers used to catch them very young and utilise them in harness; but there is a good deal of doubt about these stories, which probably refer to the quagga or Burchell's variety.

There is no doubt about the stories of his ferocity. Pringle gives one of a young Boer who was hunting in the Graaf Reinet mountains, and who forced a zebra to the brink of a precipice. There the courageous animal turned to bay, attacked the huntsman with his teeth, and literally tore his foot from his leg. The injuries were so frightful that the Boer died a few days afterwards.

Sir John Barrow tells of a soldier of Cape Colony, who once tried to ride a captive zebra. It threw him down a steep bank, and then quietly and deliberately bit off one of his ears.

Mr. Bryden tells us that, when at Graaf Reinet two or three years ago, he heard of a small troop of six or eight, which had been seen in a wild and desolate part of the neighbouring mountains. They con-

finned themselves to the almost inaccessible slopes, and had only by chance been sighted by some rhebok hunters.

"I had the greatest curiosity," he says, "to behold these beautiful creatures in their own wild fastnesses, and for many days, while following mountain antelopes, I looked far and wide for the richly-striped 'wilde paard.' At length, one day, when out alone with Igneese, the Kaffir, I caught a glimpse of the herd. I remember the day well. We had sallied out for a day's rhebok shooting on a distant part of the farm, and after a long and unsuccessful tramp over some of the wildest mountains, and through some of the deepest and most lonely kloofs I ever saw in South Africa, we came to an abrupt corner—'hock,' the Boers call it—of a mountain, near to its summit. Stealing quietly round a sort of pass, the Kaffir suddenly whispered, or, rather, gasped, 'Wilde paarden!' and I beheld, right in our front, and rather above us, standing on a rocky platform, a magnificent zebra, and a little beyond him six others. The troop was about two hundred and fifty yards distant, and for two or three minutes we stood, motionless, regarding them. My host strictly preserved, as far as he could, these rare creatures; so, of course, shooting was out of the question, though the light in the Kaffir's eye plainly showed what his feelings were upon the subject of preservation. After a pause, we moved very stealthily forward, to get, if possible, a nearer view. In an instant, the sentinel we had first seen had discovered us, and, at a wild, shrill neigh from him, the whole troop took to their heels, galloped headlong over the mountain top, and were quickly lost to view."

On one other occasion, and one only, Mr. Bryden had another fleeting glimpse of the same troop; but mortal eye will never see them again.

Others are not so forbearing as Mr. Bryden and his host. We have learned the fate of the troop of zebras of Naroekas Poort. Tracked by the Boers and the natives—who spare nothing in the shape of game—the noble animals were one by one picked off, until, towards the end of last year, only one stallion remained—the last representative of the striped beauties that for ages have graced these rugged and lonely mountains.

The story of this stallion is an interesting one. Finding himself alone in the world, he joined a troop of horses belonging to the breeding establishment of a farmer,

which were allowed to range far and wide on the hillsides. With these he roamed for some time in good fellowship, and became so accustomed to them that one day he allowed himself to be driven with them into the kraal. There an attempt was made to detain him, in order to domesticate him if possible. He was successfully lassoed and tied to a tree; but then all his ferocious nature was aroused, and no man dared approach his open mouth and gleaming teeth. Still, efforts were made to induce him to feed. When driven into the kraal he was in fine condition, with coat shining in the sun. He refused to eat the grass of the kraal, and all the other food offered to him. Messengers were despatched to the mountain tops to cut for him some of his own natural herbage; but still he resolutely refused to eat. He drank water greedily—three bucketfuls at a time—but would touch nothing else. And so for three weeks he lingered in miserable captivity, on a diet of pure water alone, and then died—the last of his race.

It has been reported that the spoor of a small troop of zebras has been lately seen in one of the remotest parts of the Cape mountains. We hope it is true; and yet what will it avail? The hand of every Boer and every Bushman is against them; and if the true zebra is not yet as completely extinct as his cousin the quagga, or as banished from his ancient haunts as his other cousin, Burchell's zebra, he is trembling on the verge of extermination, and will soon be as lost as the dodo. Alas, the pity of it!

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Jean Vellacot*,"
"*A Faïre Dame*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLII. SYMEE'S RECEPTION.

AMICE was very strong in her determination when once her mind was made up. It was almost impossible to turn her from her plans; and the strange power this gave her was out of all proportion to her gentle appearance. If it could be tabulated, we should find that the chief rulers of the world were quiet, determined people, who, among those who do not know them, pass almost unnoticed.

She acted at once. She knew that not a moment was to be lost if Symee was to be carried off, so, telling her to pack her things, she ordered the pony-carriage, gave a short explanation to Elva, and then she went to the Vicarage to see Herbert Heaton.

Miss Heaton was more than shocked when she heard Amice ask to have a few words alone with the Vicar. Had she been able to prevent it she would have done so; but there was no time. Amice was very shy when she had to talk.

"I want to tell you, Mr. Heaton, that I am going to London with Symee Vicary. Her brother is in trouble, and the time has come when she certainly ought to be with him."

Herbert remembered the former conversation, and felt guilty. He had, indeed, called upon Vicary, but he had not found him at home, and so he had dropped the idea of talking to him, vaguely putting it off till the young man should come back to Rushbrook. Something in Amice's bearing seemed like a silent rebuke.

"Have you got your father's leave, Miss Amice? I thought——"

"No; I am going without. But it is better so. Symee has so little power of making up her mind. It is our fault; she has never had to rough it. Gold seems to do so much harm, oh, so much."

Herbert felt that Amice Kestell was certainly not like other girls. She was a little peculiar, but good; yes, certainly, very good.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, not knowing what she expected of him.

"I want your sanction," she said, slowly, and looking at him very earnestly. "You are a clergyman, you can bind and unloose; it is your gift. I want you to let me go against my father's wish."

Herbert Heaton was a very high-minded man, and believed in his orders more than many of his fellow clergy. Still, to be asked point-blank to use his power in this strange manner, was a case he had never considered.

"You mean that——"

"That my father is angry with me, very angry, about Symee. Still, it is right, and you ought to be able to tell me so."

"But the circumstances; I hardly know—obedience to parents is a distinct commandment, very distinct; in fact——"

Amice lowered her blue eyes from his face. There was no help to be had here.

"Thank you," she said. "I see I must go on my own responsibility. Good-bye, I am in a hurry."

Miss Heaton little guessed the reason of Amice's visit. She was only very indignant that a young lady should dare to ask for a private interview.

"Herbert, you will get yourself into difficulties with that meek-eyed girl. She is very, very bold. Why, Elva, although she has made such a bungle of her affairs, at least never asks for private interviews. What was it about?"

Herbert felt a little ruffled. Women were really made to be a trial to men; especially to young men who only asked to be left alone.

"A matter of no consequence."

"That is just what I thought. A mere excuse for seeing you alone."

"Nonsense," said Herbert, retreating to his study, knowing as he did so that he was running away from a scolding which would have to be delivered in the future; and anticipation always increases the value, either good or bad, of what is expected.

Amice saw that she must rely on herself alone; and, without further waiting, or even allowing Symee to say good-bye to any one but Elva, she drove off to the station.

Poor Symee, in spite of days of unhappiness, she was somewhat like the Israelites. She was fearful of leaving the leeks and the melons of Egypt. What was Jesse's present position? She knew that he was very poor; and then his letters had been so strange that she was afraid.

"Miss Amice, you'll come with me and explain it to Jesse, won't you? He may be angry with me."

"He cannot be angry with you. You have saved some money, Symee, and that will help you both, for a time, at least. And remember, I trust you to write to me for anything you want. There can be no ceremony between us."

"You have always been good to me, Miss Amice."

They did not say much on the way; both had many things to think about.

At last they were approaching Golden Sparrow Street. Jesse was still in that enchanting neighbourhood. He had only moved down lower in the scale of his society, and had a room now in the same house as the inventor, Obed Diggings.

Amice had never been so near to London squalor as when she and Symee stopped at the address Jesse had given.

The cabman stared a little as he put down the box at the poor house, and did not touch his cap when a woman opened the door.

Symee blushed. It seemed too dreadful, bringing Miss Amice here, and yet she relied on her to explain all the circumstances to Jesse.

"Mr. Vicary is at home," said the woman; and she pointed to a back room as she stared at the lady and at Symee's box.

Symee went forward and knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Jesse's voice; and as he looked up he saw a sight which made the blood mount to his cheeks.

"Symee! What have you come here for?" he said, almost savagely.

It was difficult to recognise in him the old kind Jesse Vicary.

"Oh, Jesse——! Miss Amice, please explain. I have been so unhappy."

"I have come up with Symee," said Amice, simply. "She was fretting herself ill about you. You are in trouble; her place is with you. Can she have a room here?"

Amice cast a glance round the place. It sadly wanted a woman's hand. It was untidy and very mean-looking. Squalid was the word best expressing it.

"What have you come here for now?" repeated Jesse, standing up straight, without offering a chair or a hand to his visitors.

"I did not ask you to come. You might have come once; now it is too late. This is no fit place for you. Miss Kestell, perhaps you will add to your kindness," he added, with withering scorn in his voice, "by taking my sister back with you, unless indeed——"

He was blinded with a tumultuous throng of passionate thoughts, that surged up like seaweed in a high tide, flung higher than usual on the scorching sand. The beautiful vision of Amice as he had once seen her had lost all its power over him; he saw nothing now but *his* daughter, the child of the man he hated, and of whose downfall he daily thought. Passion had already made terrible havoc in this man; that concentrated meditation on injury had laid a mark as if of bodily disease on Jesse Vicary. His eyes had sunk in their sockets, his cheeks were deadly pale, he seemed already possessed by an evil spirit, that allowed him no rest. No wonder that Symee shrank a little nearer to Miss

Amice. She could hardly recognise her brother.

Amice alone remained composed and unmoved. She looked Jesse straight in the face.

"You are soured by trouble, Mr. Vicary. You do not mean what you say. Symee's duty is with you now. She can come back to us whenever she likes, but at present she will be happier here."

"Happier," laughed Jesse. "Symee long ago declined poverty."

"No, no, Jesse, not that; but I had a duty to Mr. Kestell—to——"

"How dare you mention his name here, Symee? Remember, if you come to me, your past life is over, over for ever."

Amice herself was moved now. She felt her limbs trembling beneath her. Was the curse here, too? She had fancied that she could heal the sore. Instead of experiencing the power of quiet firmness, a strange feeling came over her that she stood before her accuser. How dared she presume to lecture Jesse Vicary, when most likely he was better than herself? But Symee had interposed with the impetuosity which now and then seizes upon timid persons.

"Oh, Jesse, how cruel, how unjust you are! What have you to say against Mr. Kestell? We owe him everything; you have often said so. It is through your own obstinacy that you are here. Mr. Kestell offered you a good position in Canada, and you would not take it."

"And, therefore, he turned me out of the work I could do here. Fine generosity!"

The blood rushed to Amice's face.

"No, no, you cannot believe that, you have no proof," she said. "You have distorted everything because you are suffering."

"I want no proof. I am certain."

Jesse hardly looked at Amice; she felt that he only barely put up with her presence.

The very tone of his voice made Amice certain, too; she saw it all, though she could not reach the clue. For some reason or other, Vicary, this man who had done so much, who had been so exemplary, had incurred her father's displeasure. But what could she do, or what could she say? Nothing.

Jesse moved uneasily; evidently he wanted Amice to go away; and she saw that he did so.

"You will be good to Symee," she

faltered; "she has done for the best. Good-bye, Symee."

Amice wanted to make one more attempt at reconciliation, but she dared not. As silently as she could she took a five-pound note, and slipped it into Symee's hand. But hatred is lynx-eyed. Before Symee could say a word, Jesse had made one step forward, and seized the paper from her.

"Symee, do you not yet understand me? Do you think that if you come here it is to spend their money—their accursed gold? There, if words are not enough, remember actions."

He flung the thin paper into the small grate, where it made a momentary flame. Symee had only time to exclaim, before Amice, trembling and pale, had opened the door and fled. She was brave no longer.

"Their accursed gold, their accursed gold," rang in her ears as she hurried away up Golden Sparrow Street, unheeding the eyes that followed her, or the interest she excited among the neighbours.

"He, too; he, too; he knows it! Only we are ignorant; only we, we his children, who ought to know."

That evening, spent with fatigue and utter misery, Amice Kestell was to have another shock. Elva, her own beautiful sister, the creature whom she loved most, was to be made more unhappy than she was already: she was to marry Walter Akister.

"Amice, don't say a word about it. Papa has begged me to consent. It is for his sake only. If it must be, at least let it never be spoken of between us."

"Oh, Elva, and even I cannot save you!"

CHAPTER XLIII. NEW FRIENDS.

WHEN Amice was gone, Symee felt as if she were alone in a strange and terrible desert land, with no one to help her. She had not moved from the chair into which she had sunk, trembling with fear, when Jesse had snatched the money from her; but with a kind of hopeless despair she cast her eyes round the miserable-looking room. Her natural instinct for tidiness, and of liking pretty things, made her feel that this was indeed sinking down into wretchedness. Oh, what could be the matter with Jesse, the brother who had formerly been so kind and gentle? She was, indeed, punished for having left him to live his life alone for so long. Now he

appeared not to care if she were or were not there.

At last she rose, and, from habit, began putting a few things straight. In a corner was her brother's iron chair-bed, which was now covered with books and papers. The floor, too, was strewn with papers, some of them written over, some with only a few words on them, and then torn across.

"Jesse, dear, where do you get your dinner? Shall I go and see if there is a room I can have? I can pay for it."

The gentle, pathetic tones presently acted as a composing draught on Jesse. It was the sight of Amice that had roused him—Amice and the bank-note.

Though he was mollified, his voice was still strange and hollow, recalling the storm he had passed through.

"Do you know, Symee, that I am a ruined man; that I cannot get work; and that—there, as well out with it—I have already been to the pawn-shop? It is wonderful how soon a man sinks down."

"That is why you are not like yourself, dear Jesse," said Symee, feeling that it was no wonder her brother was like this. "But, now I have come, perhaps luck will turn. You are so clever, people must find it out sooner or later."

"Do you think there are not thousands of clever men in London who yet have to—see their wives starving? Happily I have only myself."

"But, Mr. Fenner. Jesse, have you been to him? I did not tell you because you told me not to mention any of their names; but it is all so sad now. Mr. Fenner never came back to Rushbrook. They say that Miss Kestell gave him up, jilted him; but I know better—he gave her up."

Jesse gazed at his sister, and an eager look passed over his face.

"Ah! was that so? Then that accounts for his being away. I thought perhaps they were married, but—but— Symee, tell me when it was that he went away."

How strange that Jesse, who just now would not hear their names mentioned, now asked after them eagerly! She explained as well as she could the events of the last months.

Jesse stood up and held out his hands to the fire, as if to warm himself. In truth, he did not know what he was doing. It was the idea of revenge that warmed him.

"I am glad, very glad, Symee, about this. The just retribution has begun; but only begun."

"Oh, Jesse, how can you say such dreadful things? What are you talking about retribution? They have all been so unhappy. Mr. Kestell looks ten years older, and he looks ill, too; and Miss Elva, my heart grieves for her. She spends so much time in crying when she thinks no one sees her."

"That is why Mr. Fenner is still away. I have been to look after him, and to get his address, but no one knows it. Listen, Symee; it was through me that that wedding was broken off."

Symee opened her eyes wide in horror. She began seriously to believe that Jesse was mad.

"Through you? Oh, Jesse, what a strange thing to say! You don't mean what you say."

Jesse smiled drearily.

"Yes, through me. That's only the beginning, child—only the beginning."

Symee left the subject. It made her feel so miserable to see Jesse like this. Had want of occupation driven him out of his mind? Then the sooner work of some kind or other was procured, the better. She even made a suggestion.

"Don't you think, dear, instead of hunting for work here in this big, miserable London, it would be better to accept that—that farm? I really wouldn't mind the loneliness. Oh, I would like it."

But Symee repented her rashness.

Jesse almost roughly put his hand on her shoulder.

"Listen, Symee; you are my sister, my only relation, and I love you dearly in spite of the bitter disappointment you made me endure. You have come here by your own accord, or urged to do so by Miss Amice Kestell. I am willing to share my last penny with you, and you may spend your own savings as you like. You earned them honestly, I know that, or I should not say this; but if ever you mention that man's name to me again, or anything connected with him, that moment we part. Don't argue this matter out. You cannot understand my motives, and I don't wish you to do so; but as to the truth of my words, ask yourself if I have ever deceived you. There, now, I will see if you can be lodged in this miserable place. It is the best I can afford; and there are better men than I am lodging under this same roof."

"It's Obed Diggings's lodgings," said Symee, uttering the first words that came into her mind. For Jesse had really frightened her, and she was glad when he went out, so that she might collect her scared senses.

Symee was not brave and hopeful. She did not pretend to herself that she looked forward, even for Jesse's sake, to living in this house; but she could submit patiently, and she did so.

A room was found for her, and the girl soon made the two chambers look, if not homelike, at least tidy. She could cook their meals, and they would not have to go to an eating-house; and, altogether, Jesse felt the benefit of having his sister with him. But there was in him none of the joy about the realisation of his once-cherished hopes. He was grateful to her, and certainly he was more comfortable; but his mind had centred itself on one object, and this, like an evil weed, choked all that came near to it.

Revenge seemed written on everything he looked at. Even when, sick of the thought, he wished to turn away from it, it followed him, and, like a beast of prey once given shelter, it would not be dislodged.

Revenge, revenge!

Yet, though figuratively you can feed on revenge, the daily wants of the natural life must be supplied. Jesse had brooded, had planned, had written out ideas; but also he had been bound to look for work. It was a time when work was difficult to get; to throw yourself or to be thrown out of office work was a very serious event indeed. Almost more serious if the appointment had been of long standing; for, even with the best of recommendations, there would come to the guarded mind of the possible employer, "Why, with this excellent character, should the firm have dismissed him? There must be something behind this." And the shadowy suspicions had more than once shut the doors against Jesse. Every vacant post had a long list of applicants waiting for it; and the struggle for life, now felt for the first time by Jesse, made him more bitter than he was already.

But he had his literary ability, an ability which, to many a hopeful youth, is going to be the "open sesame" of glorious hidden treasures. It is only when it becomes a matter of hunger, of substantial bread, that even the original thinker begins to find out that if the struggle in getting employment by writing figures and business letters is

great, there is but little difference when it is a case of coining gold out of brains—not easy-going, calm, contented brains, but fever-haunted, evil-haunted, demon-possessed brains.

The editor who had taken Hoel Fenner's place knew nothing personally of Vicary; but, by hearsay, he was a man who had been ill-judged enough to refuse a good position. The refusal of an article which Jesse sent was courteous but decided; evidently the paper in question had not been read, and, in his present mood, Jesse took that as another insult. He tried where he was not known, and the results, as usual, were slow, and by no means always sure.

He had come to a low ebb when Symee appeared, and he was conscious of feeling angry, because he could no longer receive her as he had once hoped. The benefit came from her, and this annoyed him and aggravated the evil passion which, like a long pent-in volcano, seemed to envelope the whole fair country of his character in ruin.

Few things take such an effect upon us as to see what had once been green grass, studded with flowers, obliterated by several inches of hot ashes. It is difficult, almost impossible, at the time to remember that in some cases this same blotting out may act as manure on the natural soil. In every soul there has been, or will be, a "divine moment;" but in every soul, too, there has been, or will be, the shadow of its lower nature visible to itself. Only, the presence of the shadow demonstrates the presence of light. It was because of Jesse Vicary's past strivings after pure sunshine that he was now so painfully conscious of the cold shadow; he fancied that the light was absorbed; he fancied, even, that he had never had it; he seemed hardly to care whether or not he ever had. To himself, and to others, Jesse Vicary was a changed man. This strange metamorphosis, this wild, passionate impatience, which burst forth on the least provocation, was a new revelation to poor Symee; she took refuge with Obed Diggings's daughter.

On the plea of incessant work, or, rather, of seeking for it, Vicary had absented himself from all his neighbours. The poor, enthusiastic inventor had been decidedly repressed by his old friend; he could not understand it, but he was not discouraged, and the advent of Symee reawakened his dreams. Here, at all events, was some one who had heard as yet nothing of the wonders of the new bouquet-

holding frame which, somehow or other, was still in a rudimentary stage, and was not yet bought up by thousands in Oxford Street. But the faith that saw these splendid visions was not one which ahrank or changed easily; on the contrary, the delay was only in order that the success might be greater.

Golden Sparrow Street was not exactly reticent about affairs of its neighbours, and Symee's arrival was chronicled with that wealth of detail which belongs to the class which inhabits such neighbourhoods; at all events, in Mrs. Dunn's lodgings, the new arrival interested Obed's sick girl, and gave her fresh food for meditation.

"Father, just ask her to step in, do now," said Milly.

Milly always got her way, so Diggings one evening obeyed.

"Well, Miss Vicary, if I may make so bold, being as it were a friend and a countryman—Greystone was my dwelling-place, miss, and seeing, also, your brother has been always a good friend to us—if you will step down and visit my afflicted child I shall take it as a mark of favour."

"Jesse said he was going out this evening. I will come down with pleasure."

And so Symee, instead of coiling Miss Kestell's dark hair round her head, found herself sitting by Milly Diggings's couch; whilst the great inventor, casting a strong odour of tobacco around him, poured forth his hopes as he cooled his throat with a pint of beer.

"It was a bad day, Miss Vicary, when your brother lost his situation; it's his first mortal trial, and he takes it a bit hard. But he shouldn't do so, he really shouldn't. What's an office-stool compared to the genius of inventing? You shall see my last superb idea. Milly is delighted with it; but we must not take her opinion, as, naturally, she's prejudiced, Miss Symee; a daughter's praise is hardly worth the use of the letters of the alphabet as composes the words. But every mortal eye that has beheld it says, 'Obed Diggings, there's no sign of failure here. Work on and perfect it.' And I do. It is nearing perfection. The brass wire that attaches the glass tube, Miss Symee, it's a marvel of ingenuity, though I say it as shouldn't. But you, too, will say it is; every one does."

The deep-set eyes glowed with a living fire, which compelled Symee to agree with the speaker. This living faith was too powerful for the girl's weaker nature.

"I'm sure it will succeed, Mr. Diggings."

"It will, Miss Symee, it will; and because I think your brother is a fine young man, with a future before him, yes, it is for that that I have offered to associate him with my scheme. He doesn't accept because he's generous. He wants me to have all the credit and all the profit. Well, I say, Jesse Vicary is a noble soul, and I recognise it."

"Jesse is good," faltered Symee, feeling at once kindly towards the old man. "I wish he would not take this trouble so much to heart. I've got a little money saved, and, before that is finished, something will turn up. I know it will. I can't understand. It isn't like Jesse to take things hard."

"He wants the divine spark of the inventor," said Obed, striking his hand on the table and taking a long pull at his tankard. "Good as he is, I fear he hasn't got that. Miss Symee, believe me, it makes up for many ills. When my poor wife had been lying for twelve hours in a state of coma, what was it that kept me up? It was the divine spark of the inventor. I said, 'I can't raise her up, maybe—God alone can do that—but I can raise up something else from here.'" He tapped his rugged forehead. "'I, too, can create.' Believe me, miss, it was a mighty consolation."

"It must have been," said Symee, humbly. "Perhaps not just at the time, but afterwards. I never invented anything, so I don't know the feeling."

"No, nor poor Milly. She took after my wife. It's not given to women, Miss Symee, to be inventors. It's man as has got that. Women, they pick up bits, and glue this and that together, and feel mighty clever over their mendings; but it's our makings that makes us happy and different from the womenkind."

"But they, I mean your inventions, have never brought you much—money?" asked Symee, knowing that, in his prosperity, Jesse had often helped the inventor.

"Money! What is money? No, not money, but fame is what oils the heart, Miss Symee. That chariot will be in a triumphant procession on which—" Here Mr. Diggings a little lost the power of guiding his chariot, and left it, hiding the retreat by coughing. "Miss Symee, money is the reward of the poor imitator, of the man who steals ideas—steals my ideas. He gets money; money that burns his

pocket, like pure rum that scorches the throat. That's where money goes to; but do you think it will always be so? No, no, no! Justice comes with a leaden foot; but at last, yes, at last, she strikes with an iron heel."

"Doesn't father talk beautifully?" said Milly; "and he really has nearly finished his frame. Sometimes he doesn't always finish his inventions. But this one—oh, father, wait till it's really finished before you show it to Miss Symee."

"You and Jesse must come to a feast, when that day comes; eh, Milly! And you'll go, my beauty, into the country; you shall go to Greystone, where you used to pick daisies and buttercups. And you'll have the doctor that visits Queen Victoria, our Gracious Majesty herself—that you shall, and he'll cure you. Doctors don't look where the gold comes from, Miss Symee, so that they can see it's of the right colour. But I forgive them, for they belong to the great class of inventors."

"Do they?" asked Symee. "Mr. Kestell said so often that Mr. Pink couldn't originate anything new; he always said the same thing about wanting sleep and tone."

"No, Miss Symee. Every few years, as I can see in the papers, there's new names given to the same old diseases; and, upon my word, the doctors are very clever at making of them up. Yes, the diseases are the same, depend upon it; it's only that the doctors turns and twists the names about, so as to make us fancy we have got something strange which they can cure. Kestell of Greystone must be an old man now. I remember him when I was a lad; spruce and spry he was, but not a rich man at all. It was all along of Westacre lands, poor Button used to say, that Mr. Kestell got rich. That's how he got the gold; but it was a chance such as doesn't come in the way of inventors. We have to get gold by the sweat of our

brows, as Adam got his posies and his corn, maybe. We think nothing of luck. It's Thought as triumphs in the long run, not a lucky buying up of land."

"Did he buy it of Button?" asked Symee, whose heart was at Rushbrook, and who cared more for a word about Mr. Kestell than all Diggings's inventions put together.

"No, not that. Poor Button's often showed me and Milly the deeds. It was a young gentleman that wanted to invest four hundred pounds that bought it. If he had lived, there would have been a piece of luck for him he wouldn't have expected. The earth hides up a mighty lot of money, Miss Symee, locks it up till the right time comes, and then she seems to run it up in the market till she finds the highest bidder. She's 'cute, albeit she's so silent; eh, Milly!"

There was no chance of Milly getting many words in when the inventor was in a mood for speech; but she was too interested in Button's deeds to allow her father all the conversation.

"Poor Button, father, he's dead and buried. I wonder if they buried the old deeds with him. He said that I was to have them when he died; for I liked spelling over the odd words. 'This indenture witnesseth,' was on one of his bits of paper. If you write to your ladies, Miss Symee, I wish you'd ask them whether the papers are still at the public. Look here, here's Button's own will, I made him write, 'I leave to Milly Diggings my title-deeds, as are merely copies and of no use to any one;' and look, here's his signature; but father didn't take the trouble to write about them, they was worthless, you know."

"I'll tell Miss Amice, she's always so kind that she'll make enquiries," said Symee, kindly.

So ended the evening; but Symee felt less lonely, and a tiny sense of freedom crept into her heart.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

ALTHOUGH there was but little of the poet in Herrick's composition, assuredly he rode forth that afternoon through Summerhill Park gates into a very ideal world.

No common object but his eye
At once involved with alien glow
His own soul's iris-bow.

In other words, Lois's simple, unselfish love for him, which her hesitating attempts at self-sacrifice revealed, had awakened so deep a joy in his heart that for the moment the commonplace stretch of country he traversed was transformed into paradise. Surely never before did afternoon sun spread abroad so golden a glamour; never before had the rough Yorkshire air seemed so laden with the sweetness of the hedgerows! The very echoes which his horse's leisurely hoofs woke in the dusty road appeared to have a music all their own in them, and to rise and fall to Lois's tender, halting phrases.

The echoes of another horse's hoofs clattering along the road at a tremendous pace was only too soon to take the music out of these.

Herrick speedily recognised the approaching rider as his own groom. As the man drew nearer he saw that he held a telegram in his hand.

"For you, sir," said the man, drawing rein. "My lady has opened it and told me to take it to Summerhill."

Herrick ran his eye over the message.

It was from his father at Wrexford, and ran thus:

"Serious explosion of fire-damp. Come over at once."

Herrick turned his horse's head at once towards the Wrexford road.

"Tell Lady Joan I'm off at once," he said. A second thought followed, a kindly one for the old grandfather, and he added: "Say also that I think it would be better not to mention this explosion in my grandfather's hearing; it would distress him terribly."

Old Mr. Gaskell, however, had, unfortunately, heard the sad news even before Herrick. The telegram containing it had, in Herrick's absence, been taken to Lady Joan as she sat in the old gentleman's room, and her exclamation of surprise, as she had read it, had apprised him of the fact.

Lady Joan, as soon as her husband had set off for Wrexford, had said to herself that, since it was expected of her, she had better at once pay her visit to her father-in-law's rooms and get it over as quickly as possible. It had been her habit all through her married life thus to do "what was expected of her," knowing well enough that if she once let herself break into rebellion, even in trifles, against the iron rule of these Gaskells, there was no knowing where that rebellion would end.

One thing, however, seemed to conspire with another to prevent the proposed visit to the old gentleman's quarters, and possibly the night might have found it unpaid if she had not received a somewhat urgent message from Parsons—old Mr. Gaskell's attendant—saying that he wished to see her at once. Parsons was a privileged person in the house, and had permission at any hour of the day or night to communi-

cate with any member of the family on matters connected with the old gentleman's comfort.

Parsons's message was a written one, and to it she had added a word on her own account to the effect that Mr. Gaskell seemed very weak that morning, and unable to rally from the fatigue of the day before.

Lady Joan with a sigh put on one side an essay she was writing with deep interest on "The Beautiful, as opposed to the Terrible, in Art," and bent her steps to her father-in-law's quarters.

These had been assigned to him on the sunniest side of the Castle, and consisted of a suite of seven rooms leading one into the other, and in addition communicating by a second door with a long, narrow corridor which ran off the big inner hall of the house. These seven rooms had been most elaborately and luxuriously furnished, and Lady Joan never passed through them without thinking what an absurd amount of time and thought and money had been lavished in their fittings and decorations. A bedroom, a dressing-room, a sitting-room, were of course necessities to the old man; but here in addition was a billiard-room in case he might want to watch a game of billiards, a library, a smoking-room, and a room set apart as a sort of museum for patents connected with the working of coal-mines. This last was a room in which the old gentleman specially delighted. As a rule it was his sitting-room; and here he generally received his guests and visitors. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to spend an hour or so in describing to an attentive ear how this or that lamp, hanging in one of the glass cases which surrounded the room, worked, or in exhibiting the various specimens of local coal which, carefully labelled, were ranged upon shelves.

Lady Joan, as she passed through these handsome rooms, and let her eye wander around on their artistic accessories—pictures, statuary, embroideries—could not help contrasting them a little bitterly with the room in which her own grandfather had died, and which, although it rejoiced in relics and heirlooms of priceless worth from an antiquarian point of view, owned to a carpet literally threadbare, and curtains burnt to their woof with the sunshine of over a hundred years.

Parsons came forward to meet her in the old gentleman's sitting-room.

"He is in an easy-chair in his dressing-

room, my lady," she said. "He seems very weak to-day, and says he will get into bed soon."

The easy-chair had, by the old gentleman's orders, been wheeled into a sunny bow-window; and, although his eyes were watering with the blinding light, he persisted in remaining there, saying that the sunshine put warmth into his bones, and was more than food or medicine to him.

The sunshine lighted up pitilessly his wrinkled face, half-shut sunken eyes, and thin hands, as they rested one on either arm of the chair.

When he opened his eyes, however, a change so great, as almost to amount to a transformation, took place. The eyes were dark-blue like his son John's, and so clear and luminous, so keen and searching, that one look from them was enough to establish the fact that though ninety years of wear and tear had reduced his muscles to the weakness of a child's, his brain and his will remained strong as ever.

And sometimes another look, a look neither keen nor searching, would come into those clear blue eyes; a look of sudden thoughtfulness, so deep as to amount to sadness, and which, let her fight against the idea as she might, never failed to bring back to Lady Joan's mind her dear old grandfather's eyes when, as he lay on his death-bed, he had turned his face towards her and had said, "If life were to come over again, Joan——" and then his eyelids had drooped, and the sentence had remained unfinished.

Worn and aged though the old man looked in the bright sunshine, his voice was cheery and firm as ever, when, after acknowledging Lady Joan's greeting, he said:

"Joan, I want you to send over to Summerhill the first thing after breakfast to-morrow to fetch that pretty little girl who is to be Herrick's wife. I want her to come and talk to me."

Lady Joan started back aghast. Without word of warning, that would enable her to determine her course, to be met by such a request as this! For a moment she did not speak.

The old man did not seem to notice her surprise, and went on calmly and authoritatively as before.

"I don't want her to come to-day, because I'm not feeling quite myself this afternoon; but to-morrow, immediately after breakfast, send the dog-cart round and fetch her."

Lady Joan began to recover herself.

"Would it not be as well to wait a day or two?" she began, slowly.

It was at this moment that Parsons came forward, bringing the telegram for Herrick.

Lady Joan, not a little glad of the diversion, opened it at once. As her eye mastered its contents, she uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What is it?" said the old man, sharply, turning towards her.

Then Lady Joan had to tell him the sad news. He sank back in his chair, covering his eyes with one hand.

"Poor lads! poor lads!" he moaned.

Presently he withdrew his hand from his face, and letting his eyes for a moment rest full on Lady Joan's, said:

"Joan, if I had my time to come over again, I don't think I should thank Heaven for the finding of coal on my land."

Lady Joan turned sharply away. At the moment she almost hated the old man for the rush of painful memories those words and the look combined had brought back to her.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADY JOAN did not take the colliery disaster so much to heart as did old Mr. Gaskell. The mines at Wrexford were dangerous ones, and during her married life had been the scene of more than one dire calamity. No doubt it would give her husband a good deal of worry, and some positive hard work, since he took such an exaggerated view of his duties as master and employer. He, doubtless, would spend days at the mouth of the pit; would take a personal interest alike in the victims and their desolate families. For weeks to come, most likely, the only talk between him and Herrick, whenever they sat down to table together, would be of new methods of precaution to be taken in working the mines, varied, perhaps, by consultations as to how Widow This and her sons, or Widow That and her daughters, could be best provided for in life.

Personally, however, Lady Joan felt herself chiefly touched by the tiresomeness of the whole thing, a tiresomeness that was doubly accentuated by the fact that it had happened just at a moment when she wished to claim her husband's undivided attention to a matter of first importance—Herrick's ill-advised choice of a wife.

To tell the truth, when she thought over

old Mr. Gaskell's request that Lois White should be sent for to the Castle on the following day, the thought of the twenty or thirty poor colliers scorched or suffocated out of their lives, speedily faded from her mind.

The longer she dwelt on the old gentleman's request, the more irritated and bewildered she grew. If she refused to comply with it she had but little doubt that he would himself ring his bell, transmit his orders to the stable, and despatch a message to Summerhill; and she would be placed in the undignified position of being compelled to stand by and witness the doing of a thing towards which she had assumed an openly hostile attitude.

This request of his was, indeed, a danger signal not to be disregarded, for it meant, without doubt, that in her opposition to Herrick's folly, she would have to contend not only with Herrick, but also with Herrick's father and grandfather.

She sat far into the night thinking over these things, trying to face her difficulties, trying to answer the by no means easy question. What must be her first step in the very unequal battle she intended to fight? A game was often lost, she told herself, by a first false move. Now, would it be a false move, before doing anything else, to appeal to Herrick to show consideration to his mother's wishes in his choice of a wife?

A moment's thought answered this question with a very emphatic affirmative. Years ago, when Herrick was quite a boy, it had been borne into Lady Joan's mind in all sorts of trivial ways, that he had taken her measure, so to speak, by precisely the same standard by which his father and grandfather had judged her, and that her wishes and opinions carried with him as much, or as little weight as they carried with them.

In this dilemma a bright thought came to her. Why not make her appeal in the first instance to the young girl who was supposed to be in love with Herrick, and professed, no doubt, to have his best interests at heart. A talk of five minutes with her on the morrow, before she could be shown in to old Mr. Gaskell, might convince her what those interests really were, and bring that love of hers to the test. Of Lois White Lady Joan knew so little that she could not even conjecture what might be the immediate results to such an appeal; but it was manifestly the thing that stood first in order to be done,

whatever else might have to be done afterwards.

The night was creeping away while Lady Joan was thus facing her anxieties and arranging her plans; two o'clock was chimed by the clock over her mantelpiece. The night was intensely hot; evidently a storm was threatening. Lady Joan, with her brain still teeming with thought, felt that sleep for another hour or two would be an impossibility. She recollected a book which she had been reading on the previous day—a collection of Elizabethan lyrics, one of which had seemed to set itself to music as she had read it. She thought she would fetch the book, which she had left in one of the drawing-rooms, and jot down the melody which had run in her head before she forgot it. It would clear her brain from painful thought, and perhaps enable her to get a little sound sleep before day dawned; so she lighted a small lamp, and went her way through the dark, silent house to the rooms below.

That faint stream of light which her lamp threw, now high, now low, lighted up a lavishness of wealth, a sumptuousness of beauty wherever it fell. Those pictures which hung upon the staircase walls she herself knew the value of, for her opinion had been asked in their choice and purchase. That little niche on the landing-place held an all-but priceless statuette, and there below in the hall stood a cabinet containing china, for which a Royal Duke had bid in vain at Christie's against the millionaire coal-owner; now the stream of light fell upon a dainty Venetian glass *tazza* which had been pinched and moulded into its beautiful form by fingers which loved their art; and anon it glinted upon—ah! what was that? Here Lady Joan with a shudder turned her head sharply away. She knew well enough that that photographic album, the mediæval silver cover of which caught and threw back the lamp-light, contained portraits of the older members of the Gaskell family in various stages of what she was pleased to call vulgarity—John's mother in a dress fearfully and wonderfully made; John's uncle in a coat of equally marvellous cut. What an odd medley of luxury and art, of vulgarity and refinement, the roof of the Castle covered, she thought, as she entered the drawing-room, and, holding high her lamp, looked around her for her volume of poems.

Something else instead of the little book

greeted her eye as she stood thus—"the counterfeit presentment" of her own tall stately figure in a pier-glass let into the opposite wall.

For the moment she started, and drew back. The mirror reached from floor to ceiling, and with the lamp held high as she was holding it, reflected not only every detail of her dress and figure, but also, with a cruel exactitude, every line, every feature of her dark, austere face, rendered possibly a shade more dark and austere than usual by the unpleasant train of thought in which she had been indulging.

This sudden apparition of herself struck a jarring note, and set her measuring not only the years that had passed, but the years that were to come.

Slowly, step by step, she drew nearer to the mirror and steadily looked herself full in the face.

Lady Joan's passage across the plain of Mars, as the ancients loved to call the middle period of life, had been easy and luxurious as wealth could make it; yet, assuredly, no hard-working bread-winner or brain-worker, could have owned to harder lines than those which marred the beautiful outline of her mouth and cut deeply across her low white brow. Making due allowance for her hair, which still retained its girlish hue, that rigid face of hers expressed, uncompromisingly, every one of her fifty years.

"Yea," she said, aloud, "that elderly woman is me—me—Joan Herriek that was, who thought she had so many young years at command that she could easily give a half-dozen or so to be spent amid plebeian surroundings for the sake of the decades of happiness that would follow. And, instead of a half-dozen years, you poor woman, you have had to give your decades, and the promised happiness has not arrived yet! Now, should a happier order of things come about to-morrow, who will give you back any one of those thirty years of yours spent in bondage?"

Lady Joan, possibly, might not have liked, even in that night silence, to have put into so many words that "the happier order of things," towards which her aspiration had pointed year by year, for the past thirty years, involved primarily the death of old Mr. Gaskell, who, to her fancy, kept afloat in the household notions born with him in his cottage farm. Yet this was the undercurrent of meaning her thoughts carried with them. With the old man, who kept alive the plebeian atmosphere of

the Castle, once out of the way, her own influence must become paramount, and other things would follow as a matter of course. The detestable colliery business would be given up; the money made in the North would be spent in the South; and Herrick, taking his right position among his mother's people, would be free to choose a well-born wife for himself.

Lady Joan turned sharply away from the mirror. "Make the most of the time that is left to you, Joan," that sombre, austere face seemed to say to her as a last word. "Soon the dark days will be on you, in which you will care little enough for anything, good or bad, that life can bring."

A slight sound of movement in the hall outside at this moment caught her ear, and brought her bitter thoughts to a halt.

What could it have been? A sound of rustling; a light footfall was it?

She went hastily out into the hall. Though an ill-made dress would set her shuddering, and a bit of crude colouring make her cover her eyes with her hand, yet she would have gone out into her own hall, at any hour of the day or night, and faced a dozen armed burglars or any other danger that might be there, for physical fear was unknown to her.

No sight so terrible, however, as armed burglar met her view as she peered hither and thither in the darkness; nothing more alarming than a slender, white-robed figure coming slowly, step by step, down the big staircase.

At first, Lady Joan did not recognise the face of this white-robed figure. As it approached, however, and the light from her lamp fell full upon it, she recognised the features of the girl, Lucy Harwood, whom she had in the morning engaged as her maid. She was dressed in her white night-gown; this, together with her slow, dreamy movements, proclaimed the fact that she was walking in her sleep.

Lady Joan advanced towards her as she touched the lowest stair. Slowly and dreamily the girl came along the hall, feeling the wall with one hand as a blind person might, and the other outstretched in vacancy. Her face was slightly upturned, her eyes wide open and stonily fixed. There was a look of pain upon her face which seemed to suggest that the errand on which she was bent was a sad one.

"Where? Where? Where in the world?" Lady Joan heard her say slowly and sadly as she came along.

Without thinking much of what she was doing, Lady Joan laid her hand on the shoulder of the girl, who started violently and awoke. Then she burst into a flood of tears, and clasping her hands together, cried:

"Oh, where am I? What have I done?"

Lady Joan's quiet manner somewhat reassured her.

"You had better take my lamp and go back to your room," she said; "and to-morrow I should like you to see a doctor. No," she added, as the girl began to protest, "I can find my way upstairs easily enough in the dark; but you, as a stranger, would lose yourself in this big house without a light."

And as Lucy departed, looking white and frightened, Lady Joan found herself wondering, with a degree of interest that surprised herself, what was the mystery this apparently commonplace life held.

LOVE AND ITS LETTERS.

It is with very mixed and indefinable sensations that one discovers in one's desks and drawers, and reads once more the love-letters that one received, and also—alas!—sent, ten or twenty years ago: tender "firstlings of the heart," as they may well be called.

Perhaps we sigh over the former; and it is odd if, spite of all our training in the midst of the buffetings of the world, we can read the latter with absolute composure. Certainly, if we have been so foolish as to cherish these records of our own levity and humiliation, as if they were reverend relics, we deserve just as much annoyance as the reperusal of them is likely to give us.

Here is one of these precious trifles. It is one of the received, not the sent:

"DEAR PETER,—How lovely of you to buy me such a nice book for my birthday! We are going to make our hay this afternoon. Gwen says we are all to help; and I know I mean to. I hope the men won't drink as much as they did last time; it was horrid, you know. We begin to make it at two o'clock. Will you lend me the wooden rake you used last year? We have not got one half as nice.

"I am your affectionate friend,

"BELLA."

This tiny epistle—it is a bilious yellow now, thanks to the objectionable touch of

old Time's ghostly fingers—is bound square with a piece of faded blue ribbon. I remember perfectly the history of that bit of ribbon. It was during the haymaking, in which I did not fail to take my share. We made but little use of our rakes. It was better fun to roll and smother each other in the hay. This being so, what more natural than that I should pay my respects to pretty little Bella with an armful of the grass? But, of course, I did not mean to knock her down and make her cry, and tear her dress, which was new, in honour of her birthday. That, however, is what I contrived to do; and she said, between her sobs, that she would never speak to me again, or forgive me. From that day forward, indeed, she was really somewhat less to me than the Bella of the past—I had never seen her cry, and get into such an extravagant passion. There was only one consolation for me. In the course of the fatal romp, I had torn her dress, so that when we stood up, panting, a bit of her blue ribbon stayed clutched in my right hand. "I won't take it—I won't," she protested, angrily, when I offered her the fragment. I am afraid she said this only that I might the more readily come under condemnation as the cause of her dishevelment. But I just put it in my pocket and kept it, and some years afterwards, for the association's sake, used it to tie round the above letter.

My pretty little Bella of those days is now the mother of five children. I regret to say she has not even had the grace to ask me to stand sponsor to a single one of them. It is as if, in the words of Shakespeare, she had said within herself, "Let me wring your heart, so that you may ever remember what you did once, and what you have lost in losing me."

To be sure, these very early letters are trivial things; of no more real consequence than a child's pout. It is just a little more serious when one is in the middle of one's teens. I speak as a man. With girls, probably this spot of time in the record of their lives is the era of the most cherished of their soul's romances.

But even as a boy, verging upon adolescence, one is not, according to the tradition of our land, likely to be very effusive in the display of one's heart. It is not the vogue with us at any time; still less in an epoch of life when we are cruelly pestered by irreconcilable problems. Are we to continue to regard all girls with the

self-satisfied contempt of the last few years, or are we to yield to the strange inclination which would have us confess that their very strength lies in their weakness, and that by some mysterious means it is our bounden duty to show a more genial interest in them than we have of late manifested?

If we take kindly to the latter alternative, and make the astounding discovery of feminine beauty, it is probable we are in for a grave attack of calf-love—one of the most educative, and yet troublesome experiences of a lifetime.

The other day, I called upon one of the ladies who, a certain number of years ago, inspired me with a passion of this kind, which, in its effects, put me in extreme doubt whether life was a burden worth bearing unless I could be assured she would share the load with me. For my part, I am glad to realise that I feel as young now as I felt then, and that I am certainly more wise and happy. This lady, too, is a matron now, with the cares of a household upon her broad shoulders. The light of love has long fled from her eyes. She is an excellent manageress, I am told, and wont to be obeyed by every one who comes within the sound of her tongue. Her children are the best-behaved children to be found anywhere. They would not say "boo" to a goose unless their mamma gave them special license to take such a liberty. And her husband—worthy man—spends his evenings at home; or, if by chance he tarries late at the house of another, he is always restless and impatient. He has a deep horizontal wrinkle on his forehead for each one of his children, and one more-appalling wrinkle, which is supposed to be a symbol of his marriage bond. The sweet fetters of domesticity are riveted hard upon him.

Well, for two years, this lady, when she was a girl, was seldom out of my thoughts. I danced with her, and walked and boated with her, now and then rode with her (I have kissed her foot ere setting it in the happy stirrup), praised her poetry, and fancied she sang well enough for the choir of heaven itself. If I could see but the top of her head in church of a Sunday, it was enough. I would then go through the service and endure the sermon in an edifying frame of mind. I lived towards her, not doubting that, when the time came, I should be able to draw her damask cheek towards mine, and offer her my hand and life together. We had talked of

love till it had become as much a commonplace as the weather. Meanwhile, however, others caught sight of her. She was no matriculated flirt, but she had most womanly instincts. It was only natural, therefore, that she should not allow me to monopolise her sweet looks and ardent, innocent phrases. In short, her beauty led others, as well as myself, "by a single hair;" and the upshot was that, when I had enjoyed the climate of my foolish Paradise for a couple of years, a traitorous friend out-argued me, and stole her away. Here is her letter on the subject. I do not know for certain what the dents upon the paper stand for. They look as if some one had trodden upon the letter with a hobnailed boot. It may have been that I do not choose to remember. She, however, never wore boots of a size to do such mischief; nor was she the girl to send me a letter thus mutilated.

"MY DEAR PETER,—You will, I feel sure, be pleased to have any important news about me from myself—direct, instead of from the lips of others. We have known each other so long that we need not stand on ceremony with each other, need we? Life is strange, Peter, is it not? I should never, a year ago, have expected what took place yesterday, because, as you know, I did not then have the high opinion of him that I certainly now have.

"You will guess, perhaps, that I mean Graham Chester. He is the dearest fellow in the world to me now; and I love him the more, Peter, because I know he is your friend, and he has told me that there is no man he values more than you. I hope, therefore, our marriage won't make us forgetful (or rather 'unmindful,' since I shall never forget you) of each other. I may say that, I think. I would not for the world, do anything to make Graham jealous; indeed, I do not feel like doing it. Still, it would hurt me very much if I thought that by marrying him (in three months—lunar ones—from to-day) I was to lose your friendship. Let us always esteem each other, dear Peter, and so believe me,

"Very sincerely yours,

"JANETTE ARCH."

I do not know that there is a word of originality in this letter. For this reason, it here serves my purpose completely. It is a letter of a type. The girl has amused herself until she is a fully matured woman. She has at length drawn a husband, but she is anxious—and why should she not

be?—not therefore to lose a friend. She is not outrageously self-considering. One is urged of nature to try and get as much out of life as life will give us. Nevertheless, one does not like to receive such letters as this from Janette Arch. I suppose we did continue to be friends for awhile in an indifferent sort of way. But she had lacerated my heart a little, pricked the bubble I had blown, sent the walls of the castle of hope I had built high tumbling in upon each other; and I could not forget it. However, I am far from bearing her any ill-will now. The other day, indeed, I could not help pitying her in a measure; she looked so worn and despotic, and trod the earth with so ponderous and hard a step—in short, was so unlike the graceful, bewitching girl whose picture I still carry in my mind's treasury.

Men and women being naturally prone, when strongly tempted, to dissemble, it cannot be said, as an infallible rule, that the love is as the love-letter. It ought to be, but it is not. The epistle may be the work of one passionate, irresponsible minute. Our sentiments may give it the lie as soon as it is sent. Reason has then fair cause to put on sackcloth, and perhaps she will be called upon to repent in public before the indignity of an action at law. Impulse, then, has the laugh all to itself, and it is in vain that its victims wriggle and groan from the dilemma to which it has brought them.

Think of those cruel reprobates who have not scrupled to stimulate the dearest chords in a woman's heart under false pretences. It is no excuse for such men to plead in self-justification that they themselves have at one time or another been deceived by a woman. One person's wrong is never another person's right. The writer once met a foolish girl, whose history is a curious reflection of this. She jilted a promising husband for no apparent reason. Asked what had induced her to behave so oddly, what, think you, was her reply? A year or two previously, she had been on the like tender footing with another young man, who had cried off when it appeared that they had nothing to do but agree as to their wedding-day. The girl had her revenge upon the sex by treating her next lover as her former lover had treated her. This was no very sensible proceeding. But the action of those who designedly heap up endearing terms and phrases in what may, by courtesy alone, be called a love-letter, and whose hearts

all the while are cold and methodical, are as barbarous as this girl was foolish.

Goethe, in his autobiography, tells us of such a man. The Count de Stadion, Prime Minister to the Elector of Mayence, used to employ his secretary, a young man, in the composition, day after day, of a number of love-letters of the most perfervid kind. When his day's official work was at an end, the minister cast his eyes over these fanciful productions; chose one that seemed to him sufficiently impassioned, copied it, and despatched it to a certain lady, for whom he had great regard. It was fair neither towards the lady, nor the youth, whose ingenuousness would be thus corrupted.

Byron, we are told, was wont, in a similar way, to express his admiration for the many ladies whose bright eyes subdued him.

Mirabeau is notoriously in the same case. When writing to this charmer or that, he would copy whole pages from sundry periodicals of the day. "Listen, my beloved," he would begin, "whilst I pour my entire soul into thy bosom;" and such intimate confidence was a literal transcript from the "Mercure de France," or a new novel!

The love-letter is not, therefore, always a true mirror of the love.

Yet, as a rule, it certainly is. From this view, read once more the little Bella's notelet from the hay-field. Perhaps I err in regarding this as a love-letter. I think I do not, however. The instinct of her sex was in her when she wrote it; and it was just as effusive as she knew how, at her age, to make it. But the love of which it was the expression, what of that? It was a gross and meagre love, built upon a picture-book that cost sixpence. Ten or fifteen years later I have reason to suppose that she wrote in the following strain to a certain youth of her admiration:

"MY DARLING TOM,—Oh, if you only knew what a difference it makes to the brightness of the day when I see you or see you not, you would never, never, dearest Tom, fail to come and spend an hour or two with us in the evening. I know, of course, that you are busy, dear; a doctor's profession is a horribly busy one. Still, if even it were only to feel mamma's pulse, it would be so sweet of you to come. Poor papa is not at all well; he thinks he is going to have another attack of gout. I was so very disappointed that we did not meet you by the river yesterday evening. Mary and I were there from six o'clock

until seven, and we would have continued our lovely promenade up and down if there had not been such a disagreeable mist, which made Mary cough. Tom, dear, I wonder if you love me half as much as I think I love you. I don't know, I'm sure. Mamma says it's just possible, and only just. But this I know, that if anything were to happen to you, I should die out of the world; it would be so blank and good for nothing without you. Do come to-night, there's a dear, good boy.

"Your ever-fond little chicken,

"BELLA."

"P.S.—Papa says he presumes I am writing to you, and he wonders if he might allow himself two glasses—only two—of the 1870 port, once in twenty-four hours."

It is the same Bella, you see; somewhat developed, that is all. She is unwilling—and I do not blame her—to miss any of the small but very genuine pleasures which seem incident to her position in the world as the affianced bride of young Tom Physic; and she is quite equal to the art of such casual suggestions as may make her lover call at her home a little oftener; even as in the old days, when she was only a yard high, she lured me into her presence under the thin presence of a deaire for a rake.

Emerson has said, somewhere, that our intellectual and active powers increase with our affection. To me this statement is not altogether credible. At least, it is not confirmed by the quality of such love-letters as the world is entertained with, through the medium of the Law Courts; nor is it confirmed by one's own love-letters. Perhaps I, as a bachelor, am a little prejudiced, but I cannot help thinking, in opposition to Emerson, that the intellect is, more often than not, held in abeyance when the heart takes up the pen to indite the familiar tale of its yearnings.

A FOOTBALL MATCH.

It was Saturday morning; the busy city was even busier than usual, by reason of everybody's anxiety to finish and get away in good time for the afternoon's holiday. At such a time the sight of strangers, in number more or less, whether Arabs, Turks, Muscovites, or Chinese, would attract hardly a passing glance; and as for a few country people of the native brand, what is there to cause surprise at their presence

in the centre of their own metropolis! But on this particular morning it was not a question of a few country people. There were hundreds of them, a curious, thorny, knotted, hard-featured kind of a crowd, in strange contrast to the smooth and supple Londoner, all whose angles have been worn away by continuous attrition. As their appearance, so their speech. It was English, to be sure, but not such as "she is spoke" within hearing of Bow Bells.

Roaming about here and there, the invading hosts broke up into small, irregular bands, loitering and gazing about, but still keeping together in a kind of loose formation. They might be staring up at the Monument, or admiring the bulk of St. Paul's, or peering over the parapet of London Bridge; but withal they had rather the appearance of people killing time, than engaged in a regular plan of sight-seeing. They wore badges, too, in their hats and caps, tickets of light blue and gold, and favours of blue and white on the lappets of their coats. The usually in-souciant London clerk was a little mystified at the sight. The light blue favours suggested the recent boat-race; and when it was seen that the gold lettering thereon formed the legend: "Play up, Wednesday!" or some other allusion to that particular day of the week—the University race having been rowed on the Wednesday previous—the surmise that these were belated boat-race visitors became almost certainty.

But when the leader of one of these invading bands was accosted and asked if he and his friends had been roving about London ever since Wednesday's boat-race, an answer was given with fine natural scorn, and in good broad Yorkshire:

"Nay, nay, wee know naught about bowt-race. We're Sheffield blades, my lad, and Wensday's our cloob. Aye, we've come for the footba' match. Play up, Wensday! Eh'oop!"

There was no mistaking the enthusiasm of these Yorkshire lads. They had started from Sheffield at five o'clock in the morning, several thousands of them, packed in four or five special trains. Their ultimate destination was Kennington Oval, where the final tie for the Association Cup was to be decided—the competing clubs being the "Sheffield Wednesday" and the Blackburn Rovers. Thus there was a kind of emulation as of two rival peoples, Yorkshire being pitted against Lancaster, as in the old Wars of the Roses. But in this case

it was a contest, the interest in which penetrated the whole social fabric. For the greater part of our country visitors were working men—grinders, riveters, polishers, having something to do, anyhow, with the great hardware industries of their native town; but all as enthusiastic about football play as any public schoolboy.

All this shows the vast popularity of a game that, half a century ago, was almost extinct. But for the public schools, and especially Rugby, where the game was still followed and cherished, football might have disappeared altogether from the roll of British sports and pastimes. It had been a famous popular game of old, played on village greens and breezy commons, parish against parish, guild against guild, or town against country—the goal, the old church porch, or perhaps the portico of the town-hall. In such a contest, young and old would take a part, and emulation and local patriotism thoroughly roused, the game might sometimes end in a general free fight, and desperate riot, involving broken heads and limbs, and even fatal casualties. Even of modern football, with its regular teams of players, working under well-settled rules, it can hardly be said that such rough encounters are altogether unknown. The contest is too sharp and violent to be always conducted with good temper. Even now, angry passions will rise, just as they did when Edmund Waller wrote:

As when a sort of lusty shepherds try
Their force at football; care of victory
Makes them salute so rudely, breast to breast,
That their encounter seems too rough for jest.

And the backers, supporters, and partizans of the rival sides are sure to enter into the spirit of the struggle with as much warmth as the players themselves, so that a general row and free fight are not unknown as the termination of a hardly-contested football match, especially in the northern regions of England, where local jealousies are perhaps stronger, and the crowds assembled of a rougher character than in the southern district. But such disturbances, if not unknown, are of an exceptional character; and as football is putting off any rough-and-tumble character it once possessed, and taking its place as a scientific game, requiring regular training and constant practice in its professors, it is likely that the disorderly element in it will soon be eradicated.

A certain risk of personal injury must always attach to such a vigorous game as

football, as it does, indeed, to almost every athletic exercise. A local poet, who celebrated a grand football match that was fought between two Derbyshire parishes early in the present century, half-seriously enumerates the parson and the doctor, as interested spectators of the fray :

The Parson purposed, for their sake,
A funeral sermon for to make,
If any one was slain.
And if one chanced to break his neck,
The Doctor's ready at a beck
To pull it in again.

But in those days, perhaps, the danger was increased by the fact that the players were often of highly-matured age, and, consequently, brittle frames. In the great match just spoken of, the leader of one side, Roebuck, is described as being just over thirty years; but the opposing captain, Little David, has seen sixty-three winters pass over his head, and can boast of half a century's football play. But our present race of players have not had time to grow old. For it is only within the last twenty years that the game has assumed its present proportions.

One great cause of the success of football, as a sport, is its attractiveness for lookers on. In spite of wind or foul weather, any good football match is sure to attract its thousands of spectators all ready to "plank down" a shilling or more for a sight of their favourite game. Thus, taking up a sporting paper of the period, we may read of the England versus Scotland match, at Glasgow: "One thousand four hundred pounds taken at the gates." "Ten thousand spectators assembled at the Essex County Ground, at Leyton," to witness the final tie for the Charity Cup. "Twenty thousand people to see the final for the Yorkshire Cup, upon the Halifax ground." And we shall find in the same paper twenty or thirty contests chronicled of merely local interest, attended by numbers varying from nine thousand to nine hundred.

And, if you have once assisted as spectator at a good football match, you will cease to wonder at the attraction of the game for the general public. For it is essentially a lively, emotional game, full of moving incidents, and the ding-dong earnestness of the players and the personal risk which they incur, enhance the dramatic effect. It is the nearest approach that we can make, in these modern days, to the gladiatorial combats of old Rome.

The scene, we will say, is Kennington Oval, and the occasion, the final tie for the

Association Cup—reckoned the blue-ribbon of the football year by that section of players, anyhow, who recognise the Association as the fount and origin of the orthodox laws and practice of the game. Another considerable section, indeed, follow a different practice altogether, and belong to the Rugby Union, whose rules are those of the game as it is played at Rugby School, as well as at Marlboro' and Cheltenham. The Association, however, has the support of other public schools, including the famous old foundations of Eton, Harrow, and Winchester.

Which of the two games is the more ancient and honourable it is difficult to say; the fundamental difference between them being that, by Association rules, kicking the ball is the only recognised mode of propulsion, catching the ball with the hands and carrying it being especially interdicted. To stop a cannon-ball with your head, it used to be said, was death according to the articles of war; but there is no such hard and fast rule at football. You may stop it with any part of your person; but to hold it involves a free kick to the opposite side. Now, in the Rugby game, holding and carrying the ball is an essential part; the rules and procedure of the game are much more complicated, so that an uninitiated spectator watching the procedure is often puzzled to know what the players would be at. But the Association game is easily understood of the people.

The popularity of the Association game may be judged of, by the crowds which are making their way to the Oval this Saturday afternoon—not much afternoon yet, for the gates are open at one, and people are already streaming through the turnstiles. As for the London contingent, they are nearly all young men, and a great majority seem to be football players themselves, and wear the badges of their respective clubs, in one form or another. But our Sheffield friends are also here in full force. They are mostly working men, rugged, and hard as their native steel, and in this respect a great contrast to the London crowd, who are nearly all of what is considered superior social standing. There is a Lancashire crowd, too, no doubt, but these do not show their colours and their complexion so defiantly as do the Yorkshiremen. But it is strange to sit here in the middle of Coccagne, and to listen to the rough Yorkshire burr, and the softer patois of Lancashire.

Anyhow, long before the time fixed for the kick-off, the enclosure railed off for the football play is surrounded by a dense array of spectators, rising in tiers head over head, ranged on the temporary wooden seats, or packed behind the railings. A fine sight it is when a bit of sulky sunshine finds its way through the threatening clouds, and brings into a weird kind of distinctness the whole scene—the green turf chalked out with the boundaries of the play, the goal posts at either end, like tall gallows erected for some monstrous hanging, the great multitudes round about, a chequered mass; here black and threatening, like a thunder-cloud, there showing white and gleaming, as a thousand faces are simultaneously turned to the light. Right opposite is the pavilion, that seedy old pavilion, which has witnessed so many famous cricket contests, which must remember the mighty men of old, and which yet has stories to tell of the performers of yesterday and to-day: how Grace once nearly knocked a hole in its clock face with a vigorous drive; or how Spofforth knocked over the wickets of the picked English players as though they had been ninepins. And the pavilion, too, is black as an ant-hill with its human throng; and the tall houses that look over the ground have their balconies full of spectators. The enormous gasometers that tower over the cricket-field bound the view, grim and silent reminders of the great wilderness of streets and houses that encloses this oasis of green turf.

Just at half-past three a narrow open space appears in the thronging ant-hill, and down the slope and bounding into the field come the Lancashire team: eleven fine fellows, all dressed in white, who are received with a roar of delighted recognition by their friends and supporters.

A stock of striplings strong of heart

Brought up from babes with beef and bread,

as some ballad writer describes the Lancashire lads of a good many centuries ago. And away they go, so many bounding brothers careering over the turf, kicking a ball before them in sheer lightness of heart.

"Lancashire, indeed; they're more than half Scotch," says a Sheffielder, angrily, on hearing some one cry, "Good old Lancashire."

But whether or no of entirely native origin, the Lancashire team is a fine one.

"My word, they'll eat up poor little Sheffield," cries a discriminating Yorkshireman. And, indeed, the Sheffield team

looked quite small when they presently made their appearance, arrayed in blue jackets, to receive a thundering salute of cheers from their numerous friends.

Then comes the ceremony of tossing a coin for choice of sides, and kick off. And now the rival teams are drawn up in battle array. There is the goal-keeper first, or last of all, whose duty it is to hold the fort—the space between the goal-posts—to the last extremity; and in front of him, the two backs, with the three half-backs on the alert in the wings and centre; and beyond them the fighting line, the five forward players, whose business it is to rush the ball into their opponents' quarters if they can, or to render a good account of the invaders if the ball is driven to their side.

A solemn moment it is when "The Major" appears, the president of the Association, carrying the leather-laced football in his arms, which he deposits carefully in the very centre of the ground. There it lies for a moment till its bearer is clear of the ground and gives the word to go, when a chosen player advances and sends it flying towards the opposite goal. It is soon stopped, footed or headed back, for you may butt the ball with your head if you can't reach it any other way. Then there is a wild intermingling of blue and white, a confused awaying crowd, driving now to one side and now to the other.

Not that the present contest is in itself remarkable; for it is soon to be seen that the Lancashire men are of too heavy metal for their opponents. As the prescient Yorkshireman foretold, his countrymen are eaten up; and as the best side has the best luck, the result is a very hollow affair. For three-quarters of an hour the play goes on all against the Sheffielders, who lose goal after goal; and then half-time is called, and there is five minutes' breathing time. During the pause certain sanguine Yorkists declare that the game may yet be saved; but such is not the general opinion among the hardy hardware men.

"Well, we've bin to Lunnon, anyhow, lads," remarks an elder, consolingly. But the bulk of his companions don't seem to think much of that. Indeed, some of their remarks about the great metropolis are rather disparaging. Here is the experience of a Sheffield knife-grinder in a walk through London streets, delivered in a tone of amused contempt, as if with the conviction that, anyhow, the knife-grinding arrangements of London were in a very backward condition.

"As we were coming along. 'See thee, George,' says William, 'whativer do you call yon?' And there were a German cocked up on a machine, grinding knives on one of them old-fashioned stones. 'Knock him over, William,' says I."

Here the shouts that greeted the return of the football teams drowned the conclusion of the narrative, which certainly showed a want of tolerance on the part of the speaker, and we were left in ignorance of the fate of his German confrère, who would certainly have been a knife-grinder with a story to tell if William had carried out his companion's instructions.

Happily the same intolerant spirit was not openly manifested during the football match to the account of the victors. The Yorkshiremen took their beating more philosophically than might have been expected; and although some said that there was "feighting" in the air, everything passed off in an orderly manner.

That the cup should go back to Lancashire was indeed almost a foregone conclusion. It has remained there for five or six consecutive years in the hands of one or another of the famous clubs of that pre-eminent county. Preston, Blackburn, and other Lancashire towns have a special reputation for football. The game, indeed, must have survived, in some form or other, in these districts, even through the dark ages, when it was practically extinct in other parts of the country. But, till the Football Association was founded in 1863, the game was played in a desultory kind of way; and, probably, no records are available for the historian who would trace the history of the game before that date.

Derbyshire, indeed, was famous for its football players up to within forty or fifty years of the present date, when the game was frosted and destroyed by the hostility of the ruling powers to such gatherings. At Chester, in early times, the football contest was an official and municipal function. According to old-established custom, the shoemakers of Chester delivered to the drapers yearly, at Shrovetide, "a ball of leather, called a foote ball," to play from the Common Hall. But as early as the year 1540, football was superseded by foot-races, which were held on the Roodde.

The shoemakers, indeed, where they formed a numerous body, seem to have been eager players at football. That was a grand match on the Berders, when the Suters of Selkirk challenged the Yarrow

men under Lord Home, and played them, on the Carterhaugh—the Shirra of Selkirk himself, the great Sir Walter Scott, being among the organisers of the contest. The game did not inspire Sir Walter with any spirited Border ballad, but the Ettrick Shepherd has surely something to say about it, and the following verse is part of a ballad composed on the occasion:

Has ne'er in a' this country been,
Sic shoulderin' and sic fa'in',
As happened but few weeks sinsyne
Here at the Christmas ba'in'.

Further north, Scone was famous for its local football matches, in which all the country-side took part, and which commenced at two p.m. and lasted till the sun went down. A current proverb, "A's fair at the Ba' o' Scone," testifies to the unscrupulous manner in which the game was fought out. At Inverness, again, the women of the district joined in the game; and through all the northern land, even to the utmost Thule, the game was enthusiastically played, till the beginning of the present century.

Nor was the game confined to Great Britain. In Normandy, and also in Brittany, local football matches were regularly played between parish and parish, with much energy and fierceness, customs that survived till the middle of the present century, though it would be difficult now to find any recollection of the game among the peasantry.

But the "renaissance" of football in our own country, and its marvellous development and popularity, is a fairly good answer to any croakers who may bewail the decadence of our British youth. For it is a game that calls for all the qualities that are valuable to the soldier and to the explorer—endurance, courage, tenacity of purpose, and a readiness to suffer all kinds of pain and trouble for the sake of victory—all these are not inconsiderable qualities; and if you add to them prudence, discipline, and good temper, you have gone far to build up the ideal character of a good football player.

IN THE FOLKS' WOOD.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

How shall I describe the days that followed; the magic saunterings in the Folks' Wood, or by the Folks' Mere—the golden light that cast a glamour over everything—the shy, illusive charm of my Titania!

At first, Miss Denison, with a keen watchfulness in her grey eyes, underlying in some intangible way her unflinching cordiality, was the constant companion of our walks and talks; but, by degrees, this watchfulness relaxed, and then came hours of blissful companionship that, even now, stir a dim yearning in my heart—despite the end.

What heroic platitudes—what noble sentiments—my inexperienced youth drew from the depths of its ignorance in those halcyon days, to win a smile from my silent nymph! I smile myself—and sigh—at the memory of those ardent commonplace.

Sylvia listened, with a gentle word now and then, and with bright eyes glancing here and there about the woods, as if in search of something. She knew every turn of them, as if she had been a bird or a squirrel, and as instinctively. Of all their wealth of herb and flower, she knew scarce a name.

I remember asking her, once, the name of a little flower of purest blue, that mightily took my town-bred fancy.

"Fairy's eyes," she answered, readily.

Later on, when her aunt had joined us, I spoke of the little blossom by the name Sylvia had given it.

"Who calls it that?" asked Miss Denison, quickly, with a shadow on her face. "It is the blue speedwell."

"It was Miss Sylvia's name for it," I explained; "it struck me as very pretty and appropriate."

"It is time Sylvia gave up her childish names for things," began Miss Denison, gravely; but Sylvia slipped her hand through her aunt's arm, with a whispered, "Don't be cross, Aunt Rachel," that brought back the smile to the elder woman's face.

Another day I spoke to Sylvia of my first sight of her in the woods.

"Were you repeating poetry?" I asked, jestingly. "Did I disturb a recitation to the Fairy Court?"

She looked gravely at me.

"Not just that——" she began, and then stopped and smiled softly.

So, many days went by, and yet I had never spoken of love to her—had not even hinted at the feelings that kept me under her fairy spell. Many a time, alone in my room, my pulses leapt as I rehearsed scenes of avowal on my own part—scenes pregnant with passion and eloquence, and palpitating with hopes of the sweet blush

that was to give the shy assent I longed for. And yet, vivid as my conception of the first part of my programme was wont to be, somehow, it was just when I came to this shy assent, that all my diffidence returned in tenfold force. I could not think of my woodland nymph as won by mortal man. Some deity of the woods, some "lovely Acis" of immortal pastures—even some bewitched merman, like him whose forsaking has been sung in sweetest music—were fitting wooer of the "cold, strange eyes" of this Dryad; mere man, albeit in the form of dream-fed youth, seemed too rude a mate for her ethereal grace.

Yet the day came, and the hour.

One glorious evening in July, she and I were in the little glade where first I met her. We sat on the fallen tree, and there had been silence between us for a space.

Sylvia was seldom the first to break a silence, and my youthful eloquence was quenched in the delight of watching her slender hand as it caressed the lichened bark of the prostrate trunk, and a tumultuous wonder if she would resent my taking the pretty hand in mine.

She sighed softly, and my heart gave a throb. It was the first sigh I had ever heard from her lips. A smile often, a bird-like little laugh more rarely, broke the habitual gentle quietness of her manner—which had no trace of depression or sadness in it; but I had never heard her sigh before.

The soft sound gave words to my desire.

"Sylvia," I said, while the beating of my heart well-nigh choked me, and all my rehearsed eloquence faded from my memory, "Sylvia—I love you—I loved you the first moment I saw you, here, on this very spot. Can you love me a little, dear—only a little?"

She looked straight before her into the depths of the wood, and the pure outline of her cheek showed no access of colour.

Timidly I took possession of the slender hand, as it strayed along the trunk. She did not withdraw it.

"Try to love me a little, dear; I love you so dearly—so dearly," I pleaded.

She turned her face towards me—the clear blue eyes as candid and untroubled as a child's.

"I do love you," she said simply, and looking straight into my eyes.

My Titania was won, and my wildest hopes fulfilled! I had "kissed Queen

Mab," and if the kiss brought a vague sense of incompleteness, and Queen Mab walked home with me through her native woods, hand-in-hand, but without any answering tremor to that which shook my pulses, was not all life before me to warm the heart of the woodland nymph into that of the perfect woman!

We walked, still hand-in-hand, into the parlour and Miss Denison's presence.

At sight of us she started and dropped her work, while her eyes read my face with intense enquiry.

"Aunt Rachel," I said, "Sylvia and I are—I have been telling Sylvia I love her; and she says she loves me—a little—too."

Miss Denison uttered a sharp exclamation, half sob, half laugh, and caught her niece in her arms, straining her to her breast, with a passion she seemed unable to control.

"My darling! my darling!" she cried, "I am so glad, so very glad!"

Then she turned to me, with an evident striving for calmness.

"I could not give her to any one I like—I trust—more," she said; "to any one I could better trust with her happiness."

She put her hand on my shoulder and kissed my forehead.

"My dear," she said, earnestly, "she shall make you happy. You shall never repent it. I pray Heaven—"

She checked herself, and began to speak more lightly and of other things.

We settled down after that, Sylvia's silence falling on her again, while my eyes were satisfied with feasting on her fragile beauty, and my heart sang pæans because she was mine.

When the too-short evening was gone, and I was alone in my bed-chamber with a tumult of feelings in my bosom that would not let me think of sleep, I sat me down at my wide-open window and looked out upon the silent night.

The moon was at the full, climbing the heavens in all her majesty, and endowing the trees of the wood, and the distant waters of the great mere, with that magical, mysterious beauty of which she alone keeps the secret.

I had sat for more than an hour, drinking in the beauty without being aware of its details, when my eye was caught by the gleam of something white amongst the trees, to the right of the house. It was gone before I had time to look at it, and it had been so vague and formless that I decided it must have been a sudden glint

of the moon on the shining foliage—if not a delusion altogether.

But, whatever it was, it had broken the train of my thought, and I began to think of preparing for bed, when I heard the cautious opening of a door near mine I knew to be Miss Denison's; then the creeping of muffled footsteps on the stairs; the guarded loosing of the bolts of the half-door; and then, watching intently from my window, I saw a dark figure, cloaked and hooded, but in which I instantly recognised my hostess, emerge upon the moonlit space, and glide swiftly into the shadow of the woods.

Something—some sickening apprehension—closed upon my heart like a spring. Instant conviction that here was a mystery—a mystery connected in some way with Sylvia—seized me, and even before the thought was formulated in my mind, I had slipped down the stairs and out of the door, and was in pursuit of the dark figure I had recognised.

Instinct, rather than any defined plan, guided me through the woods—ghostly and eerie now to my newly-awakened apprehensions of the mystery they must conceal—and past the mere, where the moon mirrored itself in the placid depths. As I paused at its side, the figure I was in pursuit of stood for a moment on its further edge, as if peering into its waters for something; then turned, and kept on its way into the deeper recesses of the wood.

I circled the mere and followed the well-remembered windings, until I was nearing the glade, where my first love-tale had been told a few hours earlier.

I was close upon it; I could even, through the trees, catch gleams of the moonlight sleeping on its sward, when from it came the sound of a lightly-trilled song, shattering with a thrilling horror the silence of the night, and freezing the blood in my veins.

I took a few steps forward, and looked upon the glade, and upon a sight that will always haunt my dreams.

The moon's rays as she rode high in the heavens, filled the little space with a silvery radiance, wherein, with floating hair and waving hands, with scraps of weird song intermingled with elfin laughter, a white-robed figure swayed in a kind of rhythmic dance, as if to music unheard by mortal ears.

I stood, stiff-stricken with the sense of unintelligible calamity, and the hooded figure I had followed stole out from the

opposite side of the glade, and approached the dancer.

"Sylvia, my darling!" she pleaded, in tones of agonised and imploring love, "come home with me; come home with Aunt Rachel, dear."

The girl laughed a tinkling, unearthly little laugh.

"They know now!" she said. "I've told them. I'll go back now!" She waved her hands once—twice. "Good night! good night!" she cried, and my strained ears caught faint, delusive echoes, as of elfin voices in answer.

Miss Denison's arm was wound firmly round the slim white figure as they crossed the little space. Her eyes fell on me where I stood amongst the trees, and there came into her face a look of hopeless anguish that hurts me to think of even now. There was something in her look, and in the way in which she drew her charge away from my direction, that told me she forbade discovery of my presence. I waited until the sound of the retreating footsteps was lost in the distance, and then followed in their track to the house, and regained my room, a prey to agitating and torturing thoughts I will not recall. Sleep was out of the question. I sat and watched the early summer dawn, thinking not at all, but letting the waves of feeling go over my head until I grew restless, and felt I must go out—not into that fatal wood, but somewhere into the open air.

Once more on that strange night I passed out of the hall-door, and finding my way into the straggling kitchen-garden at the back of the house, and away from the sight of the Folks' Wood, I strolled up and down its grass-grown paths in a vain endeavour to think consecutively of the night's events.

Presently the latch of the gate clicked, and I saw Miss Denison's tall figure approaching.

No smile greeted me now. On her worn face could be read a despairing sadness that made no effort at concealment. A dull, half-understood resentment against her had smouldered in my breast during the hours of my night watch; glimpses of something treacherous had caught here, there, on my mental consciousness, to lose force again for want of knowledge; but, at sight of her face, I am glad to remember that, even in my own misery, I found pity for hers.

She came close to me, but did not speak.

"How is—she!" I stammered at last.

"She is asleep," she said, in a dull, dead-sounding voice. "Old Martha is with her. I have come to say a few words to you before you go. Since you have seen my miserable secret with your own eyes—there is little to say. I don't ask you to forgive me. I have no defence to make. It is true—I would have sacrificed you—or any one—for her good. I plotted and planned for it; that was my only reason for wishing for a boarder. If you had proved unworthy, I should have kept her from you and looked for another—that's all."

"It was a little hard on me," I said, in a voice I could not keep quite steady.

Her face worked passionately.

"It was cruel; it was inhuman!" she cried. "Only, I love her so—only I believed—I hoped at least—that to know herself loved would awaken her own soul. That this—this folly—ah! let me face it at last! this delusion—this madness would pass away, and I might see her a happy wife and mother. My Sylvia—my beautiful Sylvia!"

Her voice broke with that pitiful cry, and the tears coursed down her thin cheeks.

I found some manliness then, and, taking her hand, drew her to a garden seat.

"Miss Denison," I said, quietly, "it is not I who should quarrel with you for your love for Sylvia, even though it has fallen hardly on me. I forgive you freely and fully for my share of the trouble."

She thanked me brokenly, and presently, in a calm tone, asked me to listen to the whole story, wherein I might, perhaps, find some sort of excuse for her sin against me.

"I had a younger brother—an only one," she began. "He was Sylvia's father. Oh, my poor Laurie! What years of misery seem to have gone by since you were my darling and my joy! But that's no matter! Well, this brother was my father's pride and delight. I was nothing to him in comparison. Laurie was to redeem our fallen fortunes; Laurie was to win every prize in life. Amongst others, his handsome face was to win the heiress whose money was sadly needed to repair our decay. I need not tell you the details of all the sad story. This is all that concerns you. In the heyday of his youth, with, as my father thought, the world at his feet, he fell in love and ran away with

a girl without a farthing—an orphan teacher in the village school. The day my father heard the news he swore a solemn oath that Laurie should never darken his doors again; and from that moment he has never spoken his name."

She paused and wrung her hands together; and the action told something of what this quietly-told story had cost her.

"Mr. Erskine," she went on, presently, very low, "they were married—I did not work to draw you into that disgrace, however else I have sinned against you. No tidings reached us—or me, rather—for it was only by stealth that I managed to let my brother know of his father's unalterable decision—for many months after the separation. Then, one day, one awful day, came news of my Laurie's death by drowning"—another pause, while her hands clutched at her breast—"and a week later, walking broken-hearted in the woods, I met the girl he had married—ill, hungry, and in rags—and she begged me, for my love of him, to give her shelter until—her child was born. There was then—it has been pulled down since—a poor, mean cottage in the very heart of the Folks' Wood. In secret, and with a quaking heart, I hid her there. I brought things from the house to make it habitable. I managed to procure doctor and nurse; and there—there amongst the trees, Sylvia was born, and her poor young mother died. When it was over, desperation made me bold, and I confessed all to my father. I suppose I was terrible in my anguish, for he consented at last to my taking the baby, Laurie's child, to bring up—although, as you have seen, he has never forgiven her her birth or her mother."

She paused—this time so long that I spoke. "Sylvia——" I began.

"Sylvia was the dearest, sweetest, loveliest of children"—her voice began to tremble—"but from the time her mind began to open I felt that she was unlike other children. As she grew older, her passion for the woods, for the tales of the fairies—oh, those fatal fairies!—that haunt them, grew with her. It seemed to suck out all other life or interest from her. She lives only in that. Ah! don't ask me, since my hopes are ended. And they were so high, only yesterday. No words can alter it or mend it! My little Sylvia—my Laurie's only child!"

That morning I left Folks' Field, and I have never seen it since.

At my request, Miss Denison kept me informed from time to time of her niece's state; for the thought of complete ignorance was unbearable to me.

Two years after that strange summer holiday, a letter—written with a kind of anguished resignation—told me that Sylvia Denison's fluttering soul had escaped its earthly bonds, and that the Folks' Wood was for ever deserted of the woodland nymph I had wooed beneath its shades.

But still, at moments, I follow that airy figure as it winds amongst the trees. I tell again my tale of love to her passionless fairy heart; and once more I feel my blood freeze as she dances her mystic dance to the sound of elfin song and laughter in the glade.

THE TRAIN-BANDS OF EDINBURGH.

EVERY year the Magistrates and Council of the ancient city of Edinburgh appoint from their number an official called the "Captain of Orange Colours," whose sole duty is to take charge, during his term of office, of an old tattered banner, a snuff-box, a tobacco-pipe and case, and a silver cup. These are the sole remaining insignia of the once famous Train-bands of the city, the memory of which has just been rescued from oblivion by the printing of their quaint records and minutes, at the order of the magistrates and under the supervision of the Town Clerk. These are worth looking at, as affording a curious picture of the municipal institutions of the past.

It is not easy for us, living in these days of admirable police organisation, fire brigades, and sanitary inspection—admirable, although some degress yet from perfection—to realise that our forefathers had either to be their own guardians or submit to be robbed and maltreated. Edinburgh began, as long ago as 1580, to entrust to her burgesses the duty of defending the commonweal; for in that year the Train-bands were instituted. The Town Council nominated sixteen citizens—ten representing the merchants and six the crafts—to be captains of the sixteen companies of the Regiment of Burgesses. There was one lieutenant, one ensign, and two sergeants to each company, thus making a total of eighty officers, forty-eight of whom were commissioned and thirty-two non-commissioned. The Cap-

tains elected their own Commandant, or Moderator, for the year, and also nominated one of their number as clerk, to keep the accounts and records.

The city was divided into sixteen districts, each distinguished by a "colour," as, orange; whytte; blew; whyte and orange; green and reid; purple; blew and whyte; orange and green; grein and whitte; reid and yellow; yellow; reid and blew; orange and blew; reid and whyte; reid, whyte, and orange; and reid—to reproduce the quaint and erratic spelling of the records. Each district was known by its colours, and the captain of the district was the captain of such and such colours. Each company was, of course, recruited from the residents of its own district.

In 1607, this custom was discontinued, and a hired watch was employed; but the service does not seem to have been effective, or, perhaps, the expense was grudged, for, in 1625, the magistrates ordained by Act of Council, that the ancient method of watching by the burghesses and inhabitants should be resumed. Proclamation was made in the name of the King and Council, that every man should "Compeir as thai ar wairnit ilk man in his awin constable's pairt in the nether Tolbuth of the burgh, at nyne houres at nycht, to answer to their names, as thai sal be callit be the baillies or constable of his pairt, with sufficient armour, and not de-pairt therefra till fyve houres in the morning under the paine of ane unlau of fyve poundis, to be payit be the contravenar 'toties quoties;' and this ordour to begin uponne the 25th of October instant."

An Act of the following year refers to the foreign wars, to the possibility of invasion, and to the necessity of being prepared for defence. It appointed the whole inhabitants to be divided into eight companies of two hundred men each, to be regularly exercised and disciplined; and the officers of each company were required to personally visit the houses of the "whole men" of their company, to see that they were provided with arms, and to report defaulters to the magistrates. The big and strong men were ordered to carry a pike, and the smaller men, "a musket with bandalier and head-piece, lead, poulder, and match." A later ordinance orders the youths of the city to be formed into two companies—that of the Merchants to march in the van, and that of the Crafts in the rear, of the Train-bands.

Whether these ordinances were or were

not fully carried out, there is no means of knowing, for the minutes of the Society of Captains only extend back to 1647. But it would appear that in 1645, the Town Council remodelled the whole system of the Train-bands, and defined the bounds of each company. They appointed the Captains, and left these officers to select their own subalterns.

A town-guard was also organised, consisting of sixty men, a lieutenant, two sergeants, and three corporals. This company was under pay, was required to be at the order of the magistrates night or day, and figured at all public functions.

In 1663, the Captains of the Train-bands formed themselves into a Society, and obtained a constitution from the Town Council. It enabled them to "meet together at such convenient times and places as they might appoint, for contriving and appointing things necessary and convenient for securing decent order among themselves in their several companies, whatever should be enacted by the major part present at every such meeting—nine being always a quorum—being regarded as the conclusion and act of the whole." They were also empowered to exact penalties and fines on their own order, and to require the obedience of all the inferior officers to their edicts.

This Society, which began as a sort of Committee of Public Safety, seems to have gradually merged into a convivial club.

It began well, however, and took over the control of such city constables as there were. The watch was regularly kept by the several companies, each in its own district and under its own Captain, but with the opportunity of a relief occasionally by borrowing a guard from a neighbouring company.

That the citizens did not like the duty, and shirked it whenever they could, is evident from successive ordinances. Thus, in 1669, there is an Act which sets forth that the neglect of the citizens to keep guard has led to the breaking open of shops and houses, and the disquietude of the city; and orders that thenceforth "all the neighbours" shall punctually attend their respective Captain's guard, and watch the whole time appointed to them, under the penalty of three pounds Scots, and further punishment at the discretion of the Council.

This may have served for a time; but laxity again set in, and in 1676 there is another solemn Act reprehending the citizens for absenting themselves from

guard without even providing substitutes, and ordaining that whenever the Guard should not turn out in sufficient force to protect the city, the Captain on duty should be held responsible for the fines on the absentees. Again and again similar enactments are repeated, until the Society of Captains, in despair, requested the Council to appoint a Town-Major or Inquisitor of the Watch Rolls, whose duty was to go the round of the Guard, take note of the absentees, pay into the guard-box six shillings Scots for each absentee, and then pursue each for eighteen shillings for his own relief and payment. With a prospect of two hundred per cent. profit on each fine, it is not likely that this official would allow any skulker to escape; so we may assume that either the Guard was thereafter well kept, or that the Town Major had a very lucrative post.

But if without fear, the Captains themselves were not without reproach, as we gather from such minutes as this:

"Edinr. 14th Decr., 1676. The which day, the City Captaines, being mett and considering the many and great violations of the law of God, and the laws of this kingdom, established by his Majestie and his royall predecessors, against cursing and swearing, which is prohibit by severall Acts of Parlt. under diverse penalties, did therefor unanimously statut and ordaine that in case ane of our number shall curse, swear, or use any unhandsome expressions at any of our meettings, he who so doeth shall be obleegid to pay in to our clerke, sex shillings Scotts, 'toties quoties.' . . . The sd. day it was furder ordained, that in case that any shall interrupt any of our number when he is tabled, before he be heard, he shall be obleegid to pay into our clerke four shillings Scotts, 'toties quoties.'"

This ordinance, however, does not seem to have permanently abolished "unhandsome expressions," for we find similar minutes at intervals of several years. The following points to something very "unhandsome" indeed:

"The Cpts. mett, and taking to ther consideration the uncomeliness of disrespectful language, one to another in generall, but more in particular the giving of a lie, which in reason may procure quarrels among them who retains a principall of honour; and to witness their dislike thereto, it is agreed, whoever gives another the lie shall be fined to the value of ten shillings sterling, or any remarkable designed reflections, to suffer a vote of the

Society, as the heynousness or otherwys as the crime may deserve."

The language here is confused, but the design is obviously praiseworthy. So also is it in the following, which is so exceedingly characteristic of the time, place, and people, that we transcribe it in full. Evidently, there had been much soul-searching before this entry:

"Edr., the fourth day of December, one thousand, seven hundred and five years.

"The which day the Society of Captains being convened in the old Councill House"—usually they met at some tavern, or at "the quarters" of some brother officer, a vintner—"considering the great growth of immoralities within this city and suburbs, and the fearfull rebukes of God, by a dreadful fire in the Parliament Close, Kirkheugh and Cowgate, which hapned about midnight upon the third day of Ffebruary 1700 years, and which it is recorded in the Councill Books, with their Christiane sentiments therant, upon the 24th of April thereafter. And, also, remembering that terrible fire, which hapned in the north side of the Landmercatt about midday upon the 28th day of October, 1701 years, wherein severall men, women and children were consumed in the flames, and lost by the fall of ruinous walls. And, furder, considering that most tremendous and terrible blowing up of gunpowder in Leith, upon the 3d day of July, 1702 years, wherein sundree persons were lost, and wonderfull ruines made in the place. And likewise reflecting upon many other tokens of God's wrath, lately come upon us, and what wee are more and more threatened with, being moved with the zeal of God, and the tyes He heath laid upon us, and that wee have taken upon ourselves to appear for Him in our severall station, doe, in the Lord's strength, resolve to be more watchfull over our hearts and wayes than formerly, and each of us in our severall capacities to reprove vice with that due zeal and prudence as we shall have occasion, and to endeavour to promote the rigorous execution of those good laws, made for suppressing of vice and punishing of the vitious. And the Society appoints this their solemn resolution to be recorded, and their Clarke to read, or move the reading heirof in the Society everle first meeting after Whitsonday and Martines yearly, as a lasting and humblinge memoriall of the said three dreadfull fyres, and that under the penalty of twenty merks, Scots, 'toties quoties.'"

How long this wholesome feeling lasted, and whether or not this solemn record was read as ordained in future years, the minutes do not show.

Due record is made of the manner in which the burgesses are to be informed that their turn for mounting guard has come. The Captain sent his drum throughout the whole of his bounds, between six and seven o'clock in the morning in the summer time, and shortly after daybreak in winter time. Pausing at the head of each "close" or "wynd," the officer proclaimed the precise hour for "attending the colours," and named those whose turn was due. Just before the appointed hour, the drum was sent round again by way of reminder; and one can well imagine that its rattle was anathematised freely enough to have enriched the Exchequer, had there been any one to pick up the "unhandsome expressions" and the consequent fines. The hour of mounting guard is repeatedly altered on the score of inconvenience, but no alteration seems to have made the duty agreeable to the worthy burgesses, who had to turn out in the cold and dark and wind.

They do not seem to have even had the compensating glory of wearing a uniform; at any rate, we find no mention of uniform in these records, and only a casual reference, at a later date, to the full-dress to be worn by the Captains at some civic function. This was ordered to be "a dark blue coat, plain yellow buttons, white vest, nankeen breeches, and white silk stockings; each Captain having appended to his left breast ribbons made in the form of a rose, denoting each of their colours."

When a new Captain, or doctor, or chaplain was appointed, there was a great gathering for what was called the "brothering" of the new comrade. In 1684, the new man had to pay the clerk seven pounds sterling towards the expenses. The sum varied from time to time; but now and again there was an enactment to check and reduce the growing expenditure at the convivial meetings. By one minute it is ordered that no Captain shall be pressed to drink what he does not want, either as to quantity or quality. By another it is decreed that whoever chooses to remain in the tavern after the Moderator or Commandant has retired, must pay his own charges. The expenses of the entertainments were, otherwise, furnished out of the common fund, made up of the "brothering" fees, and the constant small fines for petty offences.

Here is a characteristic entry of a "brothering":

"Edinburgh, January 3, 1687. The which day ye Society of Captains being in the evening met and conveyed, in Captain Patrick Steele his house, Capt. Edward Cunningham and Capt. Walter Dermont, after having taken ye usuall oaths and engagements, were, with ye accustomed solemnities and ceremonies, received into ye Brotherhood, and declared members of ye said society. Each of the said intrant captains haveing conform to ane act payd in to ye Clerk seven pounds sterling, which ye Society appointed their Clerk to record."

What were "the accustomed solemnities and ceremonies" we gather, in part, from later entries, such as this: The entrant "stood upon ane carpet in the middle of the roome with the whole Society surrounding him, with their swords drawn, and after performing of some of the usuall seremonies he kneeled upon his right knee and the whole Society crossed their swords upon his head, and soe he was declared a member of the Society, and ordered that their clerk should record the samen."

Still, it must be confessed, that one would like to know more about the "usuall seremonies" which are repeatedly mentioned, but never further described.

What we do gather, however, is that there was either a dinner or a supper after the "seremonies," and a big drink, although the minutes are always careful to record that the company, at a timeous hour, "marched to their respective quarters in good order and with proper decorum."

One should imagine that there must have been a little poetic license in such a record after the festivity recorded in the following tavern bill, if it included a company of only sixteen Captains:

Supper	£6	4	6
46 bottles port, 3s. 9d.	8	12	6
19 bottles sherry, 4s.	3	16	0
Rum punch	2	13	6
Whisky tody	0	2	6
Brandy and gin	0	9	6
Porter	0	7	6
Negus	0	5	6
Bread and beer	0	8	6
Biscuit, prawns, etc.	0	7	9
Breakage	0	8	0
Fruits, etc.	0	19	4
Tea and coffie	0	12	0
Cadies and paper	0	3	6
Rum tody, 6s.	0	6	0

£25 16 7

Waiters..... 1 1 0

£26 17 7

The item for breakage is suggestive ; but then we must remember that the custom of the time was to shatter the glass after certain toasts.

Here is a more modest bill ; but still exhibiting a wonderful capacity for liquor among the officers, in comparison with the charge for solids :

Supper	£1 3 0
Fifty-one bottles of punch	2 11 0
Seven bottles of claret	0 14 0
More, one do.	0 2 6
12 bottles of porter.....	0 3 0
Beer and cadies	0 2 3
Ye officer	0 1 0
Glasses	0 1 6
	£4 18 3
Servants	0 2 0
	£5 0 3

Edinburgh, 11 August, 1752.

Great sticklers for discipline and etiquette were these gallant Captains in their glory. Thus, on one occasion, they minute :

"The Societie of Captains being convened, they did unanimously statute and ordain that every one of their number, together with their subalterns, should be obliged to attend the Lord Provost and Town Councill upon all emergent occasions, and in all cases of imminent danger, either to the City or inhabitants, by fire, tumultuous mobs, rabbles or uproars, and that they shall lay outt themselves jointly for maintaining the peace and quietness of the good town, to the outmost of their power, and ordered the same to be recorded, as a publick law of the Society, that all may know their duty in the premisses."

Shortly after this assertion of their rights as public guardians and ordainers of "publick law," the Captains had to submit a long and solemn "Representation" to the Town Provost and Magistrates concerning the insubordination of a certain "Ensigne" who refused or neglected to obey the orders of a Captain acting in place of his own superior, absent on leave. The "Levetennant" seems to have been no better, for, it is sad to read, "being desired by the Captain to sett out the sentries, he and the ensigne, in a mutinous manner, retired and called the rolls, and the Captain desiring both subalterns to sett the sentries upon the Tolbuth, the levetennant answered he would receive commands from no Captain save Captain Robertson, and so went out of guard. The ensigne the very same way disobeyed the Captain, with the aggravation that he wrapped the roll up

and put it in his pockett when the Captain desired it."

This was shocking conduct, and fully justified extreme measures on the part of the "Captain" on duty. But he, "partly from ane uncommon spirit, and partly from a compassion to the exceeding folly" of the two insubordinates, was "willing to pass from what the law of arms would have advised for curbing the insolence of such notorious offenders." So he went calmly to the Lord Provost's house, "who being in bed, desired the Captain, by his lady, to gett sentries from the Captain of the Guard," which was a ready way out of the difficulty. But, in the meantime, the "levetennant and ensigne sent out sentries, and the levetennant went off from the guard with such of the neighbourhood as he could persuade to go with him, but the ensigne stayed sometime longer to show his art in counteracting the Captain, and frustrating the very design of keeping guard."

This was too much, and, therefore, the Society laid a formal complaint before the Council on the just plea that "no Government can subsist without order and discipline," and that the atrocious conduct of the rebellious officers had "wounded the policy and government of this burgh in its very vitalls, which is not to be cured but by some exemplary punishment, and cutting off such gangrened members." The indictment is a long and severe one, and it so affected the Council, that, we learn by the record of an Act which followed, they reprimanded the offenders, suspended them from office, and declared the "Levetennant" as "incapable of all publick trust within this city, during the Councill's pleasure."

At other times, we find the Society "extruding" members for various offences against the rules of their order. One Captain Walter Orrok, we find, had been guilty of "rood behaviour" to the Commandant. He was not expelled, but "the Society did apoint him to ask pardon of the Commandant, the Society to drink to Captain John Murray (the Commandant) in a moderate glass of wine." Whether the piper had to be paid by Captain Walter Orrok, history sayeth not.

During the rebellion of '45 the Trainbands seem to have disappeared, and there is an hiatus in their records until 1747, when a new set of Captains was appointed. Thereafter the Society became more and more a convivial one, and

keeping guard seems to have become a mere formality.

What they never failed to do, however, was to keep the King's and Queen's birthdays with proper loyalty.

Here, for instance, is a quaint record of the fourth of June, 1764 :

"Being the anniversary of His Majesty's birthday, the Society of Captains, at the desire of the Lord Provost, went from the Goldsmith's Hall to the Parliament House, where his Lordship, with the Lord High Commissioner, the Magistrates and Councilmans, nobility and gentry, etc., drank His Majesty's health, the Queen and Royal Family, etc., etc. In the evening there was an elegant supper at Sommers', where the Commandant and Society of Captains entertained the Lord Provost and Magistrates with that elegance and ease so peculiar to that Society. This evening, a little scuffle happened between the City guard and a few idle boys; but by the tender care and diligence of the Lord Provost, the evening was concluded without any disturbance, and the Society spent the night with the utmost happiness."

We have not the menu, but this was the bill on that occasion :

Supper, jeles and sileybubs	£2	2	0
2 doz. and 7 botts clerat	5	8	6
2 doz. and 11 botts punch	1	5	0
6 botts Madeira	1	1	0
Bread and beer	0	3	0
Porter	0	2	0
Cups	0	4	0
4 botts negus	0	5	0
Apples, oranges, resins, and almonds	0	7	6
Frans	0	2	6
Cook and biakets	0	1	6
Cadies	0	1	6
Servants' of officers' drink	0	2	0
	£11	6	0
Waiters	0	5	0
	£11	11	0

Certainly a moderate sum for such a big entertainment; but, then, a sovereign in these old days went a very great deal further than we can make one go now.

The Captains must have been famous entertainers in the last half of the last century. Their suppers or dinners are always superb, conducted with "that elegance and ease so peculiar to the Society," characterised by "grate joy," or "much friendship and mirth," and ending with "propriety." The clerk never fails to record that at the time to go to quarters "the corps retired in distinct divisions, and in excellent order."

We must not leave the minutes and the clerks without one remarkable illustra-

tion. The following entry occurs in 1782, and is signed by the Lieutenant-colonel, and not, as was usually the case, by the clerk :

"In order to render the minutes of the Society of Captains in future intelligible, and to prevent disputes in the corps with regard to precedent, it is proposed that no person can be elected clerk to this corps without having previously given proof of his acquaintance with grammar and orthography, and being a legible penman, as many inconveniences have been experienced by such deficiencies."

A most laudable resolution, but coming rather too late to be of much use. For it was passed in 1782, and in 1795 the alarm of a French invasion caused the enrolment of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers. In 1798, the Magistrates suspended the appointment of officers to the Train-bands, and in that year, therefore, the ancient City Guards terminated what had for long previously been only an honorary existence. But, in 1848, the Town Council revived the office of Commandant and Captain of the Orange Colours, and to this day they annually make the appointment for the arduous duty named at the outset of this article.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "*Murid's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellaot*,"
"*A Fair's Damself*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"A MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED."

HOEL was now really convalescent; but he was still very weak. He had sustained slight internal injury from the fall from the quay, and that, besides the other danger he had passed through, had laid him low. Sickness is often represented as a time for mental reflection; but more often it is passed in a vague round of thoughtlessness that takes possession of the brain, and a weary and profitless wondering.

May was approaching, and only now was the once keen-witted Hoel Fenner able to lie on a couch in his bedroom, and slowly string a few consecutive ideas together. Sister Marie was still with him, and Hoel had quite decided that the Roman Catholic Church had done well in producing such an embodiment of all that was beautiful and womanly as the Sisters of Charity.

But Hoel had many other thoughts in his mind that, as he daily grew stronger, also became more settled and persistent.

These thoughts related to Jesse Vicary and to Elva. It was no good disguising the fact; he loved Elva now with the new love grown of absence, and perhaps, too—so contrary is man's mind—from the very fact that he had cut himself off entirely from her. A hundred times a day he would say to himself: "I will put this case of conscience before Sister Marie, and she will decide." But he had not done so, and now Sister Marie no longer sat up at night with him, and did not stay all day. Soon the doctor would pronounce him fit to return home—home, how ridiculous the word sounded!—and the delightfully simple remarks of this French Sister could no longer be listened to.

"Vicary would be a good conscience-holder," he thought; "but then how can I ever see him again without telling him the truth; and how can I tell him the truth and bring ruin upon Elva? Elva—Good Heavens, what a fool I have been! Why did I run away like that? But what is done is done. She despises me, and I cannot defend myself, even though any gentleman would approve my conduct. Ah, would there be some adverse opinion? Are we able to judge any one with a right judgement? Is not even common law often administered most unjustly?"

"If I have been right by myself, have I not deliberately chosen to be unjust to Vicary in order to save myself the pain of forcing justice upon another? Hang it all, is there justice anywhere? Don't we, most of us, accept a justice with a smiling face? Are not some rules of society monstrously unjust, but custom makes them just? Can one pretend to do more than keep one's own hands clean? I have done that. Well, I shall go back to London as soon as ever I can travel, and just see what turns up. But with Elva—no, I must put away that thought."

At this moment Auguste the waiter came in with "Mistère Fennère's" morning paper, and the first thing his eye alighted on was:

"A marriage is arranged between the Honourable Walter Akister, only son of Lord Cartmel, the well-known astronomer, and Miss Kestell, eldest daughter of Mr. Kestell of Greystone. The wedding, we understand, is to take place early in May, at Rushbrook."

Hoel flung the paper away. Had he

been strong enough he would have stamped upon it. A rage new and altogether foreign to his nature seized him; more overwhelming because he could not blame either Walter Akister or Elva. Blame them—how could he? What must she have thought of him? Why, she thought so badly of him that she had been able to turn her love into hatred, and trample out her sweetest womanhood.

Then, after a few minutes he felt angry with Elva for thinking badly of him. To be prepared to marry that Walter Akister seemed worse than folly; it was a crime. It was like a woman to be inconstant, fickle, shallow, and so on, through all the usual and well-worn invectives against women, till his common sense reasserted itself, and he saw plainly that such conduct as his—unwilling though it had been—was enough to quench any woman's belief in any man—enough, and more than enough.

Weak as he was, Hoel rose from the couch, and grasping the support of the mantelpiece, stood trying to calm himself. He had fancied he had cooled himself into indifference, and that his illness had taken away all mad regrets. They had never been mad till now. Only now did he appear to realise his loss, only now, when Elva had promised herself to another.

He leaned against the marble, and felt angry with his weakness, and angry with the fate that had brought such misery upon him, and at that moment Sister Marie entered with her quiet, peace-suggestive ways, that seemed to repudiate any stormy human passion.

"Monsieur is standing, he has the strength to-day. That is because I asked Saint Joseph."

"Saint Joseph! Pshaw! It is because that woman I told you of, Sister Marie, is faithless, and is going to marry another man."

"You must rejoice greatly, as you told me it was not her fault."

"Rejoice? I do no such thing; I am very angry. She has no business to love twice. Besides—besides, I love her more than ever, just when I had fancied myself cured."

"We all have to tread the Rue de l'Enfer."

"Tread it, yes, when we have paved it first; but what do you think of treading it when one has tried to be an honourable man all one's life, when one has only done what is right, and then the misfortunes

of the wicked overtake one? The world is a place of injustice."

"Ah, monsieur, it is the intentions we forget; some of our deeds are beautiful, but the intentions beneath are very adverse to God. The intention is oftener self than God."

"I have done my duty for my own sake! Honestly, it is a pity that this reason of self-love does not exist often, if the result is good."

The good little Sister was not going to argue with a man so thoroughly out of sorts as Hoel.

"You are very good to tell me your trouble," she said, meekly.

"No, I did it with a bad purpose," he said, with half a smile. "Really, you good people can have no earthly peace. Just now my purpose is to get back to England and leave this dreary place—no offence; but, good Heavens! this has been a weary time; I never realised so fully before what I had gone through. When may I go?"

"Monsieur le Docteur will tell us. If monsieur goes back to trouble, he will think of us with pleasure sometimes."

"With pleasure! With envy."

"Monsieur must have duties in his country. He will have some mistakes to rectify, some love to give back. How much happiness the good God allows us to give!"

"To give, and very little to receive."

"We cannot give without receiving; but monsieur is so clever, he knows all this better than I can tell him. It is such a simple rule, a trite result, that never disappoints one."

"I don't know it," said Hoel, crossly, sinking wearily back upon his couch. "I never remember doing anything for the simple reason of giving and expecting nothing back. Honestly, there are few human beings—outside dwellers in convents—who do that; and these I fancy—"

"The convent walls do not make all hearts tender, monsieur; it is God. He can work as well in the world as in the cloister. Here is a good thought: He is doing good always, all day long, even when we do nothing to help Him."

"I never have done good. Well, perhaps, I tried to help a young man I met; but at last I did him an injury."

"And you will go back and repair it."

"If I repair that injury I shall bring sorrow into another household."

"Heaven answers such questions, mon-

sieur, we have but to go straight on. Ah! but you know all that better than I can do. It is a rule in earthly things as well as in heavenly matters."

"I thought I acted honourably," said Hoel, half to himself; "and yet, perhaps, after all, poor Vicary's right comes first. But does it? And Elva! Ah, now she will marry another man, have I not even less right to— Yes, that's it; fool that I was. I had everything in my own hands, and rejected it, and now—now it is taken from me. It will soon be no longer my secret to keep or to publish; it will be more sacred, and yet— Look here, Sister Marie, you are a saint, if there is a reality to that word, tell me, honestly, with all your little tables of right and wrong, composed like a calendar of the year, tell me what is right?"

"Suppose a young man exists who has been wronged, grievously wronged by one who is now on the verge of the grave; suppose—are you listening and tabulating?—suppose a third person knows this, and that he would, he must spare the old man at the expense of the younger man, who is hale and strong and will live many a long year yet; ought not the third person to consider age before youth? I have put it plainly."

"Where there is a wrong to be righted the duty is easy, monsieur. Go and right it. It does not take long to say."

Hoel did not answer; but he was not quite so happy in his former decision as he had been. Everything had appeared so plain to him when he fled away from England, and now nothing seemed right. He himself was out of his own reckoning; and, further, he was tormented lest this new idea should have sprung from the shock of reading of Elva's engagement.

If he sacrificed her father now, it would look like spite; it would, perhaps, be something much like disappointed jealousy. Positively Hoel, who had never had doubts about himself or his own course of action, now was tortured by doubt. That ridiculously simple Sister of Charity was like a single dahlia—truth was much more like the highly-folded complex dahlia—its petals were to be so easily reckoned up. Right and wrong were abstract terms, which only simpletons made simple. To right some men was to wrong others; all pure chance, a lottery, an uncertain toss-up.

No, he could not escape the consequences at all events, that was certain. Elva had changed. How she had been able to consent.

to marry Walter he could not understand, and the fact was torture to him. Still, he could not blame her. It was too late now to change his path of action; he had taken it, believing it to be honourable and the only one possible. Why should another way suddenly start into view and wind upward clearly in sight? Not a smooth and pleasant way, perhaps; but not altogether so devoid of nobility as he had fancied.

Behind all this, and in spite of that horrid paragraph, "a marriage is arranged," . . . came the certainty that Elva was his superior, and that now he dared not go to her and say: "Because of the sin of another I forsook you." He remembered some of her remarks; worse, her novel, the book he had so much despised, "An Undine of To-day"; in that she had struck the key-note of her belief in a personal honour, a code greater, more large-minded, more unselfish than he had entertained, and he had then thought it absurd. To feel utterly at sea with oneself and one's principles is not cheering to low spirits. From beginning to the end, Hoel now saw he might have acted differently. Why had not he done so?

By the evening Hoel had worked himself feverish, and was angry because he was so weak. Sister Marie only smiled quietly. He could have thrown half his books at her head.

This new impatience was a good sign—though Hoel thought it an extraordinary madness. He despised impatience as womanish and contemptible.

"Look here, Sister Marie, I am going as soon as you get that doctor to look in and say I shall not be doing a foolish thing. I seem to have made so many mistakes lately, as well avoid another."

"We will ask him to-morrow. And you have decided to go and—undo the wrong thing, monsieur?"

"I have decided nothing. I shall see what turns up. Nothing really matters now. I've told you before, if not, I tell you now, I was a fool, a downright fool; I fancied that a woman loved me, and now I find I'm the sufferer. I love her infinitely more than she can understand. She is going to marry another man, whilst I—it's strange, Sister, but true—I would not take another in her place for the gold of the Indies."

"It is again of your own happiness you are thinking; why not think of hers first? That other man will make her happy, be satisfied with that; your great love for her is capable of bearing that trial."

"No," said Hoel, savagely, for his newly-developed temper was, it seemed, in constant request—"no, it is not capable of this. Pray speak plainly, you quiet saints are in no ways chary of the truth. You think me even more selfish than I was before."

"One does not become a great scholar without years of labour, nor very unselfish without learning. Monsieur thinks it too easy to learn."

"Easy! easy! I don't think it easy; I tell you plainly, it's impossible. I can't be resigned to my—my darling's marrying that conceited coxcomb—no, that is what he thinks me. But, anyhow, he's a unlicked cub. There, anything you like."

Hoel used the good Sister as a safety-valve.

"Anyhow, I shall go next week. I may as well attend the wedding, and be unselfish," he added, in bitter irony.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

LADY JOAN'S rest was a short one that night, and her appetite for breakfast the following morning was taken away by a message from her father-in-law, which greeted her as she sat down to table, to the effect that he hoped the dog-cart had already been despatched to Summerhill to fetch Miss White.

The old gentleman had the—to Lady Joan's way of thinking—reprehensible habit, not only of expressing in decisive fashion any wishes that might occur to him over night, but of sending down the first thing the next morning to ascertain if those wishes had been carried out.

Annoyance was to follow annoyance that morning. The first post brought with it a very big annoyance indeed, in the shape of a letter from the Lady Honoria Herrick.

It was dated from Southmoor, and ran as follows:

"DEAREST AUNT,—You will be surprised to see we are all at home again. Father and mother returned last week from Belle-Plage, and I have been sent for from Brussels, because I'm told I'm finished, whatever that means. I have wonderful news to tell you—father says he hasn't the heart to write it, so I must—Southmoor is to be sold! Father says the place is going to utter ruin, and there is not the slightest likelihood of his ever being able to keep it up. So I have had to sign a lot of papers, and the thing will soon be an accomplished

fact. Between ourselves—I'm awfully glad. I hate the place; it's so mouldy and dilapidated, and there's such a horrible odour of ancestors hanging about it one feels as if one were living in a vault. I will write again soon and tell you all our plans so soon as we have any. At present, things are very unsettled. Mother is about as usual: that is to say, the weather doesn't suit her, and she is living on crumbs of chicken and egg-spoonfuls of jelly. Give my love to my uncle and cousin. Your loving niece,
"HONOR."

Southmoor was to be sold! That was the only idea Lady Joan brought away from her niece's letter. Southmoor, the home of her childhood; the house where generations of Herricks had been born and had died was to come into the market to fall to the lot, perhaps, of some millionaire tradesman of democratic ideas and plebeian tastes; or, worse fate still, perhaps, be seized upon by some speculative building society, and the old park, with its stately trees, be parcelled into lots, upon which, in due course, red-brick middle-class villas would spring into existence.

Lady Joan had not visited the place much of late years. Her brother, the present Earl of Southmoor, married to an invalid, though high-born lady, and, haunted by the family spectre of poverty, had spent the past fifteen years of his life wandering about the Continent in search of health for his wife and cheap education for his only child. In tastes, he was Lady Joan's counterpart; in intellect, considerably her inferior. His pride had had to be largely deferred to in all Lady Joan's efforts to be of service to him. It went without saying that he and the Gaskells had nothing in common; and though Lady Joan would gladly have adopted her niece

and brought her up as her own daughter, the Earl preferred for the Lady Honoria an atmosphere of aristocratic poverty to the plebeian luxury of Longridge Castle.

If the young lady herself had been consulted on the matter, she would undoubtedly have made a different choice, for, the truth must be told, Lady Honoria was that anomaly in nature, a child as unlike its race as if it had been born in another planet. The one or two glimpses she had had of Longridge Castle in her childhood, even now contrasted pleasantly in her mind with the life she had since been compelled to lead in cheap continental hotels, or in later years in a cheap school at Brussels.

Lady Joan in making plans for Herrick's future, had freely admitted the fact that her niece was not everything that an aristocratic damsel should be. She comforted herself, however, with the thought of Honoria's youth, and the possibility that her faults of character, though glaring, were purely superficial. Married to Herrick, settled down at Southmoor, under her own immediate eye, what might not be hoped for in the way of reformation for so young a girl!

She did not care to dwell upon the girl's undisguised satisfaction at the thought of the sale of the old home. The bitter fact alone riveted her attention.

"It shall not be," she exclaimed aloud, as she folded the letter, and laid it on one side. "If I have to go down on my knees to my husband to make him buy the place, it shall not come into the market!"

A second thought followed—that of the feeble old grandfather, who, once before when the purchase of Southmoor had been hinted at by Lady Joan, had exclaimed: "Don't touch it, John, it would be a non-paying investment."

Surely never did messenger bring more ill-timed tidings than the servant who at this moment entered and announced that Miss White had arrived.

Lois White, in her schoolroom at Summerhill, surrounded by her small pupils, had been not a little surprised at the message brought to her that morning "with Lady Joan's compliments."

"Wants to see me?" she repeated, blankly, as she fetched her hat and gloves, and despatched a message to Mrs. Leyton, asking for permission to be free of the schoolroom that morning.

Her heart beat fast as she thought of a second ordeal, even more terrible than the

one which, two days back, she had gone through under the aegis of Herrick's presence. Now, neither Herrick nor his father would, she knew, be at Longridge to receive her, and alone she would have to face Herrick's mother in her rigid staidness. Her fears increased upon her as she sat waiting for Lady Joan in one of the big drawing-rooms.

"Oh, if Herrick had but been born to poverty instead of to wealth such as this!" was her thought, as her eye took stock of the beauty and luxuriousness of her surroundings.

Another thought trod on the heels of this one:

"What silly presumption for me to think for a moment that Herrick's mother, with her aristocratic blood, in addition to her wealth, would ever receive poor, little me as a fit wife for her son."

Lady Joan's manner when, after about a quarter of an hour, she entered the room, was not reassuring:

"I hope my sending for you in school-hours has not inconvenienced you," she said, after a formal bow, and a touch with the tips of her fingers. "Mr. Gaskell, however, was anxious to see you, and one feels compelled to defer to the wishes of one at his great age."

Lois murmured a string of polite commonplaces in reply, and Lady Joan resumed:

"I am glad on my own account, as well as on Mr. Gaskell's, that you were able to come, for there is something I particularly wish to say to you—something, in fact, that must be said; could not be written."

The methodical manner in which she spoke showed that she had not kept Lois waiting fifteen minutes for nothing.

Lois flushed crimson. She felt that the thunder-cloud she had dreaded was about to break now.

Lady Joan went on:

"But before I speak what necessity has laid upon me to speak, may I ask one question—a very important one—do you really consider yourself to be engaged to be married to my son?"

The words were spoken now. Lois started, her lips opened; but never a word escaped them. Did she consider herself to be engaged to be married? No, not in the sense in which most young girls consider themselves to be engaged to be married after the momentous question has been asked and answered. That Herrick looked upon marriage as the inevitable ending to

his courtship there was not a doubt. Lois, however, before the day on which Herrick had slipped a diamond and ruby ring on her finger had come to an end, had said to herself: "There is such a thing as loving and letting go. If I thought my love for Herrick might be detrimental to him in the days to come, I would take myself out of his life at once and for ever."

Lady Joan, waiting for her answer and looking down into that frank, childlike face, read it as easily as she would read an open book.

Lois had put on a small round hat that morning, and neither drooping brim nor veil hid the pained, bewildered look which said, as plainly as words could: "I am brought face to face with a matter beyond my capabilities. Where shall I look for help and guidance?"

Lady Joan—with a slight feeling of wonder over the girl's simplicity—said to herself that her course lay plain before her now. An appeal to the girl, founded on her love for Herrick, a few words of advice, some golden guineas, and the thing was done.

"A pretty enough child," she thought; "the very wife for a struggling artist—she would save him a small fortune in models. But a wife for Herrick! No!"

Aloud she said:

"I am sorry if my question has given you pain. Pardon my abruptness in asking it. Let me put it in another form. Do you love my son?"

Lois knew well enough how to answer that question.

"Love him!" she cried passionately, clasping her hands together, "oh, I would lay down my life, gladly, at any time, to save him a moment's pain."

"Then, of course," said Lady Joan, coldly, and with great decision, "you have given careful thought to the question whether his marriage with you would be likely to conduce to his real happiness in life?"

"Careful thought!" cried Lois, impetuously. "I have thought of nothing else from morning till night since the day he—he asked me—to be his wife; but how can I—how is it possible for me to decide what will or will not make his happiness?"

"No self-seeking there, no ambitious views for herself, so I may as well speak out plainly," thought Lady Joan. So she said, with great deliberation:

"And I, too, as Herrick's mother, have

thought of nothing else from morning till night since I knew that marriage was in his thoughts; but I have had no difficulty in forming a decisive opinion on the matter. Shall I tell you what it is?"

Lois turned her face eagerly towards her.

"It is this," said Lady Joan, coldly, bluntly, cruelly. "That a marriage between you and him would be about the most disastrous thing that could happen to him; for the twofold reason that it would sow dissension between him and his relatives, and prevent his making a marriage suitable to his station in life."

A sharp cry, such as a child cut with a knife might utter, broke from Lois's lips. She grew pale; her hands clasped together convulsively.

"Help me, help me!" she cried, piteously. "What am I to do?"

"If you are asking the question, really wishing for an answer, I will tell you," said Lady Joan, calmly and coldly as before.

"Go away at once. Leave Longridge at once and for ever. Don't go into hysterics over it and talk about a breaking heart and such like—ah, pardon me—nonsense; but write, after you have left here, a plain, common-sense letter to my son, telling him that, having well thought over the matter, you have come to the conclusion that unequal marriages are good for neither party concerned, and that consequently of yourself, of your own free will—kindly lay stress on that—you have taken steps to end the engagement."

"Go! where shall I go!" said Lois, plaintively. "I haven't a friend in the world except Mrs. Leyton."

Lady Joan looked at her incredulously.

"Not a friend!" she repeated. "Where were you living before you came to Summerhill?"

"I was brought up at a big orphanage. My father was a naval officer, he and my mother both died when I was a child. I went straight from the orphanage to Summerhill when I was old enough to teach."

"And had you no relatives save father and mother?" asked Lady Joan. "Pardon my questions; but I am trying to see my way to helping you in the future, in any manner you may like to choose."

"My father had a cousin I used to see at one time; but he went to America long ago. I have not heard from him for years."

"I dare say you could find out his present

address in some way. It seems to me that America would be a very desirable destination for you, all things considered. It would involve complete change of scene and surroundings—a very great consideration—and——”

But Lady Joan's sentence was not to be finished; for at this moment Dr. Scott's voice, in loud tones, was heard immediately outside the door.

“Never mind about announcing me,” he was saying, no doubt to a servant. “I must see her without a moment's delay.”

Then he pushed open the door and entered without ceremony.

“Lady Joan,” he said, abruptly, “I have just received a telegram from your son containing sad news. There is no time to tell you as you ought to be told, for the telegram has unfortunately been delayed in transmission, and the news will announce itself unless I make haste. So far as I understand the message, there has been a second terrible explosion at the Wrexford mines, and your husband—there, I see you understand me—no, not killed; severely injured. They are bringing him now. The ambulance is almost at the door. More than this I do not know.”

CHAPTER X.

HERRICK'S account of the terrible occurrence, given in short, disjointed sentences, was easy enough to understand. His father had not been indulging in any deeds of Quixotic heroism, but had simply been doing his duty at the pit's mouth, and in the mines, as he had ever done in similar circumstances, organising search-parties, and seeing that the men already rescued were properly attended to. A second explosion had not been anticipated, and he, and his father also, had several times descended the shaft in the miner's cage. Help had been greatly needed in all quarters, and he himself had helped to bear away the last ambulance of rescued men in default of sufficient bearers.

Meantime, his father, in company with the chief engineer, had descended the shaft in order to ascertain if a certain improved system of ventilation which had been submitted to him were practicable. When the cage was within twenty feet of the bottom, the second explosion had occurred; his father and the engineer had both been violently precipitated from the cage, the engineer had been killed on the

spot, and his father had sustained—so far as could be ascertained—terrible bruises to his limbs, and serious injuries to the spine.

“Terrible bruises to his limbs, and serious injuries to the spine!” The verdict of the doctors, after a more prolonged examination had been made, was simply the translation into technical language of Herrick's words.

They expressed their gravest fears as to his chances of ultimate recovery.

Old Dr. Scott went a step farther than the Wrexford doctors who had accompanied the ambulance home, and confided as his opinion to the nurse whose services had been hastily called into requisition, that “twenty-four hours must see the end of it.”

In order to avoid additional jolting, John Gaskell had been carried on the mattress on which he had lain in the ambulance, into a room on the ground-floor—one of old Mr. Gaskell's luxuriously-furnished suite of apartments. Here they had hastily placed a bedstead, and here, within two rooms from where his aged father was lying, it was fated that John Gaskell's last hours should be spent.

Lady Joan had borne the shock of the ill-tidings better than Herrick could have anticipated. At first, possibly, she had scarcely realised the full import of Dr. Scott's words; but when, about five minutes after, the slow ambulance-bearers had brought in the once-stalwart John, one single glance at his white, drawn face, must have told her the whole terrible truth.

“Come in here, mother,” Herrick said, drawing her back into her boudoir, which opened off the hall. “There are several doctors—you will be in the way just now. I shall remain beside my father.”

Then he looked up and saw Lois standing, looking pale and scared, at the farther end of the room. He did not at the moment realise the strangeness of the fact of her presence in the house—only hailed it with delight. In the terrible sorrow which had come upon them, who so likely to be helpful and sympathetic as the sweet girl so soon to be one of the family?

“You will look after my mother, Lois,” was all he said, as he hastily withdrew.

Lois's heart sank; her instincts warned her that she would be the last person in the world to whom Herrick's mother would turn for consolation.

She made one step from out her corner.

"Shall I go—shall I stay—can I be of any use?" she asked, timidly.

Even with the shadow of a great sorrow falling upon her, Lady Joan's brain was quite clear to decide whether the girl whom she had judged to be no fit wife for Herrick was to be admitted to that position of friendliness in the house which alone justifies the acceptance of services in a time of need.

"You could not by any possibility be of any—the slightest—use in the circumstances," she answered, coldly. "I would suggest that you return at once to Summerhill and think well over the conversation we have had this morning. When you have thoroughly considered the matter, I feel sure——"

But at this moment the door opened, and Herrick entered the room—as hastily as he had quitted it.

"Mother," he said, "my father has for a moment recovered consciousness, and has spoken your name. I think he wishes you to sit beside him."

CHAPTER XL

"MY father has spoken your name!" To John Gaskell, with the first faint gleam of consciousness, came the thought of his wife. Nearly thirty years of wedded life forges something of a bond between a man and woman. The mere fact that two people have thus long walked side by side through life is in itself a guarantee that a bond of companionship has been formed. More than this there may be, but this at least there must be. At times, one of the two may have wished to turn to the left when the other would fain go to the right, and each may occasionally have given a sigh for more congenial companionship. In spite of this, however, the sense of comradeship remains unbroken, and when at last death, with sharp touch, smites the hands of the two asunder, the loss is measured by what might have been rather than by what actually has been.

Thus, at least, it was with John Gaskell now as he lay upon his death-bed.

He had not been married a month before his shrewd common-sense had laid bare to him the fact that Lady Joan had married him for his wealth, not for himself. Characteristically, he had surveyed the "situation," and had done his best to save his life, as well as his wife's, from shipwreck.

"There never can be any talk of love between us," he had said to himself, "but

we can at least remember that we are an educated lady and gentleman bound to live together for life, and treat each other with proper respect and consideration."

Lady Joan he was inclined to pity rather than to blame. He laid the blame of their ill-advised marriage entirely on the shoulders of the courtly and impetuous old Earl, her grandfather.

Of Vaughan Elliot he knew nothing, or, possibly, his estimate of Lady Joan's conduct might have suffered some modification. His acquaintance with the Southmoor family was but slight: a tramp on the Devon moors after snipe in company with Joan's brother, a subsequent introduction to the fascinating sister, a stay of three days at Southmoor, and the thing was done.

John Gaskell was very young at the time. His gold had not opened all doors to him; and the flattering attentions showered upon him by the ancient aristocrat, for the moment dazzled and blinded him. Later on, when disillusion came, he was not the one to sound the town-crier's bell and cry: "Oyez, oyez, oyez. I've been tricked into a marriage for the sake of my gold. Come and pity me every one who passes by."

The utmost that outsiders could note was, that after his marriage, John became devoted to his business in a manner not to be expected of so wealthy a man. Also, that Lady Joan's opinions or advice were never on any occasion sought for by him, though he would spend hours closeted with his old father, discussing all matters, great or small, that concerned the welfare of his household or that of his workpeople. All, however, who knew John Gaskell intimately, were forced to admit that he treated his wife from year's end to year's end with the most unvarying politeness, lavished his gold upon her, saw that every one of her whims and wishes was gratified so soon as formed, although possibly he did not seem to trouble himself much as to what went on in her heart.

And Lady Joan, on her part, had seemed to acquiesce in a condition of things she was powerless to alter. To tell the truth, it very well suited her cold and unsympathetic temperament that no exhibitions of ardent feeling should be required of her. To do her justice, she was incapable of the small hypocrisies by which so many women make their household wheels to work smoothly. No flimsy self-deception hid from her eyes the fact that she was as

much a stranger and an alien in her own home as if she had been born in another clime, and had been taught to speak a tongue different from that which her husband, her son, and her father-in-law spoke.

Even now as she entered the darkened room and took her seat at the head of the bed, whereon her husband lay stricken to his death, there were no tears on her face, and not for a moment did she say in her heart, as so many wives in similar circumstances would have said :

"Life ends for me to-day, though I may breathe and eat and drink for another fifty years to come."

Her husband made no sign, by so much as a quiver of the eyelid, that he was conscious of her presence. After one brief gleam of consciousness he had relapsed into insensibility; his heavy stertorous breathing proclaiming the fact.

"It is partly the effect of the opiate we have been compelled to administer," said the old doctor, coming forward. "You need not remain, unless you choose, Lady Joan. Your husband will not be conscious of your presence."

Lady Joan, however, chose to remain. She leaned back in her chair with her hand pressed over her eyes, her face by only one degree less white and rigid than that of the suffering man beside whom she sat.

"Poor soul!" thought the doctor, pityingly, "she is thinking of what lies before her in the future."

Yes, that was exactly what Lady Joan was doing, although not quite in the fashion which the doctor imagined. She was thinking what a miserable position hers would be, by-and-by, when John was gone and she was utterly dependent either upon the old man or upon Herrick.

She knew exactly the financial position of the Gaskells, one towards each other, for John had never been reticent on the matter. "I am my father's administrator, head-steward, general manager, what you will," he had been wont to say, when his friends had made complimentary allusions to his wealth or position, as the largest landowner in the county. It was true that yearly, as a matter of convenience, a large sum of money was placed to John's banking account, so that cheques might be drawn and payments made by him; but this in no wise affected the fact that Longridge and the mines at Wrexford, and all other land and investments—great and

small—belonged in their entirety to old Mr. Gaskell, and only at his death could become John's.

Now, if the old man had died, as he might reasonably have been expected to do, some twenty years back, Lady Joan's thoughts ran, all this wealth and property would have been John's. He, no doubt, would have made liberal provision for her by will, and——

Ah! here a sudden recollection flashing across her mind put all other thoughts to flight. John had once, long ago, made a will; so long ago, indeed, that until that moment she had forgotten all about it. Some twenty years back, John had been called upon to undertake a tour of inspection among certain South American mines, in which he possessed an interest. The will which he then made, on the eve of his departure, had been framed to meet two contingencies—old Mr. Gaskell's death during John's absence, and the subsequent death of John through misadventure. Both these events were within the range of the possibilities; for the old gentleman had passed his threescore and ten years, and John was about to run the gauntlet of all sorts of dangers amid mines and machinery.

The will, though elaborated by the lawyers into folios and sheets, was, in itself, a very simple document, and merely gave all the property—"real, landed, or personal"—of which John might die possessed to Lady Joan for life, with reversion to Herrick on her death. Old friends of John Gaskell's were appointed trustees to this will, and, until Lady Joan's death, Herrick could only draw a certain fixed income from the estate. At this time Lady Joan's health was very fragile, and there seemed to be little likelihood of her living to see Herrick grown to manhood.

"Read it, Joan, and let me see that you understand it," her husband had said to her, with a look, half-pitying, half-contemptuous, in his eyes, which she had found even more easy to read than the sheets of parchment which he handed to her.

"Here, you poor woman, who have sold yourself for wealth and luxury," that look seemed to say, "I have taken care that Fate shall not cheat you out of your dues."

"Remember, Joan," he had said, as he folded the will and placed it in an envelope addressed to his solicitors, "this is only so much waste paper, unless my father dies before me."

No other will, to Lady Joan's certain knowledge, had since been made by him ; for, until the death of his father, no necessity for so doing could arise. No doubt, if the thought of this will had ever come into John's mind, it must simply have figured to him, as he had before phrased it, as "so much waste paper."

"So much waste paper," thought Lady Joan, bitterly, the echo of her husband's words, spoken twenty years back, ringing sharply in her ears now. "My thirty years of bondage served to no purpose ! Southmoor to be sold, and the will which would enable me to buy Southmoor twice over with ease, so much waste paper ! And all because an old man's useless life has been unnaturally prolonged ! If the two must die, it is a thousand pities that the old man should not go first !"

GIANTOLOGY.

A MEMBER of the Académie Française, M. Henrion, propounded, in 1718, a curious theory, according to which the human race has gradually decreased in stature. Our progenitor, Adam, says the learned academician, was one hundred and twenty-three feet nine inches in height ; Eve was one hundred and eighteen feet nine inches ; Noah was twenty-seven feet ; Abraham, twenty feet ; and Moses, thirteen feet in height.

Whence M. Henrion derived his information we cannot so much as guess ; but we are glad to know, on his assurance, that a process, apparently designed to whittle away the human race to vanishing point, suddenly and permanently ceased at the beginning of the Christian era. That there were races of giants in the earlier ages of the world has been a common belief ; which may be found stated in such widely divergent books as Pliny's *Natural History*, and St. Augustine's "*De Civitate Dei*."

Most nations of the world have traditions of their ancestors, handed down from prehistoric times, and we invariably find that there were giants in those days. The hearers of Homer's "*Odyssey*" had no manner of doubt that, somewhere beyond the sea, there dwelt monsters similar to that Polyphemus whose single eye Ulysses destroyed with a firebrand. And that this is a mere tradition of pre-Hellenic barbarism, magnified through the mist of time, is a comparatively modern discovery.

In 1536 the voracious Sir John Maun-

deville had some account to give of what looks very like the Cyclops ; for he says : "In one of these yles ben folk of gret stature, as geauntes, and they ben hidouse for to loke upon, and thei han but on eye, and that is in the myddle of the front."

But, apart from the existence of monsters, such as the poetry and folk-lore of every nation abounds in, there appears to have been a general impression that the men of old were taller men than now. The Hindoos have a tradition of a giant race who bestrode elephants as we do horses. The Grecian heroes, at the siege of Troy, were said to have thrown stones at their enemies which the strongest of their descendants could not move. Homer and Vergil speak of the men of their own day as mere dwarfs in comparison with those elder heroes of whom they sang. So strongly did this idea take possession of the Greek mind, that their actors, when personating the traditionary heroes on the stage, made themselves taller with buskins, lengthened their arms with gauntlets, and padded themselves out to appear of proportionate breadth and strength.

Many readers of the "*Idylls of the King*" will be astonished to hear that, according to one account of him, the blameless Arthur was "fifteen foote long in the prime of his yers ;" that Queen Guinivere was twelve feet high ; and Sir Gawaine, twelve feet and a half.

When Queen Elizabeth visited Kenilworth Castle, in 1575, there were six gigantic figures, eight feet in height, standing over the castle gate. And a contemporary writer says : "By this dumb show it was meant that in the daies of King Arthur men were of that stature. So that the Castle of Kenilworth should seem still to be kept by King Arthur's heirs and their servants."

We may pass by the Anakim and other giant races spoken of in the Bible, for the reason that, from the Septuagint downwards, there appears to have been some ambiguity about the use of the word giant in Scripture. Rabbinical glosses and interpretations may be found in plenty ; but they only make matters worse. We are told, for instance, that Og, King of Bashan, escaped the Flood, by wading, only knee deep, beside the Ark ; that he lived three thousand years ; that one of his bones long served for a bridge over a river ; and that once, being hungry, he roasted a freshly-caught fish at the sun !

What kind of fish this was, or how

it was caught, the rabbins do not say; but doubtless

His angle-rod made of a sturdy oak,
His line a cable that in storms ne'er broke,
His hook he baited with a dragon's tail,
And sat upon a rock and bobbed for whale.

Emerson says it is natural to believe in great men; and we fancy his remark may be true in more senses than one. Rabelais' Gargantua, who required seventeen thousand nine hundred and thirteen cows to supply him with milk; who ate six pilgrims in a salad without knowing anything about it; and who combed his hair with a comb nine hundred feet long, the teeth of which were the tusks of great elephants, may be suspected to be an exaggeration. Even Gulliver's Brobdingnagians, who were only "about as tall as an ordinary spire-steeple," are thought to have had an odd cubit or two added to their stature; but the story of any moderate-sized giant seems at any time to have been accepted, without the least demand for anything in the shape of adequate evidence or proof. "Whoever will," says Sir John Maundeville, after relating some marvel, "may believe me if he will, and whoever will not, may choose." But when we remember that even a naturalist like Buffon had no doubt of the existence of giants, ten, twelve, or fifteen feet in height, we may perhaps cease to wonder that unscientific people in an unscientific age found it no tax on their credulity to swallow a good deal more.

Mr. Tylor, in his "Early History of Mankind," tells us that the earliest discoveries of large fossil bones, such as those of the mammoth and mastodon, were always spoken of as discoveries of gigantic human bones. When a tooth, weighing four pounds and three-quarters, and a thigh-bone seventeen feet long, were found in New England, Dr. Increase Mather addressed a paper to the Royal Society of London on the subject, and quoted them as conclusive proof of the immense stature of antediluvian man. There are many stories of the discovery of gigantic human remains during the Middle Ages. In 1613, some masons, digging near the ruins of a castle in Dauphiné, in a field traditionally called the "giant's field," discovered a tomb, and therein a skeleton, said to be a human skeleton, entire. It measured twenty-five feet six inches in length, ten feet across the shoulders, and five feet from breast to back. This account is very circumstantial, but we are sorry to say it

is entitled to no more credit on that score.

Quetelet has shown the principle on which variations in the size of sundry individuals of a race may be accounted for. It may perhaps be sufficient to state here that the existence of a giant twenty feet high can be shown to involve the existence of a race whose average height is between thirteen and fourteen feet. When we are asked to believe in the existence of the former, we may fairly ask for some proof of the existence of the latter. Quetelet avers that the tallest man whose stature has been authentically recorded was a Scotchman, who measured eight feet three inches, and was secured for his regiment of gigantic guards by the indefatigable Frederick the Great.

In any account, ancient or modern, of the wonders of nature or art, the enquirer may expect to find exaggeration and inaccuracy rampant. This is well exemplified in the various accounts given at different times of the stature of the Patagonians, the tallest known race in the world. It is now known that they attain to an average stature of about five feet eleven inches. At the close of the sixteenth century they were described in Pigafetta's "Voyage Round the World" as so tall, that the Spaniards' heads scarcely reached up to the Patagonians' waists. Assuming these Spaniards to have been no taller than five feet six inches, this account would credit the Patagonians with a stature of nine feet. Sir T. Cavendish calls them gigantic, and says the foot of one of them measured eighteen inches in length. According to the known laws of human proportion, this would give them a height of seven and a half feet. The naturalist, Turner, asserts that one of them measured twelve feet in height. Andreas Thevet, in a "Description of America," published in 1575, says he measured the skeleton of one, and found it to be eleven feet five inches in length. Van Noort, a Dutch traveller, about 1598 captured and brought away a native boy, who described some of his countrymen as ten or twelve feet high. Sebald de Weert, who visited Patagonia in 1598, describes the people as being ten or eleven feet high, and so strong that they could easily tear up by the roots trees of a span in diameter. Sir Richard Hawkins simply says they were a head taller than Europeans.

P. J. Tarrubia, who published his "Gianthologia," in 1761, to prove the

existence of giants in Patagonia, says that he has conversed with many sailors and travellers who had seen men there nine or ten feet in height; and asserts that the South Americans had a body of soldiers, consisting of about four hundred men, whose statures ranged from nine to eleven feet.

Byron, in 1764, says that he saw a chief not less than seven feet high, and others nearly as tall.

The "Annual Register," for 1768, says: "some of them are certainly nine feet, if they do not exceed it; . . . there was hardly a man less than eight feet; . . . the women . . . run from seven and a half feet to eight."

Captain Wallis, in 1766, measured some Patagonians, who were six feet seven inches; but the general stature he found to be from five feet ten to six feet.

In 1785 some Spanish officers measured certain Patagonians, "with great accuracy," and found the common height to range from six feet six to seven feet.

Captain Bourne, about 1849, says he thinks their average height must be six and a half feet; but he had nothing to measure them with.

These varying accounts of the size of a people, still in existence to be measured, are sufficient to show that all accounts of abnormalities — whether by Plutarch or Pliny, by Saxo Grammaticus or St. Augustine, to say nothing of Barnum—need to be taken with great reserve.

Pliny relates that, in the time of Claudius Cæsar, a man named Gabbaras was brought by that Emperor from Arabia to Rome, and that his height was nine feet nine inches: "The tallest man that has been seen in our times."

The Emperor Maximinus was said to be eight feet and a half or nine feet in height. He could draw a carriage which two oxen could not move, and usually ate about forty pounds of meat and drank six gallons of wine every day! The Emperor Jovianus is spoken of as a giant, though of somewhat more modest proportions and achievements than these. The Emperor Charlemagne, according to received tradition, was of gigantic stature; but was quite overtopped by a soldier of his army, whose fame has not equalled his deserts, for he is reported to have overthrown whole battalions of the enemy as if he were mowing grass, and ought certainly to be accorded a place beside Samson in the popular pantheon of heroic warriors.

Harold Hardrake, King of Norway, is reported to have been more than eight feet high; and Rolf the Ganger, a Danish Chief of the ninth century, was too tall and heavy for any horse to carry, and so gained his surname by always travelling on foot.

Guy, Earl of Warwick, was doubtless a very big fellow; but no one at the present time will undertake to separate the true from the fabulous in his history. What is shown as his porridge-pot, at Warwick Castle, is, in reality, an old garrison cauldron, and the armour, said to have been worn by him, was evidently made for a horse. What that six-foot-long weapon of iron was originally used for we cannot undertake to say; but it certainly appears to us slightly improbable that Guy used it as a table fork!

Perhaps the tallest story of this kind is one told by John Cassanio, in his "De Gigantibus," published in 1580, to the effect that one of Francis the First's Guards, an archer, was of such a height, that a man of ordinary size might walk upright between his legs when he stood astride.

Fuller, in his "Worthies," mentions Walter Parsons, a native of Staffordshire, who was first a blacksmith and afterwards porter to James the First and Charles the First. His height, according to some accounts, was seven feet two inches, and, according to others, as much as seven feet seven, and his strength was immense. His successor in the office of Royal porter was William Evans, who was two inches taller, but much weaker, and, like many giants, knock-kneed. Evans was the man who, while dancing in a Court masque, as well as his weak legs permitted, drew out of one of his pockets the fiery little dwarf, Jeffrey Hudson.

Oliver Cromwell had a porter, named Daniel, who was seven feet six inches high. Unfortunately, he took to reading books of divinity, fancied himself a second prophet Daniel, and went mad. Many people believed in him, and he used to preach to large congregations. He was found to be incurable, and was confined in Bedlam. The story is told that a gentleman once ventured to ask a female member of his congregation what good the ravings of such a madman could do her, and received the reply, delivered with withering scorn, that Festus thought the Apostle Paul to be a raving madman.

The modern lesser giants, like the ancient mightier traditional ones, are to be

found in all races and countries; and Londoners have had various opportunities of seeing, for a consideration, specimens described as English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, Dutch, Polish, Negro, Indian, and Chinese.

The garrulous Pepys records in his Diary that in 1664 he saw a Dutch giant at Charing Cross, stated to measure nine feet six inches in height. In 1728, a German giant, named Miller, was exhibited in London, after having previously shown himself to most of the Sovereigns of Europe. Louis the Fourteenth of France had given him a richly-mounted sword and a silver sceptre, and he was in the habit of swaggering up and down with these articles in his hands whenever people came to see him. He attracted much notice in London, and report credits him with being seven feet eight inches in height, with a hand twelve inches in length, and one finger which measured nine inches.

Edmund Malone, an Irish giant, was brought to England when he was nineteen years of age. He was shown to Charles the Second, and the merry Monarch walked under his arm. In the handbills he was described as being ten feet and a half high, but he seems to have really measured seven feet six inches.

In Trinity College, Dublin, is still preserved the skeleton of Cornelius McGrath, who, after his death, at the age of twenty-four, was found to measure seven feet eight inches in height. When fifteen years of age, he was attacked by violent pains, which were at first supposed to be rheumatic, but which were afterwards surmised to be growing-pains, for, during one year he grew from the height of five feet to that of six feet eight inches and three-quarters. A boy, sixteen years of age, of that extraordinary size, naturally attracted a great deal of attention, and a crowd of men, women, and children always followed him whenever he showed himself in the streets of Cork. His hand is described as about the size of an ordinary shoulder of mutton; the lasts on which his shoes were made measured fifteen inches in length; but for all his bulk, he was very moderate in eating and drinking.

O'Brien, the first Irish giant of that name, was eight feet four inches in length at the time of his death. Having made some money by exhibiting himself, he exchanged the bulk of it for two bank-notes, one of seven hundred pounds, the other of

seventy pounds. These were stolen from his pocket, and the loss afflicted him so keenly that he took to drink in a manner that hastened his end. He expressed a wish that his body might be thrown into the sea, so that the doctors might not have his bones; but this was denied him, and his skeleton is now in the Hunterian Museum. A second Irish giant of the same name exhibited himself in London, and became somewhat famous. He claimed to be eight feet three inches and a half in height; but his barber, who wrote a glowing account of him in the "Mirror" for 1826, alleged that he was four and a quarter inches taller. He used to sleep on two beds joined together, as any ordinary couch would have been useless to him. He was courageous, possessed the warm temperament of an Irishman, and was endowed with more than average intelligence for a bricklayer, so the superior barber informs us:

"Mr. O'Brien enjoyed his early pipe, and the lamps of the town (Northampton) afforded him an easy method of lighting it. When at the door of Mr. Dent, in Bridge Street, he withdrew the cap to the lamp, whiffed his tobacco into flame, and stalked away as if no uncommon event had taken place."

On one occasion he is said to have kissed a young lady who was leaning out of the upper window of a house to look at him as he walked along the street. And, at another time, travelling in the carriage specially made to accommodate his unusual proportions, he was stopped by a highwayman. The giant thrust out his head, and as much of his body as possible, to see what was the matter, whereupon the highwayman was so panic-stricken that he clapped spurs to his horse and fled.

The celebrity of these two Irishmen appears to have produced quite a crop of Irish giants, who all dubbed themselves by the name of O'Brien. A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" says he once saw one made:

"A tall, lathy, overgrown, beardless lad was called into a booth, on Ham Common, and, in ten minutes after, consenting to hire himself to the showman for the day, he was transformed into a whiskered giant at least a foot taller and twenty stone heavier than before; so that actually his very mother and sisters, who paid to see the 'Irish Giant,' did not recognise him."

Giants usually make their appearance, quite unexpectedly, among brothers and sisters and other relatives of ordinary size;

but occasionally we hear of an entire family of them.

James Toller, called the young English giant, was eight feet one inch in height at the age of eighteen, and could boast of two sisters who were similar monstrosities: one, at the age of thirteen, was five feet eight inches, and the other, at the age of seven, was nearly five feet high.

A farmer of Norfolk, standing six feet six inches in height, married a wife who was little short of six feet, and weighed fourteen stone. They had a family, consisting of five daughters and four sons, all of whom were of great size: the height of the males averaging six feet five, and that of the females, six feet three and a half inches. One of the sons, Robert—who was introduced to the Royal Family, in 1851—was seven feet six inches in height, and thirty-three stone in weight. He died of consumption, at about the age of forty-three.

The Frenchman, Louis Frenz—who was exhibited in London, in 1822—was seven feet four, or six, inches in height, and is said to have had two sisters nearly as tall, and a brother, taller than himself.

Chang Woo Gow, the Chinese giant, who measured seven feet nine inches, had a sister who is reported to have reached the enormous height of eight feet four inches.

Frederick the Great, of Prussia, formed a regiment of the tallest men he could procure, and insisted on their marrying the tallest women they could find, with a view of producing a giant race of guards; but in this he was unsuccessful. Voltaire says that these men were his greatest delight. Those who stood in the front rank were none of them less than seven feet high; and he ransacked Europe and Asia to add to their number. There is a somewhat apocryphal story that Frederick was once reviewing his regiment of giants in the presence of the French, Spanish, and English Ambassadors, and that he asked each of these in turn whether an equal number of their countrymen would care to engage with such soldiers. The French and Spanish ambassadors politely replied in the negative; but the English ambassador replied that, while he could not venture to assert that an equal number of his countrymen would beat the giants, he was perfectly sure that half the number would try.

Giants are generally dull, heavy-minded, as well as heavy-bodied, and although sometimes possessed of enormous strength,

are often sickly, knock-kneed, and not unfrequently idiotic, forming a striking contrast to their opposites, the dwarfs, who are generally quick and intelligent. As Shakespeare says:

'Tis excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant;

and we may congratulate ourselves that they generally do not know how to use it. During the seventeenth century the Empress of Austria gathered together at Vienna all the giants and dwarfs to be found in the German Empire. They were all housed in one building, and there were some apprehensions that the dwarfs would be terrified at the sight of the giants. Instead of this, however, the dwarfs teased, insulted, and even robbed the giants, just as the redoubtable Jack and Hop o' my Thumb do in the children's story-books, until the monsters were forced to pray for protection from their lively little enemies. Virey lays it down as a general principle that the bigger a man's body, the smaller is his mind, though he will, of course, allow of a few exceptions. "Tall men," he says, "are mostly tame and insipid, like watery vegetables; insomuch that we seldom hear of a very tall man becoming a very great man." They do not even make the best soldiers; and it may not be insignificant that the conquerors of the world, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon, were all little men, while Attila, who overthrew Rome, was a mere dwarf. Wanley, in his "Wonders of the Little World," quaintly says: "As the tallest ears of corn are the lightest in the head, and the houses many stories high have their uppermost rooms the worst furnished, so those human fabrics which nature hath raised to a giant-like height are observed not to have so happy a composition of the brain as other men." On the whole, in stature, as in other things, perfection appears to lie in the golden mean.

THE FIRST ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

[In order that our readers may be "posted" on both sides of the case, we publish the following notes from a correspondent on the article "Early Telegraphy," which appeared in No. 60, Third Series, of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, February 22nd, 1890.]

ALL THE YEAR ROUND, I know, would not willingly convey wrong impressions, still less mislead the opinions of its readers.

with respect to facts, which, although reputed to be stubborn things, have at times a singular habit of becoming very vapoury and unstable in the sight of men—not to mention women.

A contributor, who lately discoursed upon the subject of "Early Telegraphy" in these pages, has unfortunately gone a little astray in the matter of the primary application of electricity to telegraphic purposes, by placing the first attempt in that direction at too down-river a point upon the stream of time. It is an excusable error enough; but an error it remains, and it happens that, latterly, I have had certain exceptional means of knowing that the statement: "It was not until 1833 that the first attempt to set up an electric telegraph was made by Weber"—meaning his line from Berlin to Trèves—is wide of the bull's-eye of truth, and is, in point of fact, a complete "outer."

Clear and precise as science is generally supposed to be, there are, nevertheless, many hazy notions floating in the popular mind as to who invented this or that, and how or when; and the practical invention of the electric telegraph is a case in point, about which that peculiar public organism still requires a considerable amount of enlightenment. From the "overwhelming majority" of even those who are accounted "well informed," the answer to the question: "Who invented the Electric Telegraph?" would most assuredly be the ready and erroneous one: "Oh, Cooke and Wheatstone, of course;" but any reader who cares to follow out what promises to be a dryish subject to the end, may become better informed, and assured of the fallacy of such popular ideas upon the subject.

No doubt the idea of an electric appliance for telegraphing signals had been active in many minds, long before its actual accomplishment; but that crowning honour was most certainly reserved for one Ronalds, whose centenary passed without recognition in 1888; and, indeed, it was still more strange that, at the Jubilee Celebration of the Electric Telegraph—which took place the year before—no mention was made of Sir Francis Ronalds, as its inventor, so completely ignorant were the celebrants of the true state of the case!

Hammersmith can boast of being the birthplace of the electric telegraph, and of still possessing the former residences, by the water-side, of the original inventor,

Sir Francis Ronalds, and of Sir Charles Wheatstone, who borrowed, and in company with Sir William Fothergill Cooke, in 1837, perfected Ronalds' original ideas, which the latter had worked out in a thoroughly conclusive and practical manner as far back as 1816; a fact which disposes of the accuracy of the late quotation from these pages.

It was in the garden of his house at Hammersmith that Sir Francis, then, and for long afterwards, plain Mr. Ronalds, set up in that year a veritable electric telegraph line over eight miles in length, the wire passing backwards and forwards on a framework of timber, through which he flashed instantaneous messages by means of frictional electricity. Not content with overhead wires, which he thought liable to damage, he also constructed an underground line, cased in insulated glass-tubes and a casing of wood, portions of which were afterwards dug up, as the following interesting letter from Mr. J. A. Peacock relates, written in December, 1871:

"About five or six years ago I was in the garden—then rented by a friend of mine—wherein this telegraph was laid down, when it was dug for and found, after a lapse of upwards of forty years, what was then found and seen agreeing with the descriptions given in the book. Several yards of copper-wire were found where the ground had not been disturbed, by reason of a large rustic garden-seat and alcove having been over it; a glass-tube, or the greater part of one, with the copper-wire in it; and one of the joints with a short tube (glass) were also found; the copper-wire seemed to be in perfect order. The wooden trough and pitch had become consolidated with the earth, which was as hard as, and formed an opening like, that of a drain-tile, or the run of a burrowing animal."

These relics, together with the original dial-plates used at Hammersmith, passed into the possession of Mr. L. Clark, M.I.C.E., after being exhibited at Brighton.

This was unquestionably the first electric telegraph; and Wheatstone frankly admitted that he and his co-partner were indebted to that Hammersmith telegraph for all the subsequent improvements which so greatly increased the utility of Ronalds' great discovery.

In 1823, Sir Francis Ronalds published a book—referred to in Mr. Peacock's letter—containing illustrations and a full de-

scription of the Hammersmith telegraph of 1816, the year, by-the-bye, when guineas ceased to be coined, besides certain correspondence with Government officials responsible for the maintenance of the clumsy old semaphore telegraphs. It is needless to add that the inventor failed to convince the official mind that there was much in it; and the matter dropped in consequence.

Later on, while Mr. Ronalds was engaged as Director of Kew Observatory, and lived at Grosvenor House, Turnham Green, he erected another telegraph line in his garden there somewhat similar to the Hammersmith one. At first sight it seems curious that the neighbouring parishes of Hammersmith, Chiswick, and Brentford, should have been the homes of Ronalds, Cooke, and Wheatstone; but the fact of their close proximity explains much.

The three families were well acquainted, and the kindly inventor made no secret of his discoveries, of which Wheatstone and Cooke's father were well aware at the time, so that it is small matter for wonder that his young friends reaped the honours and profits of an invention for which the real Simon Pure only received the honour of knighthood in his eighty-third year! This neglect, however, troubled him but little, for he was the perfection of a disinterested enthusiast in the interests of his favourite science, and took no pains to protect his inventions with a view to pecuniary profit.

By the comparatively few his true worth and fame are known and properly appreciated; but to the million he remains an altogether unknown quantity, although it is very probable that without his early discovery the ungrateful world might yet be waiting for its telephones, electric-lamps, and sixpenny telegrams.

The question whether Cooke was a conscious or unconscious "adapter" of Ronalds' previous discoveries may, in the minds of the censorious, be a matter of doubt; but one thing is clear, at any rate, which is, that when inventors fall out, other men sometimes come by their own; and so it was with Ronalds. A fierce controversy arose between the twin inventors—Cooke and Wheatstone—which, at the time, quite eclipsed the modest fame of Ronalds; but certain statements becoming public, attention was drawn to his prior claims, and among electricians it became known that the disputants were quarrelling over what was not quite their own, although it is, of course, an indisputable fact that they

improved and introduced the electric telegraph to the world at large, just twenty-one years after its birth in the mind and at the hands of Ronalds.

For the benefit of those who may be desirous of searching more deeply into the matter, there may be recommended the following sources of information, namely: "A Description of an Electric Telegraph," by Francis Ronalds, 1823; "The Ronalds Catalogue of Electrical Works," edited by Mr. A. J. Frost, in 1880; and "Thelame," for February the first, 1889, in which chapter and verse will be found for all, and more than all, that has been advanced in this necessarily brief recognition of the just claims to honour of the great unknown.

A MORAL SHIPWRECK.

A COMPLETE STORY.

It was a hot June afternoon, and, in spite of open windows, the air inside the schoolroom of King Edward's Grammar School, at Martlebury, was very close and stuffy, an atmospheric condition which, coupled with the effects of early dinner and the drowsy cawing of rooks and humming of bees, which came in from the outside, made it no easy matter for Mr. Brownfield, who was taking afternoon school, to maintain that watchfulness necessary to keep forty or more boys close at their mathematics, and to see that they did not take to consuming apples, or kicking shins, or carving names on desks. Mr. Brownfield had the county paper before him, and he was trying, seemingly on homœopathic principles, to conquer his rising drowsiness by the consideration of its contents; but the mists rose more and more persistently before his eyes, and welcome sleep would soon have descended, had he not, just at the critical moment, been warned that something had happened, by the sudden cessation of all those muffled noises which accompany slackness of work. Mr. Brownfield opened his eyes and saw that the Doctor was in his high deak at the other end of the room. Not twice a term did the Doctor sit in his august seat during afternoon school; but here he was, and what was more, we were evidently about to know what had brought him there.

"I have just received the news," the Doctor said, "that Philip Magenis has been elected to an open scholarship at

Carfax College, Oxford. It is some time since so great an honour has fallen to the school, and I wish to be the first to congratulate the boy who has won it, and to ask you all to give him a hearty cheer."

The Doctor held out his hand, and a tall, dark boy, sitting at the end of the nearest bench, rose and took it. Then we all cheered, in the rough and tumble manner so characteristic of the English boy; and the Doctor crowned our happiness by giving us a half-holiday on the spot.

Philip Magenis was a black swan amongst the lads of exceeding homely wit who were at that time King Edward's alumni at Martlebury. He was the son of a Jamaica planter, and, except for a short visit, paid twice a year to his father's Liverpool agent, he remained all his time at Martlebury. Before he had been a week at the school, the Doctor saw that he had drawn a prize in the great boy lottery. Magenis simply walked to the head of the school, and the Doctor, put on his mettle, worked harder to bring on his brilliant pupil than he had worked since he had won his fellowship; and, at the first opportunity, he sent Magenis in for a scholarship at his old college.

There was a close schoolboy friendship between Magenis and myself, and the next half-year I found the school life very dreary without him. My parents, fired by the report of Philip's success, and by a flattering but fallacious belief in my own powers, sent me in at the next examination at Carfax to pick up a scholarship, as my brilliant schoolfellow had done; but all I gained was permission to enrol my name amongst the commoners of that august society.

In my first term—with all a freshman's humility upon me—I was, in a manner, awed by the brilliant figure Magenis was already making. It is not always that one can designate, amongst the undergraduate world, any particular youth of whom it may be confidently declared that he will make his mark in after life. It is never difficult to find men who become Hertford and Ireland scholars, almost as a matter of course; men who seem to have come into the world for the express purpose of achieving such distinctions, with a fellowship to follow, and then, also as a matter of course, dropping out of notice; but he who, not being either in the boat or the eleven, can compel the admiration of undergraduates as well as tutors, is a wonderful product, and is compounded of very different metal.

Such a one was Philip Magenis. The assured position which Magenis had attained when I went up, and the fact that he could pick and choose where he would for his associates, in no way shed that cold cloud of estrangement, which so often rises in like circumstances, over our friendship. We became, if anything, more intimate than ever, and, little prone as youth as a rule is to be impressed by intellectual power, I became a fervent believer in his superiority to all the rest of his contemporaries; and it was no wonder to me that he attained to all those distinctions which at present make up the footnote to his name in the Oxford Calendar. All who knew him soon followed my lead; and it became a commonplace, at least at Oxford, that any one, gifted with such brilliant parts, such charm of manner, and such indomitable will might compass any end he sought.

When I went down Magenis was already fellow and lecturer at St. Anne's, and there were rumours that he was busy over an edition of Aristophanes which would show that all the honours of scholarship were not to be swept away by Cambridge and the Germans. Great things were expected from his teaching; and the St. Anne's people, who had not shone particularly in the schools of late, began to talk about half-a-dozen firsts who were coming on. I never missed the University news in my morning paper; and what I read showed me that Magenis was rapidly coming to the front. Though my Greek was getting very rusty, I asked my bookseller whether the new edition of Aristophanes was announced, and began to search the columns of the literary journals for notices of the same.

One Saturday afternoon at Marlow I came across a man named Fletcher, whom I had often met in Magenis's rooms, and our talk naturally soon drifted towards the subject of our common friend, the coming man. As soon as I mentioned Magenis's name, Fletcher looked at me in interrogative surprise for a moment, and then said that he supposed I had not heard any Oxford news lately.

I replied that I had not, and thereupon Fletcher proceeded to give me some which astonished me considerably. Magenis, it seemed, had resigned his lectureship at St. Anne's at the end of last term, and had given up his rooms and left Oxford. Nobody knew what to make of it. The people at St. Anne's were very reticent;

and all the reports which had got about as to the cause of this sudden move on Magenis's part rested on conjecture alone. Some said he was disappointed with the fruit of his work as a teacher. Some that he wanted rest and leisure to finish off the *Aristophanes*, while others opined that a story of some sort would be heard about the business before long.

I was amazed beyond measure at this news, and I set to work to find out more details than Fletcher had been able to give me, but I got on very little farther. The real cause was never known outside the governing body of St. Anne's. Whatever it might be, it could not have involved anything greatly to Magenis's discredit, as he still held his fellowship; and, during the next Long Vacation, he was working for some time in the College library. He disappeared, however, before Term began, and Oxford seemed to get on quite well without him, and readily gave him that meed of oblivion which is so surely the portion of all those who do not keep their names before the world academic by means akin to those by which the sale of divers articles of everyday use is stimulated. The new *Aristophanes* was not announced in the publishers' lists, and still the world of scholarship went on much as usual. When a prominent soldier falls in the battle of life, it is wonderful how quickly the ranks close, and the struggle rages just the same as if he had never struck a blow, and so it was with Philip Magenis.

It was two years later when I next heard news of him, and this news was, that he had taken orders, and had gone to a small college living in Gloucestershire. One summer, during a boating trip over the western rivers and canals, I found myself close to Lymney Crucis, the cure of souls which Magenis had undertaken, so I halted early in the afternoon at a neighbouring village, and walked over to see him.

Magenis was at home; and, in spite of a shadow of reserve in his first words of greeting, it was clear that he was really glad to see me. His village was as lovely to look upon as the eye of an artist could wish; a perfect little church; cottages with warm, brown limestone roofs peeping out of the masses of elm and chestnut foliage; and his rectory was a cosy square house of the last century, as good æsthetically, perhaps, as any of the neo-gothic dwellings with which the Anglican revival has covered the face of the land, but like all bachelors' houses, it was cold and un-

lovely. A few pictures, which I remembered in the old college days, hung upon the walls of the room, which served him for library and dining-room as well; and the shelves were filled with books, many of them richly-bound college prizes. The furniture was rough and homely, and there were evidences on all sides that the place was the home of a man who shifted largely for himself.

We drew our chairs to the fire, which Magenis had kindled, as the evening was chilly, and, as the light flickered round the dusky room and showed me the graceful etchings and dainty books side by side, with Church almanacks and hours of choir practice, and coal and blanket-club accounts and other homely memoranda of a country parson's life, I recalled to mind their late environment, and realised, in a way, the depth and breadth of the gulf which Magenis must have traversed in passing from his old to his new life. He talked freely enough; but I fear I was an inattentive listener, for my thoughts would keep wandering away into speculations as to what cross-current of the pitiless, uncontrollable stream of circumstance, could have landed this man on the shore of such an intellectual wilderness as Lymney Crucis.

Magenis was still on the right side of thirty; but his was one of those restless spirits which agonise over trifles, and, in consequence, his face was already drawn and lined, and his hair was grizzling fast. In his talk there was just the same charm and brightness as of old. Insight, and grasp, and power were all there; but I very soon found out from the drift of his discourse, that he had made a clean cut with the past; that Carfax, and St. Anne's, and the new edition of *Aristophanes*, were forbidden ground. He was very much interested in my own affairs, and he asked me all sorts of questions as to what I was doing, and what I was going to do; and when I, in return, wanted to know something about his parish work, he was no longer reticent. He had plenty to say, both about its more serious side, and about the cricket club, and the cottage flower-show, and the athletic sports, and the other diversions over which the country parson of to-day is supposed to preside, in order to keep his parishioners from ennui and the public-house.

I was glad to note a ring of enthusiasm in his voice as he spoke of the change for the better which had come over the parish

lads since he had shown them that his duties as a clergyman did not begin and end with the church door. I marked, too, that he had even picked up a slight twang of Gloucestershire accent, as he went on describing his present way of life, as if it were the one field of work he would have chosen from all the rest. There seemed to be no backward gazing towards that fair city which lay not many miles away; no hankering after the career within its walls which, for a man of his bent, must have been almost an ideal one; and, as I looked at his strenuous face, I began to wonder whether, after all, he had made a mistake in leaving Oxford. It was about eight o'clock when a ring came at the bell, and our tête-à-tête was interrupted by the entry of a clerical neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Morris. It was plain, from the way in which he and Magenis met, that the two men saw a good deal of each other. I was a little annoyed to find that our pleasant talk of past times was cut short at once in favour of a dialogue between the host and the newcomer on what might by courtesy have been called rural economy; but which had a tendency to specialise itself into an eclogue, the theme of which was the breeding and management of the pig. Mr. Morris was a short, stout, dark man, with crisply curling black hair, and a brick-red complexion. His clothes looked as if they had never yet been brushed; and they retained, along with a twelvemonth's dust, an odour of rank cavendish, which a two miles walk in the air had not dissipated.

"So you've sold your Berkshires, Morris," said Magenis, as soon as the newcomer had lighted his pipe. "I saw them on Harry Joyce's cart the other day."

"Yes, I've sold them," said Morris, with a grin of enjoyment overspreading his oily countenance, "and I fancy I've sold Master Harry, too. He'd had a glass too much when he came to look at 'em; and I'd make a bet he'll lose ten shillings apiece over 'em."

"You'll have the Income Tax people down upon you for farming profits, Morris."

"Oh, I don't do so badly, what with one thing or another." And then, for the next half-hour, Mr. Morris went on detailing to us the sum he had netted from the year's produce of an extraordinary sow; how much an acre he had got for his potatoes, and what he meant to do next year with a patch of lucerne. To my amazement

Magenis listened to it all with a show of interest. "And next spring," Mr. Morris went on, "I'll see to that bit of yours at the top of the garden, and get it cleaned. Then, if you give it a good dose of muck every winter, it will last you for twenty years."

"Twenty years," I groaned, inwardly, as I listened to this droning boor. Twenty years of such a life for a man like Magenis, after breathing for a season the keenest intellectual air that England holds! I almost expected to see him writhe and shiver as he listened; but he gave no such sign, and Morris went on in the same strain till past ten, when, to my joy, he took his departure, after first imbibing a glass of grog mixed strong enough to ward off any amount of evening damp he might encounter on his way home.

After he was gone, we sat chatting till past midnight; and the next morning my host walked with me as far as the canal wharf, where I had left my boat.

"Now, Phil," I said, at parting, "I'm not going without a promise from you that you will run up to town for a week, before Christmas."

"I see what notion you've got in your head," he replied, with a little ring of sarcasm in his voice. "You think I'm 'rusting up,' as the saying is, in these wilds, and you kindly propose to arrest further deterioration."

"My dear fellow, I want you to come for my own pleasure, much more than for any possible benefit to yourself; and Hammond, and Barton, and Wingrove, are always talking about you."

"You don't say so; now just tell me, do these illustrious wits ever show any signs of rust? I know it's presumption to suggest that men can get rusty in London; but I'm a little curious."

"I'll have them all to meet you at the Club, and then you shall judge for yourself."

"I recognise Barton's hand, now and then, in the 'Grove,' which I see about once a month. Whether the rust has got at his wits or not, I won't venture to say; but it has certainly not corrupted that fine store of commonplace he collected at Oxford. Barton is one of the luckiest men I know. He has found something as good as the philosopher's stone. Aided and abetted by certain wise publishers and a discerning public, he turns his rubbish into gold, or cheques, which are just as good."

"Ah, now you are a little unfair, Magenis. To hear you talk like that, shows plainly that a spell in town is the very thing you want. It's all very well to do the Timon in moderation; but men can't get along without society of some sort."

"My good fellow, haven't I got Morris, and another just like him in the next parish? The fact is—I don't mind confessing it a bit—that I have got into my rut; one which does for me well enough, and I don't much care to meet Barton, or Johnson, or Thomson, and hear how these superfine gentry are grinding along in theirs. I study the world's history in a penny paper two days old, and I don't find I'm much the worse for it."

"Perhaps not," I replied; "but aren't you a little hard upon your old friends, who want to see you, and talk to you again, quite independent of rust, and ruts, and all the rest of it?"

"My old friends. Yes. I often think no man ever had better friends than I have had; friends who were good for foul weather as well as fair," he said, in a tone which almost persuaded me that I was listening to the Magenis of five years ago; "but our ways have parted, and we had better each go on our own road. You don't understand, I can see, how it is that I can endure poor Morris's chatter about his pigs and his potatoes; but have you ever asked yourself why you should turn up your nose at a man who finds consolation in his pigs and his potatoes?"

"I'd never turn up my nose at a peasant, in such case, Magenis."

"Yes, but why draw the line at the peasant? Why should Morris and I be cut out? By rightly administering our pigs and our potatoes, we add to the earth's produce, and find occupation, and do harm to no man. How many of your persons of culture can say as much for their daily round? Good-bye. Send me a line whenever you can spare the time; and take care of yourself amongst the wits of the 'Cam and Isis.'"

So we parted. This last speech, the bitter laugh that accompanied it, and the weary look on his face, and his listless gait as he turned and vanished from my sight, gave fresh life to my fears that Magenis, in spite of his professions of content, was eating his heart out in this solitude. I thought about him, and little else, as I made my way back to town. There I had to resume my own fight with

the world, so Philip Magenis and his fortunes grew as dim in my recollection as, no doubt, I and mine did in his.

For many months no tidings of Magenis came to me, and whenever I thought of him I tried to hope that my latest impression of him was a false one, and that he was indeed settled in a manner profitable both to himself and those about him; but I never ceased to regret that such a man should have sunk into so deep a slough. One evening as I entered the restaurant I frequented, I was astonished to see Magenis, in lay attire, seated at one of the corner tables. His eye caught mine at once, and the look of recognition was by no means cordial or effusive. It was, indeed, sufficiently the opposite to show me, amazed as I was at the moment, that he would be better pleased if I were to pass on, and made no further sign; but the force of association, and the charm of the man's personality, were too strong, and I held out my hand to him. He took it, but with a very stiff arm, and his whole manner showed me that he meant to be left to himself. I was not inclined to force my company upon him; so, after a few commonplace words, I withdrew to my accustomed table at the other end of the room.

I had not been long seated before Stewart Netherby, a man who often dined alongside me, entered the restaurant, and, as he came towards me, I noticed that he nodded familiarly to Magenis. Here, then, was a clue to this latest phase of the Magenis mystery; and, as soon as Netherby had ordered his roast mutton and greens, I opened the subject.

"Oh, so you know something of Magenis, do you?" he replied. "I forgot, though, you and he would be about the same standing at Oxford. Poor Magenis, he has made a sad muddle of it, first and last."

"You don't mean to say that he has given up his living," I cried.

"But that's just what he has done. He has cut the whole concern, this time; and he isn't like so many of those fellows who, when they cease to believe in one form of religion, must needs invent a new one. He has done with the Church, and means to make the best terms he can with the world, I take it."

"But has he been in London long? I never see anything of him at the 'Cam and Isis.'"

"It's nearly a year since I first met him

at the 'Organon.' He has taken his name off your Club, I fancy, and sees very little of his old friends. His mind seems to be full of the crisis yet, for whenever we talk together, he always harks back to his spiritual difficulties."

"He is the very last man I should have expected to find in such trouble," I replied. "When I saw him down in Gloucestershire, he seemed quite happy in his work. I confess I was a little surprised that life in such a place should content him; but so it was."

"Ah, yes, he liked it for a bit; but one must never be surprised at any queer turn men like Magenis may take. You remember he vanished from Oxford just as every one was looking for that new book which was to take the world by storm; and no one knew why. Now he has cut the Church to become a bookseller's hack, and no one knows why; though, the other day Tom Evans did tell me that he was supposed to be a little too fond of whisky for a parish priest in these blue-ribbon days; but what can the Bishops expect if they send men like Magenis to vegetate amongst a lot of yokels? However, it won't do to take everything that Tom relates for gospel; and I have never seen Magenis drink anything stronger than water since I have known him."

"And what is he doing for a living?" I asked.

"I heard he was editing school classics, and doing 'hack' work for the 'Grove.'"

"Heavens, what a waste!"

"Ah, it is, and no mistake; but this is a queer world, and many men, just as clever as Magenis, get beaten by it. 'Tis enough to make one wonder sometimes whether this universe can be run on right principles."

After this lapse into moralising, my companion reverted to the practical, and enlightened me as to the rights and wrongs of a dispute which was, at that time, running very high in journalistic circles; but all his explanations left me just as wise as they found me. Magenis had finished his meal, but still sat in his place reading, and the sight of his clouded, weary face would let me think of nothing else besides the cruel coil of fate which had caught him in its folds and dragged him down into the abyss, away from the path up to the heights which he might so easily have scaled. We no longer give to Fate the resistless, relentless attributes which are cast about her in the drama of the Greeks;

but here seemed to be a man, pursued like Œdipus or Orestes by some invisible malignant power. In such case, nowadays, we look for some flaw in the moral fibre, and hold that every man carries about with him a fate shut up in some corner of his anatomy which will make or mar him according to the use he makes of his gifts. There are signs, indeed, that science will soon bring it all to a question of physical temper. If the tabernacle enclosing the life of a particular person be duly trained and nourished according to its idiosyncrasy, the tabernacle and the life together may rise to the Zenith; vary the treatment ever so little, and they sink to Nadir. It was hard for me to think in this fashion of a figure so picturesque as Magenis, and I would fain have found the source of his troubles in the dread grandeur of the Greek idea. The Philistine moralist would settle the question out of hand by declaring that there must be a faulty strand, a screw loose somewhere; but in my weakness I could not help laying much of the mischief to the charge of malignant circumstance, that watchful foe who waits to trip us up whenever it comes to choosing between the right hand and the left; and to whose working, much more than to the natural evil of man's heart, we may ascribe the genesis of those evils which fill life with nine-tenths of its terrors.

POETRY AND SPECULATION.

WE live in an atmosphere of paradox. Else I should not venture to affirm, as I do, that the man who spends his days bawling on the Stock Exchange, and the tranquil poet in his little cot by the banks of a rill, have much in common with one another. And when I say this, I do not refer merely to the affinity that every man has with his neighbour, inasmuch as they are man and man, with the same appetites for sleep, and food, and motion. I mean that, under a certain twist of circumstances, the poet might do well for the Stock Exchange, and the man who lives by "rises and falls" might write very pretty verses.

Both of them are, by the method of their lives, rooted and grounded in the imagination.

We all know that the poet is nourished on the breath of his fancy. Condemn him to go to and fro in the world unsupported by the divine crutches of the ideal, and

what a sorry career his would be! This is made sadly evident by the confession of individual members of the fraternity in those moments of indescribable anguish, when their genius seems to have forsaken them, and they are left, as they fear, for ever, face to face with the naked skeleton of things. "There is not," says poor honest Burns, "among all the martyr-ologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is, not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear." Sensibility and imagination! Of such, and little else, are they compounded. And so, when, either as atonement for their sins, or to teach them to be strong in weakness, their imagination suddenly glides out of their nature, and they are left trembling before a grim and somewhat unkind world, no wonder their sufferings are often unbearable.

His pleasures are, however, like his pains—exquisite. When the tide of life flows strong within him, when imagination tickles sensibility, and sensibility spurs on imagination, there is then no bounds to the ecstasy of the man. It is reaction upon reaction. The pendulum swings as far one way as it formerly swung the other way. The burden of his lay is now "hope," whereas, of late, it was "despair." He is all or nothing. He cannot bridle or coerce his fancy to make it belie his feelings. That is a gift of the prose writer, in compensation for the inferior order of his talent. Or, at least, it is the mark of such strength of mind as seldom indeed is one of the endowments of poets of the first rank.

No wonder that poets who have sworn undivided allegiance to sensibility are short-lived. It is only the philosophic bards who come to threescore years and ten; having taught themselves to beware the fires of inspiration which consume their more impressionable brethren, long ere the first snows of autumn float down upon their heads. These are they who

On man, on nature, and on human life,
Musing in solitude . . . oft perceptive
Fair train of imagery before them rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight,
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed.

Their very pains serve them to point a melodious moral; and they die as they have lived—didactically.

But to return to my parallel. Is not the speculator upon the Stock Exchange in

much the same case as the poet of sensibility? His pleasures and pains are of the intense kind. Little, as a rule, knows he of the calm middle gratifications of life. He may seem, to be sure, like an ordinary mortal in the hours when his business is suspended. But look into his heart, and read the hurrying thoughts that alarm and cheer him in succession. He plays for high stakes, like the poet himself; and, when ruin stares him in the face, even as in the like case the poet gloomily and fiercely analyses his own woes, and proclaims his suffering to the world, so our speculator finds himself, in default of other consolation, compelled to

Hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

If life is estimable, rather for the intensity of its pleasures than for the length to which it may be practised, who would not rather live the life of the speculator of ordinary vicissitudes, than in the dull, monotonous life of the person whose circumstances have held him aloof, all his days, from the palpitating shocks of hope and fear? The man who does not run the gamut of his faculties is a vegetable, not a man. I know well that it is reckoned seemly and philosophic to be indifferent.

Yet, unless such stoical indifference succeed to the strife of hopes and fears, which are the common lot of men, and be not a substitute for them, it is a defect and not a quality to be desired. There must first be life, experience, sensations—as Schiller says—and, afterwards, there may then be the art both of representing them in literature and of bringing experience and sensations into subservience to the methods of conduct most convenient to the individual. It is a mercy we cannot all be philosophers, even as it is, no doubt, well that we are not all fools.

The speculator, devoid of imagination, is as impossible a being as the poet without fancy. The one, in buying scrip of a new gold mine at par already with his mind's eye, sees the day when that for which he pays a hundred pounds will be worth a thousand pounds. The day may never come. It is a pity, but our friend has meanwhile lived in a paradise of hope of his own furnishing; and it is at least probable that he is allowed to eat some of the fruit of this fair garden of his dreams.

Similarly, the poet, when he has surrendered himself wholly to the sway of his conception, is, for the time, less a material being, gross like you or me, than

pure spirit careering through ether. On this subject, I quote her Grace the Duchess of Newcastle of ancient renown, not for her poetic genius, but for her quaint confirmation of my words :

When I did write this book, I took great paines,
For I did walk, and thinke, and breake my braines;
My thoughts run out of breath, then down would
Ie,
And panting with short wind like those that dye.

Her Grace's pains were coincident with the merit of her achievements. Had she been better poet, she would have suffered less in the embrace of her thought, and more afterwards in the realisation that she was woman as well as poet. The bard of a generation is transported far out of himself by the sweet obligations of his verse. None but he knows of the happiness that attends upon this suspension of actual existence and transference, like the soul of Epimenides, into other spheres.

What, then, of the awakening, or, rather, the relapse from the ideal towards the real? It is not agreeable. There is often prostration of body as well as disappointment of spirit. When the bard is poor, a husband, and a father, and in the position of bread-winner to his wife and little ones, this reaction may well be diabolical. He has revelled in a world other than this. He must pay in the body for the soul's debauch, and bitter, indeed, may the reckoning be. Nevertheless, under average circumstances, has he so very much to complain of?

Man cannot live by pleasure alone. The recall to material life is salutary; and when the worst is said, has he not, during this one day or hour, experienced such delicate and yet intense joys as, even in mere recollection, ought, in reason, more than counterbalance a whole year of drudgery and deprivation!

It would seem so, notwithstanding the clamorous denials of but too many of those who have interpreted their sufferings in song.

I have been in the company of men who are speculators by profession, and I have been in the company of poets. The former show much of the abstraction of mind of the latter. Unless you talk with them about the one engrossing subject, they reply to you much at hazard, and not infrequently with a distant look, almost of commiseration, as if you were a denizen of a world far less interesting than theirs. The poet's self-absorption, at times, is, of course, proverbial. He cannot always help

himself. A flood of fancy overwhelms him, and, for the nonce, he is but a being of ideas, held together by a fleshly form in human guise.

Perhaps it is a pity that the poet and the speculator cannot now and again withdraw themselves from the arena of the world. During the intervals of the poet's inspirations, he is often an unhappy man; restless, worn, and distrustful of himself and his fellow creatures. The speculator, too, who has cast the dice, and knows he cannot learn the issue of the fling for weeks, perhaps months, must, in the nature of things, suffer much anxiety which he would be glad to spare himself. If only they could both have their periods of insensible coma, it might be an advantage. For the mind, in their case, has a way of preying upon itself when it has not what it conceives to be the exact cause for exultation. If it cannot rejoice, it is prone to grieve.

To some people the speculator is, by the nature of his profession, a bane to his fellow men. He neither sows nor spins like other men. He is nothing better than a gambler—a person who would, for his own profit, play pitch-and-toss with the moon and stars if he were permitted—a person in whom it were as vain to seek for reputable qualities of mind as to exact intelligence of a born idiot.

This inference is not wholly an unreasonable one. But in so far as mere tangible products are concerned, the poet is in precisely the same case. Plato and Adam Smith would rate him very low as a promoter of the material well-being of other men, even if they would not rather exile him as a cause of positive harm. Both in the world of trade and politics, the imagination, unaided, is treated with but scant courtesy. You are all very well in your own province, my friend; but here you are quite impotent, and likely to be an insufferable embarrassment.

Yet there is something heroic about the speculator which compels a certain respect for him, even though one may not be in sympathy with his method of livelihood. He, a pigmy, is for ever tilting with Fortune herself, who is said to hold all the threads of life—of men and all living beings—in her hands. Ours is a world replete with mystery, as it is teeming with life. None can say with any assurance what will happen to-morrow. There may, in fact, be no to-morrow for us. At any moment, it is said, one or other of the

myriad whirling fragments of which the universe consists might deviate from its course, and break our world to atoms. There would be a prodigious dust somewhere for a while; but, afterwards, all would be as it was before, save and except ourselves.

And in the face of this gigantic menace, which one might suppose would suffice to hold us all fast in servile subordination to Fate and the issue of things, man snaps his fingers at the future, and says, "This will happen," or "That will happen," and stakes money upon his arguments!

Dame Fortune herself, president of all things, must be hugely entertained by our conduct; and it is quite possible that she finds so much diversion in the behaviour of our friend the speculator, that she favours him because of his temerity, even as the world is disposed to smile amiably at a precocious child, pat him on the head, and give him a shilling or two as a mark of its appreciation of his wit or impudence.

Nor need the speculator, any more than the poet himself, be ignoble in private life, because he is so much at the mercy of his imagination. He is such a man as he is quite independently of the exercise of this particular faculty of his. The speculator will not become an avaricious man, simply because his imagination dazzles him with the project of untold wealth as the result of this or that "operation" on the Stock Exchange or in the markets. The poet will not put an end to himself merely because, at his awakening from a dream of fancy, he finds life is harder than it seemed when viewed through the radiant medium of his luxuriant imagination.

Of the perils that dog both these professions, we have already said something. It is difficult to determine in which profession they excel. They may not be perils wholly incident to the man as speculator or poet; but the manner of his life is nearly sure to augment them. Seduced by his imagination, the speculator, whom Dame Fortune thinks well to rebuff, does not, therefore, give up the battle, or even allow himself a truce. No; he must, he thinks, be bold. Courage is so estimable a virtue that it must meet with its reward. And so, to account for a loss of five thousand pounds, he recklessly incurs new liabilities which may, or may not, cancel this loss, may, or may not, double it. When the imagination thus takes the bit in its teeth, it is apt to go at a terrible pace. And in more instances

than the world wots of, it brings its master crashing to the ground, a ruined and infuriated man.

There are times to indulge the imagination, and times to slight it, and there is no arbiter as to the respective fitness of these occasions, except that ancient, discreet judge, Reason.

The poet who places the reins of his imagination in the hands of this judge at the beginning of his career, is likely to be the happiest kind of poet. He may well, on this condition, be content to surrender a measure of his prospective greatness. And, certainly, the speculator may be advised to forego one half or a quarter of the profits that his imagination promises him, if only he also may get countenance from Reason for the residue.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Jean Vellacot*,"
"*A Faire Damsell*," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLV. A VISITOR.

MAY-DAY has had so many lovers, so many fond poets and gentle female hearts dedicated to it, that it is not for the common pen to add to the already unnumbered words of praise, especially, as truth—which is greater than fiction—being told, May-day has, for some time past, woefully misbehaved itself. Once, she was a lovely maiden, clad with summer draperies, dancing the livelong day, and quite impervious to catching cold from wet feet, for she had an especial liking to green grass, or, rather, velvet sward; and she carried wreathed flowers and had nothing to do except to be on the look out for some "rustic swain," who, regardless of losing a day's wage, could also trip it with her and the other maidens of the May; and further, was wondrously gifted with the power of improvising verses.

We still cling to the old falsehoods with passionate perseverance, hoping against hope that good old times will come back; forgetting, that when they do—or, if they do—our taste for syllabub will be gone, and that a day's wage will seem better than a dance round a Maypole. Anyhow, when they come, we shall then all be able to read: the poor, what is written in books, and the rich, what a too-highly civilised society has written in their minds. Alas! there are no more May-days in store for us.

Jesse Vicary, upon this May-day, could have remembered—had he so wished—days of happy rambles in green woods. He could remember, or, rather, he could have recalled—had he not tried and succeeded in banishing such ideas—great thoughts, which oftener come in spring days, like sap that travels to the embryo buds; but, for him, all this had been swept away. May-day was to be his starting-point; he had fixed the date, and there only remained for him to accomplish his revenge. Having turned over many impossible plans, he had settled on none of them; but he meant simply to go and meet Mr. Kestell face to face, and—tell him the truth.

He would go and stay at Rushbrook, in some poor cottage, and he would way-lay him. He would force an interview upon him. Whose fault was it he was out of work and fast sinking down into hopelessness? Whose, but the man who should have been honest enough to own his fault, and not act a lie before the respectable world.

May-day, in London, was gloomy, and the sun, struggling out through misty clouds, produced a feeling of closeness, without warmth, which was oppressive to the spirits.

Symee had made the small quarters which the brother and sister could afford look something like home. Slowly but surely the girl was beginning to understand that there is something better than abundance of creature comforts. "Man shall not live by bread alone," has a depth of meaning which only a few of us realise. Symee, it is true, had worked hard enough for her daily bread; but she found that, anxious as it was to have to think of every penny, disappointing, too, as was Jesse's strange, moody attitude, the freedom she experienced compensated for all the creature comforts the Kestells had given her.

How hard she tried to get something to tempt Jesse, how she treasured up little amusing sayings of Obed Diggings's to win a smile from him, seldom with success; but all this had drawn her out of herself. She could not blame Jesse, because she was continually blaming herself for not having sooner come to him; and now she fancied this was her punishment. Trouble had quite altered her brother's character, and not knowing the reason, Symee thought: "It is my fault, and this is my punishment."

On this May-day though, Symee had a

longing for the sight of the country, a longing which country people alone can understand, and she had spent a half-penny on a bunch of wallflowers, which, when the breakfast-table was ready, she triumphantly placed in the centre.

"Jesse, look, don't you love wallflowers?"

Jesse Vicary looked at the flowers without appearing to see them.

"Ah," he said, pushing back the hair from his forehead. Then, suddenly: "Symee, do you mind being left alone a little while? I can't find work, and—before looking for any more I must go down to Rushbrook."

"To Rushbrook! Oh, mayn't I go too? Miss Amice will let me, I know."

"No," said Jesse, quickly, almost roughly. "Symee, you chose once for all. If you are tired of being with me, then go; but don't come back again."

The tears started in Symee's eyes. Could this be the tender brother she had once thought so gentle and patient?

"I will do as you think best, of course, Jesse dear; only as you were going——"

"Oh, I shall not be long. You can spend the evenings with Milly Diggings. When I come back I must find work, or else I had better take to street sweeping."

He laughed a little scornfully.

"When are you going, dear? I must get your new shirt ironed; and——"

"I'm going to-day. I don't want to be made smart, Symee." Then, ashamed of himself as he saw the tears fall slowly down Symee's cheeks, he added:

"When I come back we'll talk over plans, Symee, and you shall decide about the future."

Symee positively dared not ask any more questions, and wisely she set about getting Jesse's handbag ready. Before Symee's arrival he had never had a woman's care and forethought. It seemed hard that now it had come to brighten his lot he could not enjoy it.

Every other feeling was burnt up. He even did not recognise himself. The old Jesse with his wealth of love and poetic fancies was gone—gone!

It did not take long to prepare Jesse's handbag, and then to put a few of his papers under lock and key. Everything was ready, and he stopped on the threshold as Symee timidly brushed his rather threadbare coat.

"You must look spruce, dear Jesse, or

they—people will think I don't take care of you. Shall you go to the farm?"

"No, to some cottage, or to the little inn."

"Oh, Jesse, you won't be very comfortable there. Why must you go? Stop here till—we could go together."

Stop here. Jesse listened to the words, and they sounded to him like the far-off voice of a guardian angel. But another voice far nearer said:

"No, let me get it over now, at once; let him own his sins, and feel some of the misery he would have me feel."

"Good-bye, Symee; take great care of yourself till I come back." And, without waiting for further leave-taking, Jesse was gone, hurrying forward as if he were being followed by a host of enemies who wished him harm; and yet, in truth, the only thing which frightened him were Symee's gentle words, "Stop here."

When Jesse was gone, Symee sat down and cried as if her heart would break. Life was so very, very sad; the brightest dreams had been realised only in mockery. Poverty stared her in the face, for her last gold piece had been slipped, unbeknown to Jesse, into his purse, and he was so absent, she hoped he would not find out her deception.

The future was a miserable outlook; even poverty was not so bad as Jesse's altered character. Nothing she did pleased him. There was some terrible thought in his mind, she knew not what, but it brought him nothing but misery.

"But it was my fault, I rejected him when he was so anxious for me, so lonely. This is my punishment. How can I blame him?"

The day seemed long indeed. She was too miserable to go out, or even to go and sit in her room below; she was making Jesse some new shirts, and at these she stitched away as if she could stitch her penitence into them.

It was in this occupation that she was surprised by a visitor. The knock at the door made her jump as she said "Come in;" and then her face flushed all over as she saw Mr. Hoel Fenner enter. She felt so terribly ashamed of being found in such a poor room, so ashamed that such a fine gentleman as Mr. Fenner should see the altered circumstances of Jesse, for she knew how much her brother had prized Mr. Fenner's friendly kindness.

But after the first instant of deep shame, Hoel Fenner's manner surprised her so

much, that she happily forgot a little of her humiliation. In the first place, the man she remembered as the embodiment of refinement and health looked terribly ill. He was a shadow of his former self, and his clothes hung loosely on him as if they belonged to some one else. Secondly, Mr. Fenner seemed hardly to notice the poverty around him, and to be only eager to see her, as he at once accepted the chair she offered him.

"Thank you; I am tired. It is nice to rest. I have been ill, and I hardly realised what a poor creature I was, Miss Vicary. I have had rather a hunt for you; I went to your brother's old lodgings, and there was not even 'Liza there. Everything has changed. Happily, the neighbours at last instructed me. Tell me, when will Vicary come in? I can wait. I must see him. I have only just come to town, and people seem to think I have come out of the grave. My lodgings are buried in papers and letters that have been waiting months for me."

He did not tell Symee that one letter he had not dared to read, and he had put it away unopened.

Hoel noticed Symee's blushes and her bewildered expression, and, with the true instinct of a gentleman, he courteously gave her time to recover herself. Only now did he notice, especially, the change in the lodgings and the poor surroundings of the place.

"It is very good of you, sir, to come here," began poor Symee, not yet feeling enough at ease to speak naturally. "I am very sorry, but Jesse is not in London. He will be sorry to miss you; he went away only this morning."

"Went away! Where, to?"

"To Rushbrook."

"Has he got leave of absence?"

"Oh! you don't know, sir!" said Symee, finding courage. "Everything is altered. We shall never be happy again. Jesse lost his situation, and oh! the weary work he has had looking for more employment. He can't find any. It is dreadful to live in this big town and have no friends."

Symee positively could not help herself; she began to cry.

Hoel slowly took in the situation. A cold feeling of dread and self-reproach crept over him.

"It was my fault. I left him to that," he thought. Aloud, he said:

"Jesse Vicary without work? It is ridiculous! You don't understand, per-

haps, Miss Vicary; but your brother has real ability. He is fitted for better things than office work; besides—besides—”

“I shouldn't mind what work it was, so that he could get something,” half-sobbed Symee, the long-kept-in sorrow forcing itself to the surface. “I believe doing nothing is sending him mad. He is quite altered—quite changed. I don't believe even to you he would appear the same man. It's trouble that is sending him off his head.”

“Vicary altered—I—saw something of the change you mean before I left. I was in trouble myself then, or else—”

The truth which Symee could not understand burst upon Hoel. Conscience said: “That is your work; you could have prevented this.” What, was Sister Marie right after all? Was it impossible to right a wrong by another deception?

“Has Jesse gone to Rushbrook? I must go after him. I am going there myself. Miss Vicary, please do not distress yourself,” added Hoel, so tenderly, that Symee thought she could now understand the charm of manner that had attracted Jesse. But she was wrong; his tenderness was a new feeling, born of new thoughts.

“You don't know how terrible it is to see Jesse changed,” said Symee. Now that the ice was broken, she could continue. “He does not even care about my having come here to live with him. Miss Amice brought me; she is so good, even if she isn't quite like other people. She tried to make me see my duty before, but I couldn't; and then Jesse refused that farm in Canada, and, somehow, he blames Mr. Kestell. It is so wrong-headed of him. Mr. Kestell has always been a good friend to us, but Jesse won't hear reason. He is mad, I think; mad with troubles which he has half brought upon himself.”

Hoel was speechless before this revelation. He had never imagined Jesse would leave Card and Lilley, and had said to himself:

“He is well off. Why disturb him at the expense of Elva's father?”

“Why did you say he left his work?”

“They sent him away. Business is very bad just now; and it was a misfortune that couldn't be helped. But Jesse will think that Mr. Kestell got him turned away. Oh, sir, how is it possible? Mr. Kestell got him the situation, and specially wanted him to remain there. Of course that Canada farm was a special offer—just

a chance. But it's no use thinking of the past. I suppose in the future we shall have the workhouse to go to, for Jesse will never touch a penny of money that comes from Rushbrook. Oh, Mr. Fenner, I know Mr. Kestell well. If I were even to write a line to him and say we were in want, he would send me anything I liked to name. He is the most generous man on earth. Don't you think it is hard on me to know that, and yet to have Jesse almost cursing me if I suggest it? And this place, too, it's not fit for Jesse to live in, he who is only really happy in the country.”

Hoel was almost stupefied by the picture which Symee drew so graphically, because so simply. Yes, it was hard on her, but not so hard as if she knew the whole truth. Ignorance is more often bliss than we choose to believe.

Hoel got up and held out his hand, but he was recalled to the fact of his silence by seeing the look of surprise on poor Symee's face.

“I will try and send you back your brother,” he said. “I am going to Rushbrook at once—to-day, if I can. You know, Miss Vicary, that there have been many sorrows connected with Rushbrook, even for me.”

He now no longer felt as if he were the only sufferer.

“Yes. And oh, sir, have you heard any particulars? Jesse won't let me write to Rushbrook, but I saw it in the paper that Miss Elva was going to marry Mr. Akister. I can't believe it.”

“Why not?”

“Oh, because she took on so—”

Symee stopped suddenly; she remembered the strong words that had been spoken by the servants about Mr. Fenner's sudden disappearance.

“When I left?” faltered Hoel, quite humbly.

“Yes, sir; but, of course, you and she had your reasons. Miss Elva was very proud, she never uttered a word; but I saw how it altered her. She changed, too; and you should have seen how tender Mr. Kestell was to her.”

“I hope no one ever blamed her,” said Hoel, suddenly, and with curious energy, “she was blameless, entirely blameless; she is so now in marrying Mr. Akister. I was a coward, Miss Vicary, a— Well, I shall go and see her married, and then that part of my life's story will be ended.”

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

"It will be better for me to creep quietly away now," said Lois, speaking hurriedly, as the door closed on Lady Joan, and she found herself alone with Herrick. "I can be of no use to any one. I should only feel myself in the way."

Herrick's face showed simple blank astonishment.

"In the way!" he repeated. "Going! You mean to leave us in the very midst of our sorrow."

He felt as one might feel who, overtaken by a flood, and planting his feet on what he thinks a rock, suddenly feels it crumbling into sand beneath him.

Lois tried to explain.

"I would give worlds—worlds if I could be of use—of comfort to—to you all; but—but—" she faltered, and broke off abruptly.

With a heart filled as hers was at the moment with conflicting emotions, it was difficult to let forth even one little scrap of feeling without suffering all to escape.

Herrick stood for a moment, steadily looking at her, trying to gather the real meaning of her words from her flushing, tearful face. There could be but one, it seemed to him.

"I don't think you quite understand, dear," he said, sadly, "the greatness of the sorrow that is coming upon us. It has not been made clear to you that by this

time to-morrow death will have entered our house."

That must be what it was; she did not realise the blackness of the overhanging cloud. It was not only that she was little more than a child in years, she had led so secluded a life, knew so little of the deeper joys or sorrows of life, that she was even below her years in development.

Her mouth quivered, great tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Oh, Herrick," she cried, clasping her hands, and looking up in his face, "if only I could bear it for you!"

Herrick's calmness began to give way.

"No one could do that. No one knows what my father has been to me all my life through," he said, unsteadily. And then he sank into the chair which she had just quitted, hiding his face in both hands.

Lois could see the tears trickling through his fingers. She bent over him, putting her arm round his neck; words failed her.

"Oh, Herrick, my poor boy, my poor boy!" was all she could find to say.

The difference in their years seemed to vanish. She felt mother-like over him, strong and protective, ready to fight sorrow—death itself, with her little hands, should either dare to approach him.

For a few minutes Herrick wrestled silently with his grief, and Lois stood bending over him, caressing his dark-brown hair, and finding no better words of comfort than:

"My poor, poor boy! If only I could bear it for you!"

Deep down in her heart was another and bitterer cry:

"Can I go away and leave him to bear his sorrow alone? Can there be another

in the whole world who could comfort him as I would?"

It was altogether a new experience to see Herrick thus overcome with grief. As a rule, his young vigour and masterfulness were the things that first and foremost made themselves felt when he entered a room. Face to face with him and his masterfulness it had been comparatively easy for her to persuade herself that he could get on very well through life without the aid of such a poor, little, insignificant creature as herself. But now, with him brought thus low, her heart had but one cry in it: "I love him so, I cannot, cannot give him up."

The room was so still that the loud ticking of a clock on a pedestal in a corner seemed to speak as with a warning voice: "I am telling, one by one, the seconds of that life which so soon will be 'all told.'" Herrick could fancy it cried aloud to him. He withdrew his hands from his face. It looked haggard and aged by a dozen years.

"Forgive me, Lois," he said, brokenly. "I ought not to give way like this—so much devolves upon me."

Even as he spoke his words were to be verified, for a servant entered, bringing a message. The manager from the Wrexford mines was wishing to see Mr. Herrick; he apologised very much for intruding at such a time; but to-morrow would be pay-day for the miners, and it would cause great inconvenience to the men if they were not paid. Did Mr. Herrick know if the cheque which was handed over regularly every month had been signed, so that he could draw upon it?

With the message the servant delivered a note from Parsons, asking if Mr. Herrick would, as soon as possible, pay a visit to his grandfather. The terrible news had not as yet been told him, and his enquiries as to what had detained Mr. Gaskell so long at Wrexford were incessant.

Herrick stood for a moment in thought over this note. "Yes, he must be told," he said presently, with a sigh. The message from the Wrexford manager, coming simultaneously with the note from Parsons, brought before his mind the fact that business relations might render it imperative that the painful tidings should be broken to the old man.

"But Dr. Scott must be present," he decided. Then he turned to Lois:

"Wait here, Lois. I shall like you to come in to my grandfather presently. You

may be able to say some word of comfort to him. I will come for you in a few minutes."

Lois, in silence, shrank back into her corner once more. With Herrick gone, the room seemed to resume its distinctive character as Lady Joan's boudoir. She felt strangely out of place amid these ancestral surroundings. The aristocratic portraits on the walls seemed, with their thin lips, to repeat Lady Joan's cold, cruel words: "I consider that a marriage between you and my son would be about the most disastrous thing that could happen to him;" while all the four corners of the room, with their luxurious fittings and works of art, seemed to cry out at her in chorus: "It would sow dissension between him and his relatives; it would prevent him making a marriage suitable to his station in life."

Even the loud-voiced marqueterie clock on its high pedestal, which had seemed to bring a message to Herrick, had one for her now, and ticked away to a refrain—what was it, the ending of a poem, or of an old song she had heard somewhere!—"I love thee so, dear, that I only can leave thee."

CHAPTER XIII.

HERRICK performed his dreary task as gently as possible.

At first old Mr. Gaskell did not seem to catch the full import of Herrick's silence in response to his eager question: "But tell me, his injuries are not serious?"

Then, as the truth flashed into his mind, he fell back in his easy-chair, moaning pitiably:

"My boy John, my stalwart laddie to go first after all!"

Dr. Scott came forward with a cordial draught, but the old man waved him on one side, saying that he was tired, and would go to bed.

"Let me get to sleep, let me get to sleep," he said; "it's all I want."

"Come now, Lois," said Herrick, about ten minutes after beckoning Lois to follow him to his grandfather's room.

It seemed to the young man that every one, aged or youthful, could not fail to respond to sweet Lois's gentle sympathy.

Lois followed him readily enough; wherever he led it was easy enough for her to follow; but alas for her, if he were not there to lead, and her fears or her love chose to show the way!

When they entered his room, the old

man was lying back on his pillows with closed eyes; his thin fingers beat restlessly on the coverlet; while ever and anon a feeble moan, as from one in pain, escaped his lips.

Herrick noted sadly that a change had passed over the aged, shrunken face, even during the brief space of time that he had been out of the room.

"Grandfather," he said, gently, "I have brought Lois to see you. Don't you remember—I introduced her to you on—on your birthday?"

It needed an effort of memory on the young man's part to remember when that birthday was. It seemed to him that a lifetime, not barely two days, had elapsed since, light-hearted and full of hope, he had brought Lois to his grandfather's side to receive and to offer congratulations.

The old man slowly opened his eyes; there was a dreamy, far-away look in them.

"Take off your hat, dear," whispered Herrick, "and let my grandfather see your face."

Lois did so; then, as if moved by a sudden impulse, she laid her soft cheek, all wet with tears, upon the old man's thin hand.

"Heaven bless you, my child!" he murmured softly.

There came a sudden look of deep tenderness into his eyes; it as suddenly faded, swept away by one of keen annoyance—one might almost say of anger—which overspread his countenance.

Old Mr. Gaskell's bedroom led into his dressing-room, this again opened into the room to which his son had been hastily carried.

Suddenly and softly the door leading into this dressing-room had been opened, and Lady Joan had looked in.

Lois's instincts must have been strangely at one with those of the old man beside whom she sat, for though her back was towards this door, and the handle had been turned without a sound, she felt Lady Joan's presence on the threshold, and in a flash of thought she attributed old Mr. Gaskell's sudden change of expression to its right cause.

Its gently, as she had come, Lady Joan closed the door and departed, saying never a word.

Herrick, not possessing Lois's quickness of perception, heard and saw nothing.

"Does Lady Joan want you—me—anything, do you think?" Lois asked him in a low tone.

"Perhaps my father may have recovered consciousness, and wishes to see me," answered Herrick, eagerly, a wild hope springing up in his heart that, after all, this much of mercy might be granted him, and he might, once again, hear his father's loved voice.

He beckoned to Parsons to place a chair for Lois beside the grandfather's bed, and hastened to his father's room by way of the corridor.

His hope was but short-lived. One look into John Gaskell's face—on which one moment of agony had set its seal—convinced him that his heavy insensibility remained unbroken.

Dr. Scott was in the room.

"It is partly the result of the opiate," he said, "which we have been compelled to administer. Then looking hurriedly round to see that they were alone, he added: "Get your mother out of the room into the fresh air for a few minutes. Her strength is being severely taxed. She has been wandering restlessly from room to room for the past quarter of an hour."

While he was speaking, Lady Joan re-entered. Her step was slow and uncertain. To Herrick's fancy, she seemed strangely preoccupied. He could almost have fancied her to be some soulless piece of machinery wound up to go through certain performances for a given time, so automatic and unreal her movements seemed.

"Mother," he said, drawing her away from the sick-bed to a window recess, "I'll stay here while you get a little fresh air. Your strength won't stand this for long together."

She scarcely seemed to hear him; but, looking beyond him, addressed Dr. Scott:

"Have you seen old Mr. Gaskell, lately—since he heard the bad news, I mean?" she asked. "Has it had a bad effect upon him, do you think?"

"I was present when your son broke the news to him," answered the doctor. "I can scarcely say yet what effect it may have had. I am going in to see him again shortly."

"Go now, if you please; I am anxious to know," she said in low tones.

"Mother," said Herrick, "I want Lois to stay in the house now she is here. Will you send a message to Summerhill, or shall I?"

"I want Lois!"

Lady Joan repeated the words. It seemed to her that the young man had spoken them with a good deal of authority.

as if he were already preparing to take up his position as master of the house.

"Yes," said Herrick with great decision, "I want Lois to stay in the house. Her presence here is a comfort to me and to my grandfather; I hope it will be also to you. Shall I send a man over to tell Mrs. Leyton not to expect her back to-day?"

Lady Joan did not reply for a moment, and Herrick had to repeat the question.

"Shall I send to Summerhill, or will you?"

"You will do as you please," presently she answered, coldly and formally. "The house is large. If she remains here, pray keep her away from these rooms."

Then she turned away from him and went into the adjoining room—the one intervening between the two sick-rooms—and stood waiting there for Dr. Scott's re-appearance.

Herrick took her place beside his father's bed. "She is unlike herself to-day, and no wonder," he thought. "She shall not be distressed by word or deed of mine. By-and-by I can fight Lois's battles easily enough. My poor father, my poor father, he is the only one to think of now!" and the young man laid his head on the pillow on which lay John Gaskell's white face in its whiter bandages, and sent up a heart-broken prayer to Heaven that those dear, blue eyes now so closely sealed might, if only for a moment, open once again and rest on his face with a gleam of recognition in them.

Presently, the voices of Lady Joan and the doctor in the adjoining room fell upon his ear.

"You think a change has set in?" Lady Joan was saying.

"I do," was the doctor's reply, in sad tones. "A very marked change for the worse. His pulse is by many degrees feebler; his temperature is lower."

"Is there any immediate danger?" asked Lady Joan.

The doctor paused before replying. Then he said, slowly:

"It is a difficult question to answer. I have seen him very low before, and he has rallied. A great deal depends upon the amount of nourishment he can be induced to take. At his great age, one cannot expect much warning of the approaching end. I know you like me to be frank with you, Lady Joan; my own impression is that his last hour will be sudden and painless."

Lady Joan's voice was unlike her own as she asked the next question:

"Will he go before my husband, do you think?"

"Heaven only knows," replied the doctor, solemnly. "Send for another doctor, and have a second opinion, Lady Joan." He broke off for a moment, and then added, sadly: "I may be wrong; but it seems to me, as I go from one sick-room to the other, that it is a race between the two, with death for the goal. Heaven only knows who'll reach it first!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE twenty-four hours that were, as the doctor had phrased it, "to see the end of it," were swiftly and surely ebbing themselves out; the hot morning wore away into a hotter afternoon; the storm seemed to draw near and nearer, but still it did not break.

No appreciable change took place in John Gaskell's condition; the narcotics acted powerfully upon him, and he appeared slowly and imperceptibly to be passing over the border which divides sleep from coma.

Old Mr. Gaskell also remained in much the same condition. He had ceased to moan over his "stalwart laddie," and now lay still and quiet, with his hand clasping Lois's, like some tired child being soothed to sleep.

Lois's presence at his bedside was so evidently a comfort to him, that Herrick, in spite of his mother's request that the young girl should be kept away from that suite of rooms, did not like to disturb her.

It was a difficult subject to mention to Lady Joan, without a display of feeling which would be most unseemly in the circumstances. So he let matters take their course, hoping and believing that when his mother saw how manifestly Lois had won his grandfather's favour, her request would not be repeated.

His presence for the nonce was not needed in either sick-room. All sorts of tiresome business details claimed his attention that afternoon; the state of confusion into which the colliery at Wrexford had been thrown by the explosion, called for the presence of one of the proprietors on the spot. As this, however, in the present sad condition of things was an impossibility, Herrick did what he could by means of telegrams, and all through the early afternoon the wires between Longridge and Wrexford were working incessantly.

It was not until close upon five o'clock that he found himself free to return to the dying beds of his father and grandfather. When he entered his grandfather's room the old man appeared to be dozing. The look on Lois's face—always so easy to read—puzzled him. She looked startled and pained at one and the same moment, as if something had occurred which had frightened and troubled her.

"You have been sitting here too long, darling," he said, in a low voice; "come for a few minutes out on the terrace."

Then he whispered a word to Parsons, that if his grandfather aroused, and enquired for Miss White, she was to send for her immediately.

The terrace was easily reached by any one of the long French windows of the grandfather's suite of rooms. The sun was on the other side of the Castle now, and the slanting shadows gave refuge from the intense heat.

"What is it, Lois—what has troubled you?" was, naturally enough, Herrick's first question, when they found themselves alone in the open air.

Lois seemed greatly disturbed.

"Oh, Herrick," she said, in low, vehement tones, "I feel—I know—I ought not to speak as I am going to speak—but tell me, has your grandfather any reason to dislike Lady Joan?"

Herrick's face changed.

"There has never, to my knowledge," he answered, "been any open quarrel between them, although, I am sure, you will easily understand that two people so opposite in character could never be expected to get on particularly well together. But why do you ask, dear? What has happened to put such a thought into your head?"

"Nothing much has happened. I dare say I'm wrong to lay stress on such a simple thing; but twice, while I've been sitting beside Mr. Gaskell, Lady Joan has opened the door leading from the dressing-room, and looked in."

"Well?"

"And each time I knew that she was there without turning my head, by the look which passed over Mr. Gaskell's face and the way in which he clutched—yes, clutched my hand."

Herrick did not speak for a moment. Lois went on:

"He looked—I scarcely know how to explain—like some one who was having a bad dream. He only opened his eyes

for half a moment the first time; the second time he did not open his eyes at all, only seemed to feel that she was there looking at him; and he held my hand so tightly and muttered something. I could scarcely hear what it was; but I think it was, 'Don't leave me, my child.'"

"Did my mother say anything?"

"Not a word; but, oh, Herrick, when I turned and looked at her she looked so dark and so—so unlike herself, that I could have fancied that another soul had taken possession of her body."

Herrick could see a reason, of which Lois knew nothing, for what she called a "dark" look on his mother's face. To his mind, it was evident that Lady Joan had looked into the room to see if her wishes had been attended to, and Lois had been requested to withdraw. Finding the contrary to be the case, her feeling of annoyance had no doubt showed in the expression of her countenance. The look on his grandfather's face, as described by Lois, was to him inexplicable. Surely she must have allowed her imagination to run away with her.

He felt perplexed. It seemed to him that the slightest wish of the old man, now lying at the gates of death, should be complied with. Yet his mother, with this terrible sorrow hanging over her, must have due consideration shown to her. It was hard to know what to do for the best. The next moment his course was to be decided for him.

"My lady wishes to speak to you, sir. She is in the library," said a servant at that moment approaching.

"Wait here for me, Lois; the fresh air will do you good," said Herrick, as he prepared to comply with his mother's summons. "Don't be afraid, dear; I shan't betray your confidences."

The library was on the ground floor. Herrick found Lady Joan standing just within the room, with, what he was willing to admit, was a very "dark" look, indeed, on her face.

"Is this a time to think of marrying and giving in marriage?" she asked, sternly, before he had time to open his lips. "Have you done well, do you think, in forcing upon me, at such a time as this, the presence of a young woman who is distasteful to me?"

Herrick felt his temper aroused.

"Forcing upon you! Distasteful to you! I do not understand!" he cried, hotly. Then his better angel conquered;

he bit his lip and restrained himself. "This is not a time for hickering and contention, at any rate," he said; "that at least can wait. Lo! I found in the house, when I returned home—I supposed she was brought here by your wish, or my grandfather's. Whether this was, or was not, the case, one thing is clear, my grandfather likes to have her beside him, and I am sure you will so far respect his wishes as to allow her to remain in his room."

Lady Joan laid her hand upon his arm. "Listen, Herrick, I have only five minutes to spare from your father's dying bed, and I have something to say to you which must—must be attended to. I suppose this young lady, of whom we have already spoken, is to remain here for the night?"

"Assuredly," answered Herrick; "I have sent a message to Summerhill to that effect."

"Very well. You have acted in the way in which, I suppose, you think you have a right to act; now I intend to act in the way in which I have an undoubted right to act. The sick-rooms are under my supervision—both of them, in all their arrangements, and I positively forbid the entry of—that young woman into any one of that suite of rooms. I have already given Parsons orders to that effect."

As she finished speaking she left the room, and Herrick, exasperated though he might be at her sentence, yet felt that in the circumstances there could be no appeal from it.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE.

STRANDED high and dry above the river—literally on the Strand—and yet with reminders of its former river-side character, lies Somerset House. From the Embankment we see little of it but the dull and heavy rustic basement, once washed by the tide in its ebb and flow; with its water-gate and water-stairs suggesting the time—not so very distant, although before the age of omnibuses and railways—when a Lord of the Admiralty might drop down from Whitehall to the Transport Office in a Government barge, or, a Commissioner of Taxes might evade the duty on carriages and livery servants, by coming down to his office in his own private wherry. Above the rustic basement is a terrace, which no one ever uses, and, above that, rises the heavy, rather than stately, frontage of

Somerset House itself, with its innumerable windows, out of which nobody ever looks. Destiny indeed, with singular irony, has placed here a dull row of public offices, upon one of the finest and most brilliant sites in London: the site of the once-charming palace of which Cowley writes:

Before my gates a Street's broad Channell goes,
Which still with Waves of crowding people flows,
And every day there passes by my side
Up to its western reach the London tide,
The Spring Tides of the Term; my Front looks
down,
On all the Pride and Business of the Town.

The beauty and convenience of the site—half way between Court and City—attracted the attention of Seymour, the proud Duke of Somerset, Protector of the realm during the minority of his nephew, Edward the Sixth. The ground was then partly occupied by certain buildings, called Chester's Inn, which had formerly been the town residence of the Bishops of Chester. The parish church of St. Mary Innocents also stood there. These buildings were swept away to make room for the Protector's stately mansion, some of the materials for which were obtained by pulling down the old church of the Knights of St. John, in Clerkenwell. The new building had a castellated front towards the river: castellated, that is, after the then prevalent domestic type, with wide bay windows and oriels, overlooking the river, with a broad terrace between, and a pleasant, if formal, garden.

Somerset's occupation of his new palace was but a short one; and, after his fall, the pride and ostentation of his building operations were urged against him as corroborative evidence of his dangerous ambition. At the Duke's attainder and execution, Somerset House fell to the Crown, and was assigned to the Princess Elizabeth. From that time it was reckoned as one of the Royal Palaces; and when Elizabeth came to the throne, she occasionally held her court here; and it was at Somerset House that the Queen handed to Sir Nicholas Bacon the Great Seal, as Lord Keeper. But it was never a favourite residence with Elizabeth; and, when she made her cousin, Carey, Lord Hunsdon, keeper of the palace, she seems to have abandoned the place to his use, except that it might be prepared occasionally for the reception of some Ambassador or foreign Prince.

Lord Hunsdon died at Somerset House, and his widow was thereupon appointed keeper with a fee of twelrepence a day

for the house and sixpence for the garden. Only charwoman's wages, to the apprehension of the present time. But that the post was worth having is evident, for the next appointment is that of the shrewd statesman Robert Cecil, the future Earl of Salisbury, who, in 1603, was appointed "Keeper of Somerset House in the Strand."

This appointment reveals the curious fact that John Gerard—a famous surgeon and herbalist of the period—had a garden plot in the palace grounds, where he grew herbs and simples, flowers and fruit, with which he undertook to supply the Queen Consort on the renewal of his lease. But Gerard's tenancy ceased before 1611, when the whole garden was surrendered to the Queen.

At the accession of the Stuart dynasty, Somerset House had been assigned to Anne of Denmark, the somewhat coarse and unprepossessing wife of King James; and it was often filled by a noisy, carousing crew from her native land. The King of Denmark—the Queen's brother—had many a Royal bout of drinking here, with King James, whose wisdom was not proof against the seductions of the wine cup.

In honour of the Queen, it was determined to change the name of the palace to Denmark House, and by this name it appears in the official correspondence of the period. But the new name did not stick; and before long the Court conformed to popular usage, and Somerset House was once more in the ascendant.

In the time of this Danish Anne, Somerset House was very much altered and remodelled. The gardens were newly arranged, and planted with all kinds of salutary herbs, the services of William Goodrowse, serjeant-surgeon, in that respect being recompensed with the handsome fee of four hundred pounds. That excellent architect, Inigo Jones, took the buildings in hand, and, leaving the river-front unaltered, he remodelled the interior courts, and newly fronted the building towards the Strand. This last was the façade, familiar to our ancestors during the past century, and of which many prints are in existence, showing it as it then existed, battered, patched, and homely, but with some traces of former dignity and florid comeliness, although altogether neglected and forlorn.

After Queen Consort Anne's death at Hampton Court in 1619, Somerset House became once more an occasional lodging-

place for Ambassadors and princely guests, and was also occupied by a crowd of people more or less connected with the Court, from whom no doubt the under-keeper—then one Richard Brown—as well as his principal, Viscount Purbeck, received some kind of advantage. A great consternation there must have been among all these squatters when, in 1623, orders came to clear everybody out, and prepare the place for the reception of the Infanta of Spain, whom the Prince of Wales, then on his romantic Spanish expedition, was expected to bring home with him.

But there was a respite for all the crowd of genteel hangers-on, the gentlemen with cloaks and ruffs, and long swords, and the ladies in stomachers and stiff brocades—the Spanish marriage was off, and Somerset House was itself again. But the talk was now of the Prince's marriage with a daughter of France, and the affair was almost concluded, when the old King died, and his body was brought to Somerset House to lie there in State till it should be borne thence to Westminster Abbey. And when that melancholy business was finished, there was a general clearance to make the place ready for Henrietta Maria, the coming Queen.

A young and lively Queen at Somerset House turned the place almost upside down. She would have pastorals there, and all kinds of masques and diversions. And then the place became a sort of petty France, thronged with friars, priests, and French servants of all kinds, till King Charles, churlishly enough, packed off the bulk of the Queen's followers, and shipped them back to France. But mass was still performed in the little chapel, which had indeed been arranged for in the marriage treaty; and Capucin Fathers paced the green alleys of the stately gardens, and occupied themselves with planting and delving thereabouts. At a later date, the author of "Silva" mentions with approval, "a cloyster of the right French elm in the little garden near to Her Majesty's the Queen Mother's chapel at Somerset House, which were, I suppose, planted there by the industry of the French Fathers, incomparable for shade and delight."

Another notable figure in Henrietta's time was "Little Geoffrey," the Queen's dwarf, who one day fell out of a window at Somerset House, when "the Queen took it so heavily that she attired not herself that day." But the dwarf must have got over this sad mishap, if he be the same Geoffrey Hudson, who, at a later date,

while sharing the Queen's exile in France, challenged and shot one Mr. Cutts for making fun of him.

As might have been expected, the Roman Catholic Chapel and the priests caused much heart-burning among the jealous Protestant citizens of London, and the somewhat bigoted 'prentice boys more than once threatened to pull down the place. Still more indignation was felt when the chapel was reconstructed on a grander scale, in the florid Franco-Italian style then prevalent, and at a cost of four thousand pounds. In the same year, 1635, some one proposed to build a bathing-palace, a great floating-bath, and to moor it opposite Somerset House. But this project is only on the point of being realised in the present year of grace, 1890.

And then came the civil war, to hurry on which Somerset House had helped a little, from the unpopularity of poor Henrietta's devotions and diversions; and the place shared the fate of other Royal Palaces in being appropriated to public uses, and as lodgings for officers and soldiers of the Parliamentary army. But the Lord Protector's body lay there in state, and was honoured with a magnificent funeral procession to Westminster Abbey. Though some will have it that, anticipating the coming reaction, Oliver's friends conveyed the body away to a place of secret sepulture—a secret said to be known to an existing family of distinction, and that the corpse that underwent the magnificent funeral, and that was dug up and gibbeted at the Restoration, was really that of some obscure defunct during the troubled days that followed Oliver's death.

And Pepys tells us of a mutiny of soldiers at Somerset House, a formidable affair under the unsettled conditions prevailing, but which was accommodated by the promise of pay and provisions.

With the Restoration came back to the old palace Henrietta, older and sadder, and perhaps wiser than during her previous tenancy of Somerset House. She found the place all dilapidated and dismantled, and she set to work to rebuild the interior courts of the palace.

This by the Queen herself designed,
Gives us a pattern of her mind.

Thus writes Edmund Waller, who not many years before had written an eloquent ode on the death of Cromwell, in a poem upon Her Majesty's new buildings at Somerset House. The result was a

composite and mixed interior, with colonnades and openings of somewhat oriental appearance, an ensemble not without its charm when brightened up by cavaliers in their silken doublets, plumed hats, and fluttering ribbons, and by the beauties of the Court in the rich and elegant toilette of the period. Brightly before the windows, too, stretched the shining river; and the charm of the prospect and the commanding nature of the site is noted by our poet:

That the fair view her window yields,
The town, the river, and the fields,
Ent'ring beneath us we descry,
And wonder how we come so high.

Once more the Capucin Fathers were to be seen about the shaded walks of the garden; and the deserted chapel, where the Puritans we may be sure had spared little in the way of images and painted glass, once more resounded to the music of the sacred offices. The chapel, too, became the resort of the aristocratic members of the old faith, and the focus of a harmless propaganda. Burials, too, by especial favour, were allowed within its walls.

But the pleasant social Court of the Queen Mother was broken up, and Henrietta Maria departed to return no more. Then the palace was occupied by the much-neglected wife of Charles the Second. It was in her time that the barbarous persecution of the Catholics broke out under the pretext of a Popish plot; and at Somerset House, according to popular repute, that active magistrate, Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, was murdered; and several of the Queen's servants were executed on the slenderest evidence. After the death of Charles, the Queen abandoned her palace; and from that time the State apartments, desolate and unused, gradually passed into a state of ruin and decay.

During the greater part of the eighteenth century, Somerset House, or the habitable part of it, was occupied by the families of minor officials connected with the Court or Royal Service. One Carrington, a King's messenger, had apartments there, when the century was middle-aged, whose daughter married George Garrick, the brother of the famous David—his shadow, so to speak, and his factotum at old Drury—and George took up his residence with his father-in-law, and the names of several of his children appear in the Register of Baptisms of Somerset House Chapel. For the chapel was still a Chapel

Royal, converted to the established religion in 1711, with a resident chaplain, the Rev. Lewis Bruce holding that office in 1745, and preaching zealously against the evils of Popery, as evidenced in the lamentable rebellion then prevalent in Scotland. Marriages, too, were celebrated there, as well as baptisms, and, occasionally, burials still took place within its walls; but these celebrations seem to have been chiefly confined to those who were, or had been, officially connected with the place.

All this time, Somerset House was nominally the Queen's Palace; but the Queens of the reigning dynasty would have none of it. And in 1775, Buckingham House was bought and given to the Queen—honest Charlotte, the homely spouse of farmer George—instead of Somerset House, which was henceforth to be devoted to public purposes. Some beginning towards this end had already been made, for, in 1770, the second annual exhibition of the Royal Academy of Painting was held within the walls of old Somerset House—a long-drawn link, this, between past and present. The modest exhibition of those days did not disdain the crude productions of amateurs “of distinction,” and the Academicians actually apologise in their first catalogue for taking people's shillings—a measure only adopted in order to exclude improper characters. But, modest as was the show, it was graced with such names as Reynolds, Gainsborough, and, at a long distance behind, Wilson and Benj. West. Bartolozzi, too, appeared in chalks, and Angelica Kauffman, R.A., shows conspicuously in the catalogue, probably, like Pope Joan among the hierarchy, the solitary example of an Academician in petticoats; that is, as far as we have gone at present.

But in 1775, the old building came down with a clatter. For towards the end of 1775, the destroyers were let loose upon old Somerset House. Those portions of the structure which Inigo Jones had altered and Queen Henrietta Maria, had repaired, were still in a habitable condition. But the remains of Somerset's old palace, including the river front and an adjoining wing, had been unoccupied for more than three-quarters of a century. The roof had fallen in at places; the wind whistled and howled through broken windows, and howled through desolate corridors and gloomy entries. All this part was reputed to be haunted, as well it might be. Two great folding doors—reputed not to have

been opened within living memory—gave access to this gloomy abode. When these were broken open, they gave admittance to a long gallery overlooking the water-garden, all dusty and dismantled, but showing traces everywhere of its former Royal occupation. Tattered hangings rotted on the walls; fragments of regal canopies; broken morsels of gilded furniture were scattered here and there; the rags and tatters of the old monarchy strewed the floor; nothing had been touched since the days of the Stuarts; and presently the whole débris, which fell to dust at a touch, was buried in the ruins of the falling structure.

The King's architect, Sir William Chambers, made a clean sweep of the whole building. He built an embankment and terrace upon the site of the old garden—that garden which veterans, living in the early Victorian age, still remembered, reached by dark, winding steps leading down from the Strand, neglected, but full of repose, in solemn, peaceful contrast to the noisy, bustling street above.

In 1779, one of the sides of the quadrangle was completed, and, by 1790, the front facing the Strand was also finished. One solitary tradition, concerning the building of New Somerset House, has been handed down to posterity. A workman, it was said, fell from the roof, and would have been dashed to pieces on the pavement of the quadrangle below, but for his watch, which became jammed in one of the crevices of the stonework, and supported him till he was rescued from his perilous position. The watch was left there by the grateful workman as a kind of ex voto offering, and there it still remains, or did till lately.

Unluckily, however, this little story was discredited many years ago by evidence: that the watch dial was fixed in its place by somebody connected with the Royal Society, which occupied rooms in the opposite corner of the building, for the purpose of testing certain transit instruments. The question that remains is, who invented the story, and, while he was about it, why did he not make a better one.

While the Royal Society once occupied the corner to the left from the main entrance from the Strand, its doorway appropriately crowned with the head of Sir Isaac Newton, the Royal Academy had its quarters to the right, under the equally appropriate sign of Michael Angelo. And here for many years the annual exhibition

was continued till, outgrowing its quarters, the Academy removed to the buildings of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Originally, too, there was other human interest in the precincts of Somerset House. A lottery-office there was, suggesting hopes of future wealth in return for a moderate investment. There was a Privy Seal office, and the Privy Seal might be affixed to a lucrative sinecure; and in one corner was an office of lights and beacons, frequented by jovial sailors and humorous sea captains, while the same pleasant salt flavour attached to the Naval Transport Office.

But in the present day there are few cheerful associations attaching to Somerset House. In the old rooms of the Royal Society are kept the huge, fateful volumes which record your entrance into the world, and which, at some time or other, will as surely note your departure from it. But the Registrar-General records have a dead and gone suggestion about them; and no more cheerful prospect is offered by the entrance to the Probate Office in the opposite corner, a corner haunted by disconsolate widows and disappointed expectants of legacies. And a search for a will is not an enlivening experience. Nor the reading of a will when found, in the dull, cheerless room, at the long table, presided over by two lynx-eyed clerks, who keep a watch upon you lest you should purloin a document, or surreptitiously copy some of its contents. Yet even here a little bit of human nature sometimes crops up. As when Farmer Brown, his weather-beaten face almost purple with excitement, jumps up and shakes a will defiantly in the face of the presiding official. "This here aren't my uncle's real will; there's another, a juster one, I want to see that." In vain the clerk informs him, with pitiless logic, that there can be only one "last will and testament," and that only by obtaining revocation of the probate of the existing document from the Court, can any other will be propounded. Poor Brown is very little satisfied with this explanation. He is firmly convinced that a better will than this is in existence somewhere, and he wants to have it looked for, "that's all."

Adjoining, too, is the Legacy Office, the name of which rings more cheerfully in the ears. But then, instead of helping people to legacies, it is only occupied in hunting down the trail of unpaid duties, and perhaps coming upon somebody for a startling lump of money, long after the inheritance has been spent. And then there

is the main body of Inland Revenue, intent on following up defaulters, and rendering taxation more productive by their diligence, which means for the outside world having more to pay. No, at the best, the associations of, Somerset House are not of a gay or an agreeable character.

It should be remembered, too, that the west wing, in which the Inland Revenue is mainly located, and which was completed as recently as 1857, is beyond the limits of old Somerset House, and is built upon what was formerly part of the Savoy. And that the east wing, now occupied by King's College, was completed in 1829, after the designs of Smirke.

As a consequence of the steep natural declivity of the site towards the river, and the artificial level of the building, there is a considerable world below the surface at Somerset House, as anybody may judge who enters the quadrangle, where a group of something like statuary faces the visitor—figures which represent King George the Third, and the venerable Father Thames himself, figures which suggest a fountain, but which only preside over a yawning gulf in the way of an opening to the underground cellars. And in part of this underground world busy work is going on in the way of stamping, printing, and embossing the innumerable stamps of all kinds, which are used as well by the Post Office, the Courts of Law, and for general revenue purposes.

And in these lower regions, if anywhere, we may listen for faint echoes of the world that has passed away. Here should Seymour walk all ghastly from the scaffold; here the old ghosts of lords and dames,

Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping,
The Lady Janes and Joans repair,
And from the gallery stand peeping.

Where the chapel once was, and the tombs of the dead, the cloistered avenue, the physic garden, the tennis-court, the orchard, now presses thump, and machinery rattles. But how is it at night, when the busy world is gone, and the great, lone building is left to the policeman and night-watchman? Then, perhaps, we may picture the silent quadrangle as peopled with the shades of homeless wanderers who seek in vain their former haunts.

INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT.

THE copyrights and copy-wrongs of authors form an ancient and a fertile theme. It has at last touched the hearts

of American Congressmen to do something, but whether that something will altogether please the men of letters, may well be doubted. There is nothing very novel, however, about the International Copyright Bill, which, while we write, it is understood that the American House of Representatives have decided to adopt. It is very curious, by the way, that the Americans, who have always been so punctilious in the matter of patents—carefully preserving for the ingenious inventor a vested interest in the product of his hands—should until now have been so very indifferent to the vested interests of any man in the product of his brain. Still more remarkable is it that their laws carefully protect a man in the possession of land which he does not create, but do not equally protect him in the possession of a book which he does create.

We have the same inconsistency in this country, however, where private property in land is recognised in perpetuity, while private property in a patent or a copyright is recognised only for a limited, and in some cases an obviously inadequate, term of years. The worst of it is, too, that a patentee has to pay heavily for the privilege of enjoying the fruit of his own invention.

An author has not to pay for a title to his copyright, but he can only enjoy the right for forty-two years after the date of publication, or, alternatively, arrange that his heirs shall enjoy it for seven years after his death. What the American Bill proposes is, that British authors shall enjoy the same protection in the United States as American authors, provided that the books be set up, printed, and bound, wholly within the United States.

There is a fine touch of the Protectionist about this proposal. In effect, it amounts to an admission that the American Union cannot do without the intellect of the Mother Country, but will dispense with her handiwork wherever and whenever possible. To the British author it matters little, perhaps, where his book is printed, so long as he is secured in his share of the profit of the publication. But British authors are not always able to preserve their copyrights in their own hands; and British printers and publishers will by no means relish the idea of being compelled to reprint everything in America on which they desire to retain the copyright.

There was an alternative proposal in

President Cleveland's time, that foreign authors should be allowed to sell stamps, or certificates, to American publishers, empowering these last to issue specified numbers of copyrighted works. The proposal was ingenious; but it limited the author to a claim for ten per cent. of the selling price, while it did not allow him any voice in fixing the selling price or style of publication. The system must have been fatal to "editions de luxe."

The times have gone when a man spends a lifetime in preparing a book for publication, like the *Alcuin Bible* in the British Museum; but many a man still, happily for the human race, spends a lifetime in collecting materials for and in writing a book. Authorship was, for many a day, a bad trade, and even yet, it is a poor profession for all but the masters or popular idols.

It was so poor a trade in olden times that no one seemed to think it worth while to retain property-rights in literary work. The first author who had "copy-money" in England, is said to have been Dr. Henry Hammond, for his "Annotations on the New Testament." That was in 1653, and the publisher who gave the "copy-money" was Royston, the King's printer. Just about the same time, the first book published by subscription was issued in the form of a Polyglot Bible.

The story of Milton's "Paradise Lost" has often been told, and, usually, mis-told. As a matter of fact, Milton and his family received, from first to last, not five pounds, but eighteen pounds, for the copyright of three editions. This was not much, certainly; but, as the publisher resold the copyright for twenty-five pounds within seven years, it is a fair presumption that he had not found it a very profitable investment. And Milton was one of the first poets, if not the very first, to receive any copy-money at all for his works.

Such is the irony of fate that within fifty years or so after Milton's death, Bentley received one hundred guineas for editing the work for which the poet and his family received only eighteen pounds! While, still later, Bishop Newton netted six hundred and thirty pounds for editing the work anew.

"All this for a song!" as Cecil, Lord Burleigh, exclaimed, when Queen Elizabeth sent a hundred pounds to Edmund Spenser, then in the penury common to poets.

It is a common habit to comment on the folly and ignorance of publishers, but

it is safe to assume that they know their own business a great deal better than the critics can do. The bookseller who would not risk more than five pounds on a first edition of "Paradise Lost," was wise in his generation, for, as a matter of fact, his generation would not buy the poem.

William Taylor, of Paternoster Row, who gave sixty pounds for "Robinson Crusoe," was more adventurous, and also more successful. It is said that he cleared fully one thousand pounds out of the earlier editions of a book of which editions are now innumerable. Yet, if Taylor had been far-seeing, he would have clung to the copyright to the last.

There is this interest about "Robinson Crusoe" in connection with American publishers and copyrights—that it was the first book, or one of the first books, of which "pirated" editions were circulated during its earlier successes. Four such "pirates" are said to have been floated during the first year of its publication.

There was no real protection against such knavery until the Copyright Act of Queen Anne was passed; and even then the "pirates" merely moved across St. George's Channel. It is not generally known, perhaps, that the Act of Union destroyed a nest of literary pirates, as well as a Dublin Parliament—a fact which some people would do well to remember when inclined to denounce the Irish Union.

That publishers occasionally make mistakes, is but to say that they are human. Dodsley, it is said, refused to give Sterne fifty pounds for "Tristram Shandy," and eventually was glad to pay him six hundred and fifty pounds for the right to the second edition only.

Some of them ran to the other extreme in paying Oliver Goldsmith for works which he never even began. Dodsley made another mistake in refusing to have anything to do with Miss Burney's first novel, "Evelina." She eventually sold it to another publisher for twenty pounds; and he must have made hundreds, if not thousands, out of it.

The whole history of literature shows that there is as much uncertainty about publishing as about authorship. No one could foresee that when Professor Robertson accepted six hundred pounds for his "History of Scotland," he would by that work make it worth while for a publisher to give him four thousand five hundred pounds for his "History of Charles the Fifth," a now much less known book.

Gibbon had, if we mistake not, to bring out the first volume of his "Decline and Fall" at his own expense; yet he is said to have cleared six thousand pounds before he finished for the copyright. He would have made more had he retained the copyright.

Then, contrast Hume, who received two hundred pounds for the first two volumes of his "History of England," with Macaulay, who received twenty thousand pounds for the first two volumes of his.

The fine old economic law of supply and demand operates in the industry of book-making, as in every other branch of human effort. The element of speculation enters there also, as it does into all branches of money-making. Luck counts for much in the literary world. It is certainly bad luck for an author—who makes a hit, with the chance of making a fortune in the Old World—to find his work—his pride, and hope, and joy—being sold by the hundred thousand in America, without the return of a single penny to him.

This is piracy and robbery, and it is proper to say that it is a system not supported by the respectable class of American publishers. What American publishers, as a class, say is, that the American people are only buyers of cheap books; that they will not give the prices asked and obtained for popular works in this country. That being so, they claim the privilege of reproducing English works in a manner to suit the American market; and that is why the new copyright law makes it a condition that the works in which exclusive property is claimed, shall be mechanically put together in America.

It is not an altogether agreeable condition; but half a loaf is better than no bread, and English authors may welcome any relief from the depredations of the pirates.

WISTFUL.

DEAR, it is hard to stand
So near thy life, yet so apart;
So near—I think so near—thine heart;
So near that I could touch thine hand,
And yet so far I dare not take
That hand in mine for love's dear sake!

So near that I can look my fill
At stated times upon thy face;
So far that I must yield a place
To others, sore against my will!
So near that I can see thee smile,
So far, my poor heart aches the while!

Dear, it is hard to know
 Whate'er the stress, the storm, the strife,
 The fret, the sadness of thy life,
 I have no power, no right to show
 Love in my heart, love on my lips,
 To comfort thee in life's eclipses ;

No right to claim before the rest,
 The privilege to weep with thee ;
 No right, across life's stormy sea,
 To bid thee welcome to my breast ;
 No right to share thy hopes, thy fears,
 Through all the weary, weary years.

Dear, it is hard to feel
 That bliss may meet thee, full and fair,
 Wherein poor I can have no share ;
 That thy widest future may reveal
 The joys of harvest manifold,
 While I stand lonely in the cold.

Dear, it is hard. But God doth know
 How leal the heart that beats for thee ;
 It is enough, enough for me
 To love thee. Let the future show
 Love can live on for its own sake,
 Though eyes may weep, though heart may
 ache !

THE LAND OF DUMPLINGS.

UNTIL within comparatively recent years the Land of Dumplings was almost a terra incognita. Adventurous sportsmen, it is true, knew it as a paradise where pheasants and partridges ran about begging to be killed, and where, at the risk of laying the seeds of consumption and getting immediate rheumatic fever, unlimited wild fowl might be shot in the marshes and fens. But, by the rest of the world, this land was held to contain no attractions that could make it worth the trouble of a four hours' journey from town. The scenery was believed to be dreary, flat, treeless, and bleak ; the east wind blew the whole year round ; the people were but one degree removed from savagedom.

In short, this country was only known to civilised people by certain specialities it produced in the way of edibles, some of which were appreciated by dwellers in Cockneydom itself, while others could only be relished, to say nothing of digested, by the barbarous natives of the land. Apoplectic-looking turkeys, thirst-producing bloaters, biffins—which, to the uninitiated, look like rotten apples squashed flat—are exported in enormous quantities from this region. Dumplings—most characteristic product—are but seldom met with outside the land of their invention. And here it should be premised that these delicacies must never be confounded with the vulgar snet-dumpling and the insipid apple-dumpling. The dumpling proper is made "off the bread," being neither more nor less

than a solid ball of leavened dough, boiled instead of baked. It may be eaten either as a savoury or a sweet. In the former case it must be consumed with goose-gravy, in the latter, treacle is the correct accompaniment. As with olives, oysters, and caviare, an education—a liberal one—is required, to learn to love the dumpling. Some persons never acquire this taste, but are compelled to look on in envy and admiration as the native puts away a cannon-ball of boiled dough, washed down with two or three tablespoonfuls of the best "Golden Syrup."

A few years ago, unfortunately for the preservation of its quaint and original character, the Land of Dumplings was discovered. A learned Doctor wrote a book about it, under the more euphonious title of "Arcady." Then a poet wrote some verses about a certain spot in that land, which a composer set to music, and the song became the rage, inasmuch that people were inspired with a longing to visit the place for themselves. It is my belief that nine-tenths of them made their wills, and set their affairs in order, before they took the train for "Poppyland."

Lastly, it was discovered that there was a lake-country situated in the Land of Dumplings, which, if not so romantic and picturesque as the lake-country in the north, was more quaint, more uncommon, and, at that time, more free from the trail of the tourist. Straightway, so many books and articles were written about it, that already quite a respectable literature exists on the subject of these "Broads," as they are called by the ignorant dwellers on their shores.

By this time the reader, who is blessed with a quick natural perception, may, perhaps, have guessed that the Land of Dumplings is also, and indeed more generally, known as the County of Norfolk. It is, alas, rapidly losing its primitive character ; all its little peculiarities are being rubbed off, and people, country, and language alike will soon, it is to be feared, be ground into one smooth, commonplace, uninteresting likeness to other people, other countries, and languages. In the more remote parts of the Land are, however, still to be found spots untouched as yet by the tourist, unspoilt by the Board School.

Norfolk, thanks to its long isolated condition, has become in some sort a region by itself. Like all the larger English counties, it contains a variety of nations, speaking a variety of dialects, within its

borders. Of course, pre-eminent are two types—the big flaxen-haired Saxon, with his strong body and slow wits, and the small, lithe Norman, swarthy-faced and shrewd. To these may be added the red-haired Danes, a larger proportion of whom are to be found on the eastern coast than in any other part of the kingdom.

In 1331, Phillippa of Hainault brought over a large number of Flemish weavers, and established them in Norwich and the neighbourhood, notably at the little village which, to this day, bears the name of Worstead, though its weavers are a thing of the past. Two centuries later, no less than four thousand Dutch and Flemings fled from the persecutions of the Duke of Alva, and settled at Norwich, where, until within quite recent times, a Dutch service has been held on Sundays. Add to these a considerable number of Huguenots who came over after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and it will be seen that the population of Norfolk is a veritable "olla podrida" of nationalities.

In spite, however, of the strangely mixed blood that runs in the veins of the native, there are certain habits and characteristics which are shared by all the more primitive inhabitants of the Land of Dumplings. In the first place, then, it must be owned that, in spite of the ennobling influence of Board Schools, the Northfolk are still remarkable for their credulity and superstition. Their belief in ghosts, witchcraft, and the evil eye, seems quite ineradicable.

A curious superstition, and one which does not, I believe, exist in other parts of the kingdom, is that which has for its object the growth of stones. A labourer's wife once pointed out to me a large stone which stood by her cottage door, and solemnly assured me that it was twice as big as it had been when placed there a few years before. Moreover, a most respectable farmer of my acquaintance, a churchwarden to boot, was accustomed to argue that stones must grow; otherwise, how was it that a fresh crop came up every year and had to be picked off the land?

In spite of his credulity, however, the native of the Land of Dumplings is held by his admirers to possess rather more than his share of mother-wit. The following little incident, which occurred during the formation of the first militia regiment, in Norfolk, does not altogether bear out this theory. The initial attempt to drill the

yokels was given up in despair, because it was found impossible to make them understand and remember which was the right and which the left leg. At length, some bright genius hit upon the idea of tying a hay-band round one leg and a straw-band round the other. Then, to the cry of "hay-leg, straw-leg," drill went swimmingly.

One characteristic that the Northfolk have in common with the noble savage, is their inability—or it may be objection, to show surprise or delight. With them, "middling," or "tidy," are the highest terms of commendation. A small boy, employed to weed in the garden, was once presented with some delicious French sweets, which his master was unable to appreciate himself. When they had disappeared, he was asked how he liked them. "They ain't so mucky," was his reply. The probability is that his vocabulary contained no positive terms of approbation.

In spite of his stolidity, however, the Norfolk man is talkative enough after his own peculiar fashion. When you begin a conversation with him, his words come out so slowly and grudgingly that you fancy each will be the last. But you speedily discover your mistake. His fount of conversation is like one of those tiny rock springs in which water rises and falls one drop at a time. The words of your interlocutor have, after a time, much the same effect upon your mind as the continual dropping of water has upon the rock.

The tongue of the Norfolk woman, on the other hand, runs without any let or hindrance. She is a past mistress of invective, understands dramatic effect, and hurls about long words with a fairly correct aim. She prefers "ruminate" to "think;" "accumulate" to "save;" and "congregate" to "meet together." A few lapses she is guilty of. A row or a muddle is expressively described by her as a "reg'lar rendez-vous," sometimes varied by a "how-d'ye-do." The most dread and mystic of all her expressions, however, is the passive verb "to be quackled," which seems to mean to be choked, or suffocated.

The Northfolk, whether male or female, are apt to pride themselves upon their humour and their power of repartee, the latter being usually of the "tu quoque" order, and of about the same consistency as their own dumplings. The words "rum," "funny," and "ridiculous," are

used to describe anything that is strange or objectionable. For example, in a wet week towards the end of August you may often hear the remark, "Funny weather for the harvest, isn't it?" while the most desperate blackguard in the village is generally termed "a funny man." A difficult or unaccustomed piece of work is "a rum job;" and objectionable behaviour on the part of a neighbour is stigmatised as "quite ridic'ous."

Churlishness is rather a part of the Norfolk labourer's manner than of his nature. To find churlishness at its height we must go to the small farmer, who takes a genuine pleasure in refusing anything he is asked, even where it would cost him nothing to grant the request. He refuses to allow the primroses to be picked off his banks, the blackberries off his hedges, the watercress out of his ditches. One brilliant specimen of this class was once asked to give some Christmas (holly) for the church decorations. The answer he returned was simple, but sufficient: "Parson should grow his own Christmas."

In the villages that are thickly scattered over the surface of the Land of Dumplings there is no social life. The Squire may or may not be on speaking terms with the Parson; there are always plenty of matters for them to squabble over. The Parson has nothing in common with the (usually) ignorant farmers, who regard him simply as a devourer of tithes. A great gulf is fixed between the yeoman and the tenant farmer; as also between the occupier of five hundred acres, and the occupier of one hundred. The proprietors of the little general shops hold themselves superior to the labourers, while even among the latter there are distinct "sets." The shepherds, team-men, and barn-men, or rather their wives and children, do not care to be intimate with the families of the thatcher, the rat-catcher, or the men who "go with the engines."

Of amusement there is next to none in village life. The young men may play a little cricket between "haysel" and harvest, when the days are long and work is over in good time. There is probably an occasional concert or meeting during the winter; but, as a rule, church and chapel-going forms the only excitement in the lives of the peasants. The Norfolk labourer considers himself an excellent judge of a sermon. On a Sunday afternoon (he seldom puts in an appearance in the morning) he lounges through the

prayers, takes a languid interest in the hymns; but if the preacher is anything of an orator, he will hang upon his lips, and discuss the sermon afterwards with as much interest as his betters might a new novel or a new play.

That the Land of Dumplings has produced many great minds of widely differing kinds may be proved by merely pointing to such names as Nelson, Rajah Brooke of Sarawak, Dr. Crotch, the composer and theorist, Harriet Martineau, the "clever Taylors" with their brilliant descendants, Mrs. Austin and Lady Duff Gordon, to say nothing of the Norwich school of painters, "Old Crome," the two Cotmans, Stannard, Stark, and others of lesser note.

It must be allowed that the natives have a sufficiently high opinion of their own intellect and virtue. They are fond of calling their southern neighbours by the opprobrious name of "Suffolk Sillies;" while, if any crime of unusual magnitude is committed in their midst, they calmly attribute it to "some furriner from the Shires."

To turn from people to places, it may be said that the Land of Dumplings contains almost as many types of landscape as it does of race. The only kind of scenery of which it possesses no sample is the rocky and mountainous. Against this, however, we may set the scenery of the "Broads," which is certainly unique in its way. The old superstition, that Norfolk is an ugly county, is now nearly exploded; but if any one still believes in it, let him pay a visit to Cromer and its neighbourhood — the Poppyland of the poet — and we prophesy that he will speedily become a convert to the true faith.

Of late years, railway contractors, builders, and tourists have done their best to ruin Cromer; but they can never succeed in quite destroying her charm, at least in the eyes of the natives. Cromer will always remain the Paradise where good Norfolk Dumplings go when they die. True, the good old days are past, when the nearest station was twenty miles away, and the visitor drove from Norwich to Cromer, on a well-horsed coach, through the dusk of the summer evening, changing horses at that most old-world of little towns — Aylsham, finally being turned out into Jetty Street in pitch darkness, and left to find his way to his lodgings as best he might. Those lodgings

were, in all probability, in the churchyard, and the address of the visitor was "John Smith, Esq., The Churchyard, Cromer," which was rather suggestive of an epitaph on the door-plate.

It must be admitted that in those good old days, the drains were in a somewhat primitive state; there were, occasionally, free fights over the one butcher's one leg of mutton; while at five o'clock p.m., the announcement might be made that there was no more milk in Cromer. But what mattered such trifles as these, in comparison with the delights of absolute freedom, life-giving air, hard white sands that presented the most perfect of playgrounds, and woods and heath-covered downs, that stretched down to the edge of the cliffs! The only wonder was that the serpent was kept out of Eden so long. In this case, it was Adam who fell; and the apple was a golden one. Cromer is now like a country beauty, who has tasted the admiration of smart visitors from town; she has grown self-conscious, and lost much of her natural charm. Hard though it be to say it, in July and August Poppyland is just a little vulgar. Blazers and deerstalkers promenade the shady lanes, while the lighthouse hills, and the beautiful woods of Felbrigg, Beeston, and Sherringham grow crops of gingerbeer bottles and paper bags.

In September and October Cromer comes to her senses, and then the natives repair to her, to spend the fine Indian summer of the east-country among her beautiful surroundings. Therefore, you who read these lines, if you be of alien blood, keep away at this season of the year. Let us who have known and loved our Cromer in her early freshness and innocence, enjoy what is left to her of charm in her old age.

A CUP OF MALVOISIE.

WITH the name of Malmsey, or Malvoisie, comes back to our remembrance that unfortunate Clarence, who, loving good liquor well in life, had, in death, rather too much of it. Some say that—half in jest, and half in earnest—he chose his manner of death himself, in order, "for once," as he said, "to have enough." Be it as it may, the name is suggestive. Reflected in the clear liquid that to-day is so rarely heard of in our beer-loving island, strange fleeting pictures seem to come and go.

The dark chamber in the Tower, and the fair face of "false, perjured Clarence," melt into the green arches of Sherwood Forest; and we see the jolly smile of Friar Tuck over his venison pasty, and flask of Malvoisie; or, again, some old baronial castle gate rises before us, and a fair lady hands a stirrup cup of good Malvoisie to her knight before he rides away. A flavour of romance lingers round the wine, and to many of us it is the only flavour known. A cup of Malvoisie is called for in a new old ballad, much as a roasted peacock is dished up by a modern medieval romancer. And yet in this prosaic nineteenth century, you may enter the poorest wine-shop of a certain little Portuguese village, and calling for "um copo de Malvasia," take a draught of a clear brown liquid, the rare aroma of which will recompense you for your fatigue in search of it, and strengthen your inner man for further exertion beneath a Portuguese sun, while leaving your brain as cool as if you had drunk water.

Observe with what generosity we lay all this information at the feet of the gentle reader! And yet what dust we swallowed; what pounds of our too solid flesh did melt; and what aching feet were contained in our boots, by the time we subsided into the creaking wicker chairs, among the dust and cobwebs which formed an æsthetic haze about the bottles of good liquor in Agostinho Gomes' wine-cellar!

It was a brilliant September afternoon, when John V. Robinson—or, as he was frequently styled by his intimates, "Melancholy Jacques," on account of the "most humorous sadness" with which "the sundry contemplation of his travels" furnished him—set forth from Cintra on foot, in quest of the village of Collares, and of the marvels which might lie upon the road, accompanied, instructed, and enlivened by the author of this paper.

Away up in the sunlight, shining above the pines and the giant boulders on the mountain side, was the castle tower of Pena, and but little below were the battlemented walls of the Moorish castle.

Far down the valley rolled the waves of vegetation: vine trellises hung heavy with fruit, and, through their green tendrils, left glimpses of heaps of scarlet tomatoes lying gathered together on the earth; and between the mountains and the valleys—looking away over the bare, scorched plain, intersected by gleaming roads, towards the

glittering bosom of the Atlantic—nestled the little town of Cintra, fair to see, as we saw it from a bend of the road before losing it from view.

"Cintra is very much like the Sleeping Beauty just awaking," quoth melancholy Jacques; "only it is a thousand pities that they ever disturbed her slumbers."

"How so, good Monsieur Melancholy? Beauty asleep is a fair sight, but apt to grow monotonous; beauty awake may be useful as well as ornamental."

"I have always had my doubts about the advisability of awaking Sleeping Beauties when they have attained such a ripe age as that one in the fairy tale. The young-old lady would probably become conscious that her manners and customs were as far behind the age as her costume, and, bent upon an outward reformation at all hazards, would cut off her superfluous hair and do it up in a bang or a frizz, or whatever may be the present name, and put on paint and powder in order to resemble her more modern sisters; but, not being to the manner born, would probably out-Herod Herod, squeeze her waist into fourteen inches, and wear large plaids of violent colours."

"And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went,
In that new world which is the old,"

quoted I.

"What an insult to the shade of Tennyson to imagine the lovely princess going over the hills, with her lover's arm enfolding a fourteen inch waist clothed in a startling plaid. But what has she to do with Cintra?"

"She is Cintra in the flesh. Look at those grey-battlemented heights, where the ivy and geranium grow up into trees and bushes on the walls. Look at those terraced gardens climbing the hill-side; cisterns empty and moss-grown; seats where the monks sat in the shade of their chestnut-trees, discussing the fortunes of Vasco de Gama and the possibility of a new world beyond the sea."

"Away behind the town rise the old palace walls in their Moorish architecture, grey with age. Convent and quinta, cottage and street, all date from a previous age of culture; and here are the traces of the long slumber that fell upon the place, in the broken walls, and deserted palaces, grass-grown walks, moss-covered statues and defaced azuleijos. A beauty Cintra was, and is; but, either she should not have fallen asleep, or never waked."

"It was probably the shriek of the railway-engine which broke the spell, and awoke the beauty from her slumbers; but to my mind she is none the worse for being awakened."

"None the worse? She has been dead to the world too long to remember the rules of good taste, and is decking herself with hideous gewgaws, and ruthlessly tearing away the ancient ornaments which suited her so well. Where is the beautiful fountain whose streams fell into sculptured marble shells in the market-place? Gone, to make room for the omnibuses, like locomotive four-post beds, which jostle the carts before the palace-gates. Look at the villas which crowd round the railway-station! Stucco atrocities! And did any other country ever dream of painting its houses in broad stripes of glaring colours all over? A red house, painted all glaring scarlet, may tone down in time, to the grief of the native Portuguese; a blue one fades into grey; a green one—well, even that, if it be not too verdant, may pass; but stripes——!"

The idea, and the sight in the distance of various eligible residences adorned in this manner, with stripes of violent colours of about half a yard in width, was always too much for the equanimity of John V. Robinson, who, turning his back upon these abominations, put on the pace so energetically that it was not until he was half-way up the steep hill of Seteais, or seven sighs, that the infirmities of the flesh became manifest to him, and he discovered that he was out of breath.

It did not improve his humour that just at this moment the trotting of donkeys' hoofs was heard, mixed with the harsh, unmusical tones of the Portuguese female voice; and round the corner swept a typical Cintra cavalcade. Evidently visitors from Lisbon for the day, and "doing" Pena, Montserrat, and the lions of the place. The ladies were, as usual, all seated on the wrong side of their mules in saddles without horns or stirrups, and with wooden rails, and flopped helplessly and inelegantly up and down with every step of the animals. The latest Paris fashions, according to Portuguese interpretation, adorned their persons, and I involuntarily thought of my companion's description of the awakened beauty as the violent colours and patterns, and hideously unbecoming costumes, jogged past me.

"Horrible!" ejaculated melancholy Jacques, with a sigh. "Now you behold

the fruits of modern civilisation! A hundred years ago these *donnas* would have had short petticoats, exposing their feet; and mantillas, or kerchiefs, half concealing the face; so that you only saw a pair of bright eyes and imagined the rest. Hence the tradition of the beauty of the women of the Peninsula. Now they cover their feet, which are often the only beauty they possess, and expose their faces, which would be better hidden. My friend, the *senhora*, who rode last and whose donkey was most heavily weighted in that cavalcade, is the proud possessor of a moustache, which you may envy, but can't emulate. . . . And they had been feasting upon garlic, too," he concluded, pensively, as I continued silent.

His innuendoes, with regard to my *hir-sute* appendages, were beneath contempt.

"Hah!" I exclaimed at length, with malignant joy, as a certain well-known sound struck upon my ear. "Now we are coming up with a relic of the past. Make much of it, for I am sure it has suffered no change for the last two thousand years."

I was too much excited to trouble about a few cyphers in a date. With every turn of the road the noise came nearer.

The sound in question is an indescribably-hideous discordant wail, rising from a groan to a screech, and sufficient to delude the inexperienced traveller into the belief that he has heedlessly wandered into one of the back lanes of purgatory. A few more turns of the road and our voices are drowned now in the rising and falling din, and we come upon a great cloud of dust, through which, as through a halo, oozes this distracting howling.

It is produced, as well I know, by that ancient and poetically-rudimentary creation, a Portuguese country cart, or rather carts, for there are four of them, piled high with furze and bracken for fuel; each drawn by two oxen, and rolling upon two wooden wheels, composed, apparently, of rounded blocks, with a hole in the middle. At every turn of the wheel, the hard edges of the unpainted, unoiled wood, grating upon one another, run through the whole excruciating gamut.

Meanwhile, the waggoners walked behind, courteously greeting us.

They were calm and unassuming—not puffed up by any unseemly pride, although they must have known that no other such unearthly groanings could be heard for miles around. Their carts were in good

travelling condition. They made themselves heard. Luck must follow.

It was in vain, some years ago, that some unpatriotic Portuguese pretended that the ears of his countrymen could be offended by this music, and actually legislated against it, forbidding the squeak with the cart, and the cart with the squeak.

It was no use. A cart without a squeak was contemptible, not to be thought of; and the law fell into abeyance, and the *carrossa* squeaks triumphant.

This music had resounded "through the heart of these lone hills" for generations; and I eloquently discoursed upon the subject to John V. Robinson, and begged him not to hurry on on my account, but to remain and wallow in antiquarian delight, while I went on before to find the village of *Collares*.

He gazed at me with lack-lustre eye, and then suddenly went mad, dashing past the astonished waggoners with a series of flying leaps, and never stopping until he had put at least half-a-mile between them and him.

By the time I reached him he was apparently engaged in an animated conversation with an inoffensive-looking stranger.

I should have taken the latter for an Englishman at once; but John V. Robinson was accustomed to say that there did not exist a modern Portuguese who, given the possibility, could resist the temptation of dressing himself like an English caricature.

I knew to the contrary; but with characteristic amiability forbore to argue the point, particularly as John V. Robinson was a bigger man than I. I always admire true modesty; and when I meet a man of very strong opinions, and fists, a still small voice within me always admonishes me to be gentle and kindly with that man, and respect sincere convictions wherever I find them.

Rounding off a magnificent period in fluent Portuguese, of which the component parts appeared to be a little French, and a good deal of bad Italian, John V. Robinson remarked casually for my benefit in English: "I am just asking how much farther it is to *Collares*."

"Oh, is that it?" exclaimed the stranger in an unmistakeable English tone. "I could not think what you were driving at. No; it is not very much farther. I have just been in at *Montserrat*, and am

going on to Collares; perhaps I may be of some use to you." He pointed below, to where the towers of Montserrat peeped out from among the verdure, and as we walked on gave us little bits of information as to the groups of houses or solitary villas on the way.

The road wound round the serra, sometimes sheltered by branching oak and cork trees, all draped by hare's-foot ferns; and here and there where a cool stream came rushing down the hillside, a fountain, ornamented with *asuleijos* in the ancient Moorish fashion, offered refreshment, and the stone seats beside it rest.

It rather added to our enjoyment when seated in a cool shaded corner, made cooler by the soft drip and flow of water, and looking out over the wealth of vegetation in the valleys and combs, to see the great sunburnt, desolate plain beyond, stretching between the serra and the sea, where the hot air quivered over the burned earth in a scorching glare.

Here, where we sat, a cool breeze swept down from the hillside. How deliciously the pines swayed to and fro! how soft the slow monotonous drip of the water!

Had Don Joao de Castro, who built that strange old mansion yonder, and who had made his quinta on the very loveliest and steepest spur of the mountain—had he ever stopped to drink at this fountain centuries ago? He seemed to emerge from the shadows before my eyes, mounted on an Arab charger, with heavy brass stirrups like slippers all embossed with curious workmanship; and beside the Don a lovely lady, who cried to him in a strange, harsh voice, mingled with wails of grief:

"I say, old man, are you going to sleep here all day? There's that atrocious din of the cart-wheels coming near us. I'm off."

Had I been dozing? Confused and stiff, with the Don Joao de Castro and the lovely lady fading before the dusty road and the musical cart, I plodded after my companions.

The road grew dustier and hotter, and we hot and dusty with it: ever whiter as to costume and redder as to countenance at every step. Faster grew the pace, for it was down-hill now, and the carts were close upon us. Hill after hill was rounded, till, at last, turning a corner, we came upon a little village lying close in the hollow of the mountain, surrounded by quintas, orchards, and gardens.

Trees here hung heavy with fruit, and

roses climbed the walls and laid their cool, soft yellow cheeks languidly against the stones while they looked down upon the dusty traveller.

We followed our new companion to a sort of little square before the principal church. It looked as if it might be a market-place, but was not; for Collares does not even boast of a market. All her fruit and wine is packed into carts, or, on big baskets on donkeys' backs, and sent away around the serra to Cintra and Lisbon and such-like highly-civilised localities.

I looked in vain for an inn, or Casa de Pasto, as they are called;* but our new companion, with the serene confidence, motioned us towards a kind of shed, or cellar, dark and frowy-looking even in that brilliant sunshine.

"What is in here?" asked John V. Robinson, sternly, stopping before the threshold, for he mistrusted that this young man was about to attempt some foolishness, and call it a practical joke.

"In here? The best wine of Collares. Oh Agostinho! Oh Senhor Agostinho!" and our friend entered, calling upon the name of the owner of this Arcadian bower.

A fat little man, with a merry round face and black eyes, came trotting towards us from the darkness.

"Bons dias, meus senhores! Tenha a bondade de entrar!" said he. "We are even now making the Muscatel wine. Would the senhores care to see the process?"

"Tenha paciencia, senhor!" said our new companion, with prudent gravity. "We will taste the wine first, and see the process after."

Senhor Agostinho laughed, his little black eyes twinkling, and his little black moustache curling up on his fat cheeks.

We looked around us for seats. Our eyes, unaccustomed to the darkness, could at first distinguish nothing but tuns and barrels; and then, as we turned our backs on the blazing doorway, where the light looked almost like white fire framed in blackness, we saw that high up the walls on both sides, and reaching almost to the bare, time-darkened rafters, were rows upon rows of bottles, dirty, covered with dust and cobwebs, and bearing labels of a more or less ancient date.

On one little shelf were a couple of

* Since this was written a grand new hotel has been started.

glasses, and another glass and a corkscrew were produced from some other corner.

An old wicker chair, such as are made in all the country side, was carefully adjusted to the unevenness of the floor, a three-legged stool was hunted up, and a packing-box stood on one end, and being thus luxuriously provided, Agostinho produced various bottles of curious liquors, which we, with all due gravity, made trial of.

"So this is the ancient Malvoisie—how do you call it here, Malvasia?" asked melancholy Jacques. "Surely that word means 'badly emptied.' Is it not so?"

"Agostinho tells me," said our new friend, "that the origin of this name was the discovery of a half-emptied cask, which had been forgotten, with the lees still at the bottom. This half-cask of liquor, 'malvasia'—badly emptied—having had longer time than usual on the lees, was found to have a particular flavour, and took its name from the accident. But whether this wine is really only of Portuguese origin, or whether the name is derived from another source, I am ignorant."

"In all cases of lack of information," I announced magisterially, "the ardent enquirer should write to 'Notes and Queries.' Just request information as to who paid the bill for that butt of Malmsey which Shakespeare gives us to understand was kept in the Tower, next door to Clarence's prison, and which was unlawfully diverted from its original purpose. You will see that some zealous seeker for, and disseminator of, useful knowledge will find a copy of the bill, with the name of the consignor, the place where the wine came from, and instructions as to the disposal of the 'returned empty.'"

Declining Agostinho's farther offers of Collares wine, Donna Branca, etc., etc., we announced ourselves now ready to see the process of the wine-making.

Agostinho therefore led the way through the barrels and boxes of his cellar to a dark little house behind.

How many years, or how many centuries, have passed since first these old stone troughs were placed there, who can say? They are dark and worn with age, and above them is a round tub, into which great heaps of grapes are being flung.

Agostinho gives us a bunch to taste. They are warm from the sunshine, and the full fruity flavour of the Muscatel is delicious to the taste. But, on the whole, I see the wisdom displayed by that young

man who said: "We will drink of the wine first, and see it made after."

A lively, dark-eyed Portuguese, with bare legs and feet, is standing up there in the tub preparing to dance upon the fruit, and squelch, squelch go his feet in the juice, and we see the wine beginning to gush out into the stone troughs below.

Some accidental chain of reasoning, curiously enough, set me calculating the present price of soap in the village, and wondering whether the strong symptoms of hydrophobia manifested by many of the Portuguese are indigenous to the race.

Quoth melancholy Jacques:

"Alas for lesser knowledge. One may drink, depart, and yet partake no venom, for his knowledge is not infected; but if one present the abhorred ingredient to his eye, make known how he hath drunk——"

"Oh, nonsense! fermentation cleanses all that," says our new friend, cheerfully. "I wonder how many vintages have passed since this wine-press was first erected! Look at that screw—eight feet high, at least, and as thick as a man's body—that should have seen good service, from its colour."

"It is very likely that these people do not know. It is most difficult to get the country people here to tell a date—they cannot read or write, as a rule—nor remember figures for long."

"It was Muscatel that Petruchio drank at his wedding," quoth melancholy Jacques. "But that will have come from Italian vines."

"Friends, let us be going. September days are short, and we have to foot it back to Cintra. There should be a moon; but Madame Phœbe is proverbially inconstant. Let us say good night, and be off. Adeus, Senhor Agostinho. Alé outra vez."

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vallant*," "*A Faire Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVI. PUZZLED FRIENDS.

A WEDDING in a country place always gives much food for conversation. Indeed, the couple about to be wedded afford such an endless subject for friendly argument and discussion, that they deserve the thanks

of the small communities to which they belong for venturing on the unknown sea of matrimony.

The halo of mystery which had settled round Elva's first engagement made the announcement that she was engaged to Walter Akister, and that the marriage was to take place almost immediately, all the more interesting, and worthy of this full and minute discussion.

Mrs. Eagle Bennison was at her best, and, we might almost say, Miss Heaton at her worst. The former, because love and marriage were subjects she was well informed about, and the latter, because she was now sure that Herbert meant to marry Amice. She hoped, by abusing the one sister, to show her brother how to avoid the other.

George Guthrie had made his one attempt to stop Elva, and was now impenetrable when questioned by his cousin. He was painfully conscious of feeling that something was wrong, and yet quite unable to say what. That Elva was throwing away her happiness he did not doubt; but it was not worth while to argue this out with Mrs. Eagle Bennison, especially now that the day was settled, and that the female tongues were so happy over the "Do you think?" of conjecture.

The Squire's wife, in the fulness of her heart, had offered Court Garden and all it contained to forward the marriage. It is so easy to be intensely generous when you are quite, quite sure your offers will be rejected.

"My dear George, you will be immensely useful to the Kestells. My choicest flowers are going down for the wedding-breakfast. At least, I have offered them; but I thought you would just see, before I order them to be cut, whether Lord Cartmel had not already sent enough. Besides, Mr. Kestell can afford to order them from Covent Garden, and it does ruin one's greenhouse for the rest of the spring if one strips it of flowers at this time."

George was in his most perverse mood.

"I assure you, dear coz, that Lord Cartmel is just now most busy calculating the relative weight of oxygen and hydrogen in so many square feet. He then means to divide the one by the other and bring them to something else. There is not a chance of his thinking of flowers."

"But that stupid Betta, won't she think of it? However, you'll see, George; and do your best to save my flowers, there's a good fellow."

"Indeed, I will. I don't think the bride or the bridegroom will care much. Walter Akister has no more idea of admiring the beautiful than a buffalo; and Elva, well she is somewhat distrait I notice. Is that the right thing for a bride to be?"

"Ab, yes!" said the good lady, lifting her eyes to the ceiling. "I remember— Oh, George, such memories are sacred!"

"Of course, except on special occasions, never brought out, I suppose, from the sacred shrine. Never mind me, cousin, if you have the least wish to air these memories. I am a bachelor, you know, so I haven't the ghost of an idea what nuptial feelings may be. I have the logical mensurative faculty which Carlyle despises; you, on the contrary, recognise symbolic worth; you can see, in Walter Akister, now that he is about to become the husband of a fair woman, all the worth which for years has been hidden from you and from the rest of the world."

"Dear George! you are so funny. Of course Walter will be Lord Cartmel some day, when his father has done stargazing, and then Elva will fill the position of Lady Cartmel so well; besides, she ought to be glad to get another offer so soon after that contretemps."

"Humph! Yes; delicate affairs are best expressed in French. Honestly, I think Elva is throwing herself away, in spite of the "straps, tatters, and tagrags" of nobility which she will acquire."

"Oh, George, what will my husband say to hear you talk so? Are you, now really and truly—are you getting at all Liberal in your opinions? If you are, John must show you that nothing is so bad as believing in the lower orders. I took all the trouble of getting up the T.A.P.S., so that every one might know that dear old England depends on its country gentlemen."

"It's a fine country," said George Guthrie, solemnly, "a very fine country is England, and a very interesting people are the English. Duenna cousin, believe me, I am not a Radical. I honestly believe in an Englishman—gentleman, I mean—and when I see him standing on his two legs, with his two five-fingered hands at his shackle bones, and miraculous head on his shoulders, yes, then I believe he is worth from fifty to a hundred—"

"Wedding-presents," said Mrs. Eagle Bennison, dreamily, who had not been able to follow George's nonsense, as she

called it. "George, instead of talking this rubbish, tell me, will a silver cream-jug look shabby to give to Elva? I can't put off giving her something any longer. It is a really old silver jug. It came from one of the Eagles, and the antique look is much valued just now. It feels heavy, too, but the truth is that it has been mended with pewter, which adds to the weight; but, of course, it also adds to its interest, doesn't it?"

"Not to the interest Elva could get on it, supposing she pawned it."

"Pawned it! How ridiculous you are. Elva, who is as rich as Cæsus, wishing to pawn anything, is an odd idea! But, indeed, I have such a strong feeling that it is a waste of money to give presents to rich people when the poor live all round us."

"Or die all round us. Yes, certainly, I agree with you. I should tell Elva quite plainly that I meant to spend twenty pounds on her present, but that I know she will prefer the cheque going into Herbert Heaton's bags next Sunday, and that she must value the pewter-mended silver jug as a memorial of the gift in church."

"No, one could not say all that; for such feelings are of course quite religious. Yes, I feel it quite a higher call to give to the poor."

Mrs. Eagle Bennison privately thought she would now not ask George's opinion any more, as he gave it too literally.

"By the way, George, what has become of Mr. Kestell's protégés? I never see either of them now."

"Like other protégés, they suffer from patronage. Only to-day I heard that Jesse Vicary has come down to Rushbrook out of work, and that he is staying at the Joyces'. Poor old Mrs. Joyce makes quite a fuss about the honour. I haven't met him yet. The girl is in London. I can't think why she does not come down. Benevolence never stands contradiction. If the Taps turned against you, what would you do to them, Mrs. Eagle Bennison?"

"I should, of course, show them how wrong it is not to honour and obey their superiors; but, happily, that spirit has not come here. That young Vicary looked conceited. Mr. Kestell was too good to him. He's very much aged, lately—Mr. Kestell, I mean; he's breaking up, I fear."

"Elva is marrying to please her father,

so he must live and see his handiwork. Parents are selfish beings. Well, I'm off to see Miss Heaton. They will want to decorate the church for the bride's arrival at the altar of Hymen. Her empyrean eyes must look at nothing mean—I can suggest your orchids, coz—she must be embowered amid rich foliage to hide her tremors and her flutterings. Aurora must have her garlands."

"Oh, but I don't believe High Church people think it quite right to decorate for brides," said Mrs. Eagle Bennison, seizing a long-forgotten plank of safety. "No, George, don't offer my orchids; or if you do, say you don't suppose they would like them."

"Of course," said George, seizing his hat. "You are clever to remember Heaton's points of ritual; I had quite forgotten it. They ought to be printed clearly on cards, like the deaf and dumb alphabet. Now, really, I'm off. I can't be sure of succeeding about the orchids; Miss Heaton is certain to find a saint, black or red, who will serve as a peg for votive flowers; but I'll try and spare your best. However, be generous, dear coz; put yourself in her place. What does our poet say!—'As though a rose should shut and be a bud again.' Try the metamorphosis. Remember your time of budding."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Eagle Bennison, smiling and blushing; "what a lovely simile! such a memory as you have, George! What poet is it who said that?"

George Guthrie went off down the forbidden path with a smile on his face; he noted the gorgeous red colouring on their stems with keen pleasure; and passing a holly-tree full of red berries, made a little moral reflection on fruit out of date. The object of his visit to Miss Heaton had in truth nothing to do with flowers; but he wished to see how much space in a little church could be set apart for the poor people. He knew Mr. Heaton might be placed in a difficult position if Mrs. Eagle Bennison and Mr. Kestell sent large orders for reserved seats, so that the aristocratic neighbourhood might see Elva married. As for Lord Cartmel, it was with difficulty the important day had been knocked into his head; Betta said gravely that her father was expecting a comet about that time, and it made him a little anxious as to a long absence from the observatory.

"There must be scientific men to be

some of all sorts," thought George, "but they are a very curious race. If Walter had chosen a kitchen-maid, his lordship would have had barely time to remonstrate. Well, it's not my duty. At present I'm bound from Tweedledum to Tweedledee."

When he reached the plantation that surrounded St. John's Church and Vicarage, he saw Mr. Heaton opening the gate, on his way home, and George Guthrie ran up to him. He had a bad habit of running like a boy, and had before now been reproved for this youthful folly by Mrs. Eagle Bennison.

"Here, Heaton, wait a moment. The world's at an end. Go and call the parson of the parish. Ah, perhaps you don't read Fielding, or don't own to it. The 'Fall of Phaëton' won't provide a text, will it?"

Herbert laughed. It did one good to see these two men together, they had nothing to hide from the world, or from each other.

"I have just been discoursing with Mr. Kestell's gardener about the floral arrangements of our little church on Thursday."

"I thought so—said so to my dear cousin. Of course, you've found it to be a black-letter saint's day; that makes flowers permissible."

Herbert smiled.

"Has Mrs. Eagle Bennison offered her flowers? Spare her, Guthrie, I know the sacrifice is too great! Miss Kestell has sent word she will have none, but the gardener says differently, so I must let them do as they like best, I suppose. To my mind this wedding is a sad business; I have had it much on my mind; but what could I do? Miss Kestell will see no one. My sister was refused; and when I called she begged me to excuse her. Come in, will you? I can show you her note."

George's face fell considerably.

"A sad business! I call it a confounded shame! If I could get hold of that—No, I'll spare your cloth, Heaton; but Hoel Fenner deserves the gallows."

"The affair is a mystery. For my part, I cannot accuse him without knowing particulars, and I know none. I only listen to those my sister invents. Ladies are apt to grow eloquent on such a subject. But have you noticed, Guthrie, that the person whose duty it is to speak out strongly, has never said a word. Mr. Kestell only once remarked to me that Mr. Fenner was quite unable to appreciate

his daughter's worth. When I saw them together I certainly thought the contrary."

George shook his head, and at this moment Miss Heaton appeared, and anxiously exclaimed:

"Oh, there you are, Herbert. How late you are! I knew you would be. Indeed, Mr. Guthrie, when Herbert goes to Rushbrook House there is no knowing when he will return."

"You must expect such troubles, Miss Heaton," answered George, wickedly; for he understood the severe lady's innuendoes. "He has been talking of love and marriage. You should have sent me. You remember Dr. Johnson's answer to the lady who asked him what love was? 'The wisdom of the fool and the folly of the wise.' I came now to plead for free seats for the ragtag and bobtail, Heaton. You should hear how the poor folk talk of the wedding; and, unfortunately, as the church is small, many will have to disappoint their eyes."

"I do not allow them to gossip to me about things that do not concern them," said Miss Heaton, severely. "The poor are abominably curious. They will go to any sight, and are quite indifferent whether it is a wedding or an inquest on a murdered man. I believe they prefer the latter."

"In this innocent pastoral district I am afraid we can't provide that; so, Miss Heaton, be merciful and wink at the weakness of the un washed portion of the parish."

"It is all very well for a free lance like you, Mr. Guthrie; but they look to me for an example."

"'Tis indeed a post of observation, Miss Heaton. I do sincerely sympathise with you. Were I in your place I fear I should commit suicide. To be forced to think always of my character and reputation would— But no, I will not praise you. I will remember Bishop Beveridge (pray, Heaton, note that I am impartial in my quotations, and range from Fielding to Beveridge), the worthy prelate said: 'I resolve never to speak of a man's virtues before his face, nor of his faults behind his back.' By the way, if he did the opposite, I should have bidden him good-morning, and said 'au revoir' till we meet in a happier clime."

"Incorrigible!" laughed the Vicar, "but if you can come down to common sense, tell me whether you have heard of Jesse Vicary's being about. I met him just now, and really I should hardly have known

him. He avoided me, so I could not get speech with him."

"Out of work, I gather, and seems to think Mr. Kestell has something to do with it. The truth is, the poor fellow is rather proud. He's learning experience, which, by the way, I always find a great waste of time; for, like the stern lights of a ship, it only lights up what's behind."

"I must go now, Mr. Guthrie," said Miss Heaton, who looked upon him with barely disguised scorn. "There is to be a procession of school children on the wedding-day. I should like them to sing a hymn when the bride appears at the beginning of the plantation."

"Little dears, how they will wake the echoes with their sweet trebles. Do you remember, Miss Heaton, the difficulty a certain Bishop was in, how best to open the conversation with Johnson; so changing to look at a few trees which stood close by, he remarked that they grew very large and strong. 'Sir,' said the doctor, 'they have nothing else to do.' Our school children can learn several hymns for the procession and the recession. That's right, isn't it, Heaton?"

Miss Heaton wanted to say, "What a foolish anecdote;" but she was not quite sure if Mr. Guthrie were laughing at her, so she retired with dignity, saying quietly she had never heard that story before, and it did not seem to have much point.

Herbert could not hide his amusement; but, as they walked out of the house, his real anxiety soon made him turn once more to the subject on his mind. Unlike his sister, he knew that, below all the fun and foolishness of the outside man, George Guthrie had a very true heart.

"I may be somewhat foolish, Guthrie," he said, "but I dislike reading the Marriage Service when I feel, 'To love, honour, and obey' means little or nothing."

"I have given up scruples, because the more one thinks of it the more it seems to me that civilised society is a sham. I never should have thought that old Kestell

was mercenary; and as to Elva—no, I'm sure she is not; but there is some powerful motive at work which baffles me. Mrs. Kestell rules them all; and, perhaps, she fancies that her daughter, having been mixed up with an unfortunate affair, had better accept the very next good offer; but, good gracious! if any one can afford to wait, it is an heiress."

"There is nothing pleasant about this engagement. Miss Amice answers all the letters about wedding presents; and, if she were a nun, Miss Kestell could not live a more secluded life. How am I to—but, look, Guthrie, who is that man walking up towards the Beacon? If you were to ask me I should say—Who would you say it was like?"

George Guthrie glanced up quickly. He was a little short sighted, but the same thought at once presented itself to him. The man they gazed at was walking very quickly towards the solitary cottage of the Joyces, which stood high on the slope of the Beacon.

"By George, Heaton! I should say it was Hoel Fenner!"

"So should I. But it hardly seems to be the right moment for his appearance!"

"And the wedding the day after tomorrow. I call it an unseemly thing to do. If you'll excuse me, Heaton, I'll go and find him."

"No, no; wait till we are sure. Besides, what can you say?"

George Guthrie laughed.

"Thank you; of course, for a moment I forget my principle of *laissez-faire*. Perhaps his appearance is another sign of the goodness of Providence. Do you remember the itinerant preacher's remark, 'My friends, it is another instance of the goodness of Providence, that large rivers always flow by large towns'?"

Herbert Heaton smiled, but added:

"Guthrie, I cannot understand my own feelings; but I have a presentiment of evil, a strong presentiment. I beseech you, weigh your words if you meet Hoel Fenner."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV.

THE sun went down a great ball of lurid fire behind the young trees in the park. As its flames died out of the stormily-purple west, rugged masses of cloud spread themselves athwart the night sky. No refreshing coolness came with the darkness. Every window in the Castle stood open; but air there was none, outside the house, nor within.

"Don't trouble about me, Herrick," said Lois, as for a moment the two stood together in the hall before separating for the night; "I am not in the least tired. Ah, if you would only let me sit up! If I go to bed I shall not be able to sleep."

Herrick had decided that the unseemliness of a discussion between him and his mother at such a time was a sufficient reason for yielding to her wish that Lois should be kept out of his grandfather's room. Furthermore, he had decided that, all things considered, it would be better for Lois to return to Summerhill on the following morning. Later on he would know well enough how to make good her position in the house as that of his future wife, and every living soul, mother included, should be taught to respect it. But for the present he resolved that not so much as a jarring look between his mother and himself should ruff; the serene atmosphere that ought to surround a death-bed.

He had spent the twilight hours

now in one sick-room, now in another, and anon in brief five minutes in the library dictating telegrams to the manager of the Wrexford mines. Now, as eleven o'clock chimed, the Castle was beginning to settle down into quiet, and he had crept away to say a farewell word to Lois, and to bid her go to rest for the night. He felt sorely at a loss how to refuse her request without betraying his mother's ill-will towards her.

"If you sat up, darling, you could be of no possible use," was all he could find to say.

Lois did not speak for a moment. She was standing immediately beneath one of the swinging bronze lamps which lighted the hall, the soft yellow light falling full upon the upturned, dimpled face, the straying gold of her hair, the tremulous mouth. The simple, infantine face might have been that of a child praying to have the moon given it for a toy, rather than that of one making a request whose granting or refusal might carry life or death with it.

She clasped her hands together imploringly.

"Oh Herrick, Herrick," she cried, "why won't you let me go near him? I beg, I entreat you, let me see him once again!"

Tears ran down her cheeks; her voice gave way with her last word.

Herrick was greatly distressed.

"If I could I would, darling, you may be sure; but for some reason or other my mother——" Here he checked himself sharply, then added: "You shall see him the first thing in the morning before you go back to Summerhill, I promise you

that. Dr. Scott told me only a minute ago that he had slightly rallied, and he thought that he might have a fairly good night."

Lois guessed at the words he had so sharply held back.

"Tell me, Herrick," she said, in a low voice, "why does Lady Joan wish to keep me away from him? He seemed so happy to have me beside him. He held my hand so tightly! I can hear his poor weak voice now, saying: 'Do not leave me, my child.'"

Here, again, tears choked her words.

Herrick's calmness nearly gave way.

"Do not add to my anxieties to-night, Lois," he said. "Believe me, I feel already as if my brains were leaving me. Will you take my word for it that my grandfather is much better left alone with his usual attendant for the night? Dr. Scott has said, more than once, that the slightest divergence of routine might be bad for him. I beg of you, go upstairs to rest now; to-morrow, before you go back to Summerhill——"

Lois suddenly laid her hand on his arm.

"Herrick," she pleaded, "if you will not let me go inside his room to-night, will you let me sit outside his door in the corridor? I will be so quiet, I will scarcely breathe. Lady Joan shall not know I am there—— Oh, do, do let me!"

She clasped her hands over his arm, her tears falling in a shower now.

Herrick grew more and more distressed and perplexed.

"Give me a reason, Lois, for such a strange request," he said.

But he might as well have asked Lois to fetch him down one of the stars at once. Her eyes drooped.

"I wish I could," she said, falteringly. "I can't tell you why, but I feel as if I were called upon to—take care of him to-night——"

"Oh, Lois, do you not think that my mother and Parsons and I are enough to take care of my dear old grandfather till morning? I shall sit in the dressing-room—that is, you know, the room between my father's and grandfather's rooms—and shall be going from one room to the other all night. If anything should happen, if my grandfather should express any wish to see you, I promise you faithfully you shall be sent for at once."

But Lois was not to be satisfied even with this promise. Her entreaties grew

more and more vehement. Might she sit in the hall, if not in the corridor? Might she come down once in the middle of the night for a report as to how things were going on?

Herrick had to feign a sternness he did not feel to silence her. If she could have given him the shadow of a reason for her request, he would have attached more importance to it. As it was, the thought in his mind was that she was overdone, hysterical, and was attaching a significance to trifles which did not of rights belong to them.

"Sleep will be the best thing for you to-night, dear; by-and-by you shall help me bear the brunt of everything," he said with a decision that ended the matter. "You have had a terribly fatiguing day—the intense heat, the thunder in the air is telling on you. Don't you know you told me you could feel a storm coming a week before it broke?"

"Thunder in the air! is it that I feel?" said Lois vaguely, dreamily. But she made no farther opposition to Herrick's wishes. In good truth, accustomed as she had ever been to yield submission to the will of others, it had cost her not a little to assert her own wishes in the way she had already done.

There followed "one long, strong kiss" between the lovers, a kiss that could not have had more of truth and passion in it if they could have turned over a page of *Time's* volume and read what lay before them in the future.

Then Lois went her way up the broad oak staircase to the room which had been assigned to her on the upper floor; and Herrick went back to the sick-rooms.

His last word to her was a repetition of his promise, that before she went back to Summerhill the next morning she should see and say good-bye to his grandfather.

He stood at the foot of the staircase watching the dainty little figure, with its flushed, tearful face and straying golden hair, till it disappeared at the turn of the stairs; taking it as much for granted that he and she would meet on the morrow as he did that the sun would rise and the shadows flee away.

CHAPTER XVI.

"SHE looks as if another soul had taken possession of her body."

Lois's words flashed into Herrick's mind as he entered the corridor leading to his

grandfather's quarters, and found Lady Joan standing on the threshold of his father's room, with a look on her face he had never seen there before.

In view of the coming night-watch, she had exchanged her tight-fitting dress for some long, dark, clinging robe; round her head and shoulders she had wrapped a grey shawl of light texture; from beneath this her eyes looked out at him, large and glittering, with a strange light in them. A prophetess of old time, a daughter of Jerusalem sitting beside the waters of Babylon, and gathering herself together to pronounce a curse upon the race which had conquered and enlaved her Fatherland, might have had much such a look shining out of her eyes and settling in rigid lines about her mouth.

"I have been waiting—waiting here to speak to you, Herrick," she said, and her voice sounded to him hard and unnatural, "to make arrangements for the night. The quieter these rooms are kept during the night hours, the better for the invalids. Dr. Scott I have already dismissed——"

"Dr. Scott dismissed!" interrupted Herrick, astonished beyond measure. "Why, he is the one we may need most of all!"

"You need not doubt my capacity for managing the routine of a sick-room. Dr. Scott himself told me that there was scarcely a likelihood of any change taking place in your father's condition before the morning; so I suggested to him that he should take his rest during the early part of the night, and I have promised to have him called at daybreak. I have had a mattress placed for him in one of the sitting-rooms—the first at the farther end of the corridor, so that in case of need he can be easily aroused."

"It seems to me," said Herrick, steadily eyeing his mother, "that if rest is to be thought of to-night for any one, it should be for you——"

"My place is here," interrupted Lady Joan, with great decision; "no one can fill it, no one shall fill it."

She added the last words excitedly, and Herrick, knowing at what terrible tension his mother's nerves must be held at that moment, forbore to press the point farther.

"Of course, you will have Parsons and Jervis—the newly-engaged nurse—" in attendance!" he asked. "And I will remain in the dressing-room, and will be in and out both rooms all night. But still——"

"I beg you will do nothing of the sort," interrupted Lady Joan—Herrick would have thought angrily, if anger at such a time had seemed to him possible—"you would be greatly in the way in the dressing-room; it is required by the nurses as a waiting-room for all sorts of purposes. These rooms must be kept in perfect quiet. It would be far wiser if you followed Dr. Scott's example, and went to rest during the early part of the night."

"I—rest! with my father lying at death's door!" was all that Herrick said in reply, but the tone in which he spoke showed that he had not by a long way attained the perfect control over his feelings which his mother exhibited.

"Why not?" she asked. "Two such sick-rooms as these cannot possibly require the attendance of more than three women. The nursing duties are next to nothing!"

It was only too true—the nursing duties were "next to nothing." The administration of an opiate, the renewal of bandages steeped in aconite, was all that could be required of nurse or doctor in John Gaskell's sick-room.

In old Mr. Gaskell's room the duties required of the nurse were scarcely heavier. Nourishment or a stimulant of some sort had to be administered hourly to the feeble and tractable invalid, but beyond this nothing could be done.

Herrick laid his hand on his mother's arm.

"Mother, say no more," he said, gently, but with a decision as great as her own. "No living soul could keep me away from my father to-night, so pray give up the attempt. I will fall in with any routine you may think best for the night-watch; but here I am, and here I shall remain until——"

Again he broke off.

It was unintentional that he spoke as if his mother had, with deliberate purpose, done her utmost to keep him from his father's bedside.

Lady Joan looked at him for a moment.

"The Gaskell strong will again," was the thought in her heart. Aloud she said:

"If your mind is made up, I waste time in endeavouring to alter it. As I have already told you, I wish both sick-rooms kept in perfect quiet; divergence of routine in your grandfather's room, Dr. Scott tells me, will have a bad effect on him, and it will be best for him to be left till morning entirely to the care of Parsons,

who knows his requirements. In this room, as I have already told you, your presence can scarcely be needed. If you choose to sit up, therefore, I should prefer your remaining in the room opening off this on the other side—the billiard-room, that is."

This then was the arrangement of the suite of seven rooms on that memorable night. Dr. Scott, with his mattress, occupied the first of the suite—the one at the extreme end of the corridor. Herrick, in compliance with Lady Joan's wish, took possession of the second—his grandfather's billiard-room. John Gaskell, attended by his wife and Jarvis the nurse, lay in the third. The fourth room, old Mr. Gaskell's dressing-room, which intervened between the two sick-rooms, was left empty for the use of the nurses, also in compliance with Lady Joan's wish. In the fifth room lay old Mr. Gaskell. Two sitting-rooms followed in succession, both untenanted. Each of these rooms, in addition to the doors by which they communicated with each other, owned to a third door opening direct into the corridor. This corridor communicated at one end with the big inner hall of the house, and at the other led by a staircase to the upper floor.

CHAPTER XVII.

HERRICK placed a chair for himself just within the billiard-room, leaving the door ajar, so that the slightest sound in the sick-room could be heard by him.

He leaned back in his chair, a prey to the sad thoughts which his familiar surroundings summoned forth with relentless hand. What pleasant games of billiards he and his father had enjoyed at that table in the after-dinner-hour, while the old grandfather looking on, gave canny counsel, now to one side, now to the other. Great Heavens! how long ago it seemed now! He could have fancied that years, not days, had elapsed since he last heard the old man say in his thin, quavering voice, "Play with caution, laddie, one chance missed gives two to your adversary;" or listened to his father's hearty tones saying, "Bravo, Herrick, I never made a better break than that at my best."

A passionate longing rose up in his heart, there and then to look once more on those loved faces; to touch once again those kindly hands, while yet the warmth of life remained to them. He repressed it with the thought of his mother's evident wish that

he should keep away from the sick-rooms during the night. It was a strange wish on her part no doubt; but still, as it was her wish, he felt bound to respect it. As before in the day, so now he resolved that his mother should not be called upon through him to bear any—the slightest—additional heart-ache to those she now suffered. "After all," his thoughts ran, "for all practical purposes he was as near his father one side of the door as the other." It might be that the solution to his mother's apparently inexplicable conduct lay in the fact that a sudden mood of jealous love had taken possession of her; and she wished no living soul to share with her the last watch beside her dying husband. Second thoughts however refused to be satisfied with so simple an explanation. As long as he could remember, his father and mother had always seemed on a fairly amicable and friendly footing towards each other; but of love of the sort that breeds jealousy, there had not been a jot.

With his mother thus in the foreground of his thoughts, other things in her conduct that day struck as it were uncomfortable key-notes. It was strange that Lois's child-like instincts had appeared to meet the old grandfather's at this point, and that both should shrink from Lady Joan as if—well as if she were unfit for the onerous duties which had thus suddenly devolved upon her.

"Well, what wonder!" he thought, "if she were unfit for such duties. What wonder if she had strangely altered during the past twenty-four hours; he himself had felt older by at least a dozen years, and her frame, her brain were not to be compared with his in youth and strength—ah!"

Herrick's thoughts here broke off abruptly as a sudden ugly suspicion crossed his mind. What if the true solution of the mystery was to be found in the fact that her brain had not been strong enough to bear the terrible strain put upon it that day, and that her reason even now tottered in the balance!

Ugly as the suspicion was, Herrick forced himself to look it in the face.

And the longer he looked at it the more likely it seemed to grow. It gave a show of reason alike to Lois's and the old grandfather's nameless terrors. They had noted a change in Lady Joan which his pre-occupied mind had debarred him from perceiving, and had shrunk from her in a manner unintelligible to themselves.

Herrick, still leaning back in his chair, covered his eyes with one hand; this, not to shut out the terrible embodiment which his fears had thus suddenly assumed, but the better to answer the practical question: "What could he do for the best? How was he to meet this unexpected emergency?"

One thing speedily made itself plain to him: his mother must be watched as much for her own sake as for the sake of those helpless ones left in her charge.

"I must keep eyes and ears on the alert to-night," he said to himself. "And remember that I am keeping watch not over two, but over three."

It was an appalling thought; his brain seemed to grow dizzy beneath it. A clock in a corner of the room chimed the hour—one o'clock. From different quarters of the Castle the same hour was repeated, and then, to Herrick's fancy, a great stillness seemed to fall upon the house, a stillness which, combined with the sultriness of the air, seemed to proclaim that the storm must be almost upon them. Not a leaf stirred in the outside darkness, nor so much as a buzzing fly or gnat whirred in the hot air. Herrick, with his hand still covering his eyes, felt oppressed and stifled by the intense silence which, like some heavy pall, seemed to overhang the house. The heat was almost beyond endurance. Was it possible, he wondered, that every one of the windows was open? He thought he would softly make the round of that suite of rooms, and see if a little more air was not to be had.

Before, however, he could put his resolve into execution, tired nature asserted itself—as well it might, after the heavy strain it had that day been called upon to endure—his head sank back upon the cushions of his high-backed chair, his arm dropped limply to his side, and he fell into a heavy though uneasy slumber.

WAITRESSES.

THE subject of waitresses is rather a wide one, and extends through a varied social stratification. Each neat-handed Phyllis that attends to one's little wants is, in point of fact, a waitress. And, as a rule, how neatly and deftly does the British waitress perform her office! We all remember the pretty picture, which has had various imitations more or less successful, "Sherry, sir!" where the waitress is bring-

ing in a decanter and biscuit. For my own part I had much rather be attended by such a waitress than by a gorgeous flunkey.

When Coningsby first meets Sidonia in D'Israeli's charming novel, it is in a little country inn, where they had taken refuge from an impending storm. They both admire the perfect grace with which the waitress lays the table-cloth. Sidonia explains that she does it so well because she knows her business perfectly, and is conscious that she does.

I knew a big house in which the noble Earl would not allow a single indoor-servant to be a male. He, his guests, and his family were all served by a bevy of maidens, who had a very pretty special uniform. At breakfast his own daughters would gracefully transform themselves into waitresses, and attend to the wants and wishes of their elders and their friends.

But I am now writing about waitresses in a more limited and restricted sense. In the course of the last generation there has been a great multiplication of the class of waitresses. One is very glad that, in these days of crowded competition, so much work of this kind is thrown open to young women. The more we find useful and paying work for women, the better for themselves and for society at large; and thus much has become a social truism. The waitresses now constitute a large and increasing class. Messrs. Spiers and Pond are said to have about two thousand waitresses, and two thousand waiters. The upshot frequently is, that a waiter marries a waitress. When I speak of waitresses as a class, I must remember that it is a class recruited from most classes. Some of them are the daughters of professional people, and so on through various grades of society. There is not much cohesion and combination among these young ladies; and among the various social developments of our time I am afraid that there is very little done for their special good. I think that their wealthier and more cultivated sisters might show them some greater measure of sympathy and friendship.

I have been admitted to the honour of some confidential talks with several young ladies of this persuasion. One Sunday morning I had such a talk with a waitress at one of the stations of the Underground Railway. She was the daughter of a solicitor, or farmer, if I remember aright, and was one of too many daughters. She

determined that she would go out and earn her own living; and though her parents did not like it, they did not object, as certainly it was the most sensible thing that she could do. She thought she would rather be a waitress than a governess. She considered that she would have more leisure and more independence. At first she did not like it at all. But she told me that she came to like it very much. She said it was so nice to save her parents expense, to be her own mistress, to buy her own dresses, and so on. Nothing could tempt her to go back. The hours were long; but, except at certain hurried parts of the day, they were not fatiguing. She had certain holidays—not too many—almost entirely consisting of alternate Sundays, or parts of Sundays, in which she secured as much rest and change as possible. She had the advantage of having friends and relations in London, so she was under good protection, and had some pleasant society.

I had a talk with another young waitress on the Underground, whose history was on the whole hardly so pleasing. The first business of a waitress is to be honest, nice-mannered, and nice-looking. It is rather difficult to obtain a combination of all these. The first is absolutely necessary, and we have got what approximation can be obtained towards the other requisites. Then if a girl has her head well screwed on her shoulders, that is to say if she can keep accounts, keep them quite faithfully and accurately, and perhaps has some knowledge of book-keeping, she can make what little way is to be made in her profession. But it is surprising what a number of girls are not to be trusted with business details. They are honest enough in all conscience, but they have a poor head for figures. They do not put down all the items; and they sometimes fail to add them up correctly. The young lady whom I am now mentioning was a very average specimen, or, rather below the average. She could only wait; her little head could not carry any business details. She was not at all satisfied with the wages she received, and, indeed, it was little more than would serve her for dress, and a very moderate amount of pocket-money. Then she had a very special grievance to complain of. She had to pay for all breakages, and the breakages came to something considerable out of the scanty allowance. She did not mind paying for anything which she had broken

herself; but very often glasses were shaken down by the passage of trains underneath the refreshment-rooms, and she thought it hard that she should have to pay for them. It can easily be understood, however, that young girls being liable to be careless, it is necessary to have some strict rule to make them careful. She also spoke of some circumstances which were extremely creditable to her employers. Thus she had rheumatic fever after she had entered on her engagement, which is generally a long and costly illness. Her employers had her nursed and taken care of all through her illness, until she was able to resume her work again, and were quite content to incur all such loss and trouble on her account.

Indeed, from what I heard concerning the firm, which is the largest concerned with this kind of business, I perceived that the waitresses are well looked after. There is always a certain amount of judicious surveillance. They are each housed in comfortable quarters under the superintendence of a lady who has come from their own ranks; and to become such a superintendent is a good piece of promotion. Cases of misconduct are very rare; but, of course, in so large a number, they occur sometimes. The fare is good; in fact, the young people may freely help themselves to whatever they like; but it is not found that there is any waste or extravagance. Any little extravagance there may be is in the matter of dress, and this comes out of their own pockets. There is an immense number of applications for employment, the work being considered light, easy, respectable, and in some respects agreeable. A register-book is kept of all applications, and approved candidates are called in as they may be wanted for vacancies. Photographs are kept of all the girls employed; and a little history is attached to each name. There are searching enquiries made before an engagement is formed, and there must be references and testimonials. Of course the great difficulty that exists in relation to these interesting young women is their position in regard to young men. In their own interest the girls require to be watched and protected. Some time ago there was a ukase issued that no shaking of hands should be permitted across the counter. It was found expedient to introduce a cautious limitation of this kind. Of course young men up to a certain point should be encouraged. Girls like a little society, and

they have to keep in view their ultimate settlement in life. Young men are also large consumers; and, within a certain margin, their consumption of edibles and drinkables is to be encouraged. Still, it is quite possible to have too much of them. There are in London a number of young men who are "loafers," who hang about public bars so long that they become nuisances, who pay overwhelming attention to young ladies, and sometimes involve them in unsatisfactory love affairs. When a chronic flirtation is established, perhaps there is not a sufficient amount of care taken of the amount of glasses of liquids which are partaken by their thirsty admirers. However, the proprietors of such places would regard with great dislike men who were at all likely to mar the happiness or good reputation of the girls they employ. There is often much more care taken of the young ladies than the young ladies are aware of. Beyond the heads of each representative station there is a certain amount of inspection and observation carried on by employers.

When a girl has too many friends at her station, and is perhaps getting talked about, she finds herself quietly removed to another station several miles away up or down the line. When undesirable acquaintances still follow her, she is offered a situation some hundred miles down in the country, where she must either go or leave altogether. There is an extreme reluctance that a girl should leave, except at her own choice. Again, changes are sometimes made with a kindly view to a girl's own wishes, or her health. I once saw a tabulated register-book of these young waitresses, in which mention was made of each locality where they had been employed. Thus a girl may be found suffering in health from the close confinement and late hours of a London bar. She is sent into the country, perhaps to the bracing air of the north, or of some sea-side resort. Perhaps she does not improve, and a milder climate is thought good for her. So a position is found, or made for her in some healthy climate suitable for her case, such as Torquay, Penzance, Hastings, where it is considered that she will have the best hopes of recovery.

Our waitresses, indeed, are a peculiar class. They have their good qualities, and also the defects of their qualities. Thanks to the School Board, and the cheap press, there is now more education among them

than used to be the case. Still there is not much continuous mental improvement among them; but I expect this is not much the case, except for a small minority in any order of society. Your modern waitress is quick, courteous, and observant. She has a gift of small talk, which she can exercise when she has a good opening for it. Occasionally she is slightly given to slang.

The waitresses are very well supplied by their admirers with the light railway literature; and they have often hours of morning and afternoon leisure in which they may read if they like; but they are not very often so disposed. I am afraid that this way of living in some way unfits them for the monotonous duties of domestic life, when they will have no constant change of faces. And to that domestic life the gift of repartee is not the most valuable that a woman can possess. As a rule waitresses are a very nice set of young people; but there are exceptions which prove the rule.

Just out of Algiers there is a pretty valley constantly visited by tourists, which is called the Valley of La Belle Sauvage. "Murray's Handbook" tells the story of the "Handsome Savage." It appears that shortly after the French occupation of Algiers, this untamed young woman kept a café in the Happy Valley, and was so noted for giving what is technically called "the rough side of her tongue," that her region is everywhere known as the Valley La Belle Sauvage.

Occasionally these interesting young people indulge in a certain amount of "cheek." I remember being at a theatre one evening and asking for the refreshment of a brandy and soda. The nymph of the counter—and a very pretty one she was—was no adept in her profession. She first put in the soda-water, and then the strong water, and then added the ice. I ventured to suggest to her that the reverse process would in general be more acceptable, and would certainly have been so to myself. She did not receive my humble hint at all graciously. She turned unpleasantly red in the face, and said that if I did not like it I might leave it. Accordingly I left it, and went back to my place. I was one of the last that night to leave the house, and as I passed the counter I saw the pretty waitress looking very dejected. I told her that I hoped she was no loser by the little transaction. She looked very sadly, and said that she

would have to pay a shilling out of her own pocket. I handed it over to her, and was happy to read her a great moral lesson at so small a cost.

Then, again, the question of "tips" to waitresses is one that suggests itself. I like waitresses to be tipped. The girls can make a little money go such a long way. Whatever doubts there may be about the propriety of tipping porters at railway-stations, there can be none about the propriety of tipping the waitresses in the refreshment-rooms of the stations. The question is whether we can summon up enough courage to tip such gorgeous creatures as the young ladies at Swindon and Crewe. It is very hard to do the correct thing in tips. Most people give either too much, or too little. I knew an Oxford man who stayed a good deal at hotels. He formulated a great principle on the subject :

"When I have been staying at an inn, if the waitress is plain, I would give her half-a-crown, and if she is pretty, half-a-sovereign."

I went one day into a fashionable confectioner's shop with a young man. He put down a sovereign in payment, and in his change there was a half-sovereign. He pushed the gold coin towards the girl who had waited on us, and said, "For yourself." The girl coloured and said: "No, thank you, sir; it is too much." When my change was given, there was a threepenny—that coin so valuable at collections—and I said: "Please keep that." She smiled brightly, and took it, and thanked me. The girl's good instinct had told her what it was best to do in both cases.

In France the tips are as variable, but they are not so good as in England. In a country place, at a little auberge, the other day, I had to pay the landlord's daughter, Suzanne, forty centimes for a "petit verre." I gave her half a franc, and said that I wanted no change. The mother thanked me, and said that Suzanne had received a great many tips—they must have been much better than mine—and had bought seven or eight sheep. I told the blushing Suzanne what a treasure she and her sheep would be to her future husband.

There is a considerable difference between the London waitress and her country cousins of the same class. In some respects the latter have an advantage. The stations and the hotels are much less busy. There are fewer trains, and they do not run so late. Indeed, it is found that

after an early hour it is not worth while to keep the refreshment-rooms open. At the hotels they close at eleven; and, below a certain number of population, at ten, instead of half-past twelve as in town. Instead of sleeping at the station, the country waitress has her own house in town, or at least lives with her own friends. She has much more time at her disposal during business hours for reading and working. She takes what part she can in the limited social life of the place; she has her accustomed place in church, and is perhaps a Sunday-school teacher, or belongs to the choir. The London waitress knows comparatively little of this sort of life. She makes her friends, indeed, but in many cases not very wisely. It is much to be wished that ladies who aim at good and useful influence would cultivate kindly relations with these girls, and ask them to their home, give them nice introductions and help them with books and music. Such ladies are often kind enough to the very poor, and will even do a certain amount of "slumming;" but they are very shy in making acquaintances with those whom they perhaps consider just to belong to the very fringe of society. Perhaps, with their nice manners, jewellery, and dresses, they may seem perilously to impinge on the social grade above them. This, however, is a mistake. The waitress is shrewd enough to know a real lady when she meets her, and will appreciate her kindness; and the other would often find a real lady in the waitress. Those young people often require a sister's kind guidance and sympathy. It is so very easy for them to pick up acquaintances, if they were ever so shy and reticent; as is often the case, it would be difficult for them not to do so. The laws of social etiquette are so inexorable, as a rule, that there are many young men in London who have no female acquaintances, or few and scattered. But the cold crust of etiquette is very soon broken over a counter. A man going to his place of business may drop in for a chat, morning and evening, for months together. This often gives a nice girl a chance of establishing herself in life. Often they throw away the chance. The steady clerk, the honest tradesman, is often despised, when compared with the smart young man with sham jewellery, loud voice, and thirsty propensities. But the one means business, while the other may mean nothing.

I have known several cases of waitresses

who have made very good matches, and have been called upon to fill somewhat high positions in society. But on the whole their public position has much less to do with their private interests than might generally be imagined. They generally marry in their own line of life, or among their own friends and connections.

I can here give rather a pretty story of a waitress and her young fortunes. She was a pretty little girl, hardly seventeen, and was at one of the metropolitan stations. Enter to her, as they say in the play-books, a middle-aged gentleman, very hot, and in a very great hurry; takes a tumbler of claret and lemonade as befitting the summer season, and precipitately disappears on hearing the ringing of a bell, which proclaimed that his train is due. He disappeared, but in his hurry he left behind him a pocket-book which he had taken out in order to discharge his reckoning. Now that pocket-book was a very important one. It contained some sovereigns, and a roll of bank-notes, and also some business papers even more important than the bank-notes. The merchant retraced his steps and went to every place he had visited in the course of the day, and he had been to a great many; but his memory was an utter blank in regard to the refreshment-room. He put an advertisement in the papers; but waitresses do not read advertisements unless they are looking for a situation for self, or friends. But one day this gentleman managed to find himself in this station, which, by the way, was not in his normal line; one which he visited very rarely, and, as it were, only by accident. Directly he entered the room the pretty girl at the counter recognised him, and came up to the little table where he was sitting—it now being late in the autumn—drinking a cup of tea.

"I think, sir," she said, "that you left a pocket-book here some months ago."

"Indeed I did; and I shall be particularly glad to hear of it again."

The girl had her wits about her. It would not do to give the pocket-book to the first stranger that claimed it after she had mentioned her find. At the same time, she had a recollection of the person to whom she spoke, which had caused her to address him.

"What sort of a pocket-book was it?" she asked. "And what did it contain?"

"It had three sovereigns in it, and five

five-pound notes, and some business papers, bills of exchange."

"It is all right. I have got your pocket-book," she said; and she went to a little desk and produced it.

It was all right to the minutest detail. There were the gold and notes, and the other precious papers, a little silver besides, and half-a-dozen postage-stamps.

"Young lady," he said, "I am very much obliged. Do you know that I have offered a reward in the newspapers for the discovery of this pocket-book?"

"I did not know it. I am very glad that I kept it for you. I do not want a reward."

She said this; but, being only a human waitress, I dare say the vision of a bonnet, or a dress, flashed on her imagination.

"Now, will you write down your name and where your mother lives in this pocket-book of mine?"

"I have no mother; but I have an aunt, and a lot of little cousins."

And she gave an address in Walbrook.

Some time after this the gentleman called upon the aunt, and said that he would be very pleased to send the girl to school for a few years, defray all possible expenses, and make himself responsible for securing her a livelihood afterwards.

The girl herself was not so pleased. She thought that school was only meant for little girls, and being a mature young woman of seventeen, she thought that she was much too old for it. But being assured that there were girls even older than that at the good and small finishing-school where he proposed to send her, she was wise enough to accept the offer, and cleverly availed herself of all the advantages which were set before her.

The merchant provided for her future by persuading her to marry him. She made him a good wife, and they "lived happy for ever afterwards," as if they belonged to a story-book.

ON GETTING OVER IT.

"OH, he—or she—will get over it—never fear!"

The phrase is one of the commonest in use, which neither age can wither nor custom stale by constant repetition. Has some fair damsel been disappointed by the object of her affections? While she is bewailing her vanished hopes, her relations and friends privately take the opportunity

of discussing her present position and future prospects; usually concluding with the above prediction, which, it must be acknowledged, in nine cases out of ten comes true. Angelina, though sorely distressed by the inconstancy of Edwin, does get over it in the end. The roses return to her cheeks, and the brightness to her eyes. Instead of shunning society as at first, she once more takes her place in the ball-room, and on the tennis-court, the merriest of the merry throng. She has got over it.

We all remember that when our worthy friend Blank lost his young and lovely wife a year after his marriage, it was generally believed that he was rapidly following her to the grave, which seemed the only remaining refuge for his broken heart, so terrible was his grief. But that was thirty years ago, and to-day Blank, stout and rubicund, sits at the bottom of his table, facing his buxom second spouse, and joking with the blooming company of sons and daughters who have never thought of him save as the most jovial of fathers. There is no need now to pity him, or to ask whether he has forgotten the sorrow which once threatened to blight his whole life. No doubt about it, he has got over it.

And happily for mankind, ninety-nine people out of a hundred do "get over" the business losses, the illnesses, the bereavements, the mortifications which are in everybody's lot; though how, they hardly know. It is only one here and there who gives way beneath a crushing blow, and never recovers from it. Of course these things leave their scars; the hardening of the heart, the decrease of hopefulness, the unavailing regret; but for all that the man or woman goes on in the same routine, not shunning social duties, taking interest in, and even pleased with trifles; attentive to the claims of their profession, just as though they had never wept bitter tears beside the grave of an only child, or seen their one hope in life vanish into ruin. Their friends say, and they even acknowledge themselves, that they have "got over it."

It is nature's great law of Adjustment to Environment carried out in that most delicate of existing organisms, the human heart.

And it is well for humanity that it is so. For if widows always wore their weeds; if the mourners always went about the streets; if every girl who had been deserted by her lover took to solitude and

sighing; if every parent, who had met with ingratitude from his children, revenged himself by cursing the whole human race, it would be chaos-come-again with a vengeance, and "Ichabod" would have to be written over every achievement of human hands.

Poor old world! It has witnessed much tribulation and endless changes since it was first set spinning in space ever so many thousand years ago; and yet here it is to-day as fresh and green and beautiful as though the din of strife, and the silence of Death had never been known in it! It has survived wars, and famines, and pestilences; revolutions, and massacres, and inundations. Tyrants have devastated whole continents, putting entire nations to the sword to gratify their brutal thirst for blood. Religious fanatics have desolated it, murdering and torturing in the name of piety. And yet somehow it has got over it—lived through a Siege of Jerusalem, a Massacre of St. Bartholomew, a Thirty Years' War, a French Revolution, as though all these things mattered not one whit. Philosophical old world!

Heartless old world is the verdict of many worthy persons who, although they may have borne with great resignation the loss of many once near and dear to them, can never bring themselves to contemplate with equanimity the certainty that, when they themselves die, the universe will go on just the same, with no pause in any of the complex processes of nature. In fact, many people never really believe that such will be the case, but retain to the last a lurking conviction that their empty place can never be filled, their loss never made good, no matter how long the world may exist. Be not deceived, my friend. The planet which has recovered from the loss of a Socrates, a Raphael, a Shakespeare, an Isaac Newton, a David Livingstone, will also survive your departure, although you may think yourself the greatest statesman, the only poet, the sublimest orator extant. Even while the laurel-wreaths laid by loving hands upon your grave in Westminster Abbey are still quite fresh and green, you may be quite forgotten, and henceforth only a shadowy abstraction catalogued among the miscellaneous population of a biographical dictionary.

Even if the world should miss you a little at first, you may be missed without being mourned, as an unconscious humourist of the working-classes once expressed it

when a sympathising visitor asked her whether she was not very lonely in the absence of her children, who were all either dead or abroad.

"I miss them more than I want them!" the mother emphatically replied; and that epitaph might truthfully be written over nine-tenths of the Kings, Generals, and other great men whose loss has apparently left the world quite inconsolable. But do not be angry with me, my friend, for predicting that you may find oblivion soon. In your time you have survived so many griefs and disappointments that it is hardly reasonable to blame mankind at large for also getting over your loss. It is only the law of nature.

You remember that time when your pretty daughter Margaret's lover was drowned at sea a week before his wedding-day, and how for months she never smiled, and how you held anxious consultations with great doctors, and how you took your darling to Mentone and Torquay, and coaxed her to walk and drive with you, ceaselessly watching her from morning till night.

What a joyful day it was when you first became certain that the roses were returning to her cheeks! How glad you were to hear again her merry laugh of old, after all those long weeks of suspense! And when, in course of time, she found another lover and married him, did you repine, even when you knew that he was in every way less gifted and less loveable than the suitor she had lost? No; you beheld her in her bridal veil with a light heart, only glad that she had got over that early grief. Neither would you think of clouding her content by disparaging comparisons between her first and her second choice.

It was an awful blow to you, too, in your own youthful days, when you fancied you were born to be a great poet and teacher of the human race; and your unsympathetic father, instead of rejoicing in your genius, sternly bade you put all that rubbish away, and take a stool in the office of your uncle, the solicitor. How hard you thought him! How you loathed the dry-as-dust routine, the making out of clients' bills, the study of fusty law-books, the engrossing of tedious documents! What a wrench it was to have to turn to a lease when you would rather have been composing a sonnet; and how hateful you thought it of your uncle to confiscate the Shakespeare he found in your desk, and insist that law-books only should be admitted to that receptacle!

But in time you got over it. You began to find the law more interesting than at first; much about the same period that you grew weary of having all your carefully-copied verses perpetually returned by stony-hearted editors and publishers, with a curt "declined with thanks." In despair you sent your manuscripts to other distinguished poets, with humble petitions for their criticism and advice to a young literary aspirant; but when these great men condescended to return them—which was not always—they did so with the brief intimation that they never undertook to give an opinion upon manuscript verses, and could only say that at the present day the supply of poets greatly exceeded the demand. To be sure, your mother greatly admired your poems, as did your Aunt Sophia.

So, by little and little, the conviction was forced upon you that you were not likely to succeed as a poet, and could not hope to find bread-and-cheese by the profession of letters; while the law offered an easy means of subsistence all ready to your hand. You ceased to trouble unsympathetic editors with your effusions, and you only composed a sonnet at longer and longer intervals; and to-day, which sees you the most prosperous lawyer in your native town, you would be puzzled to give the titles, much less repeat the words of those compositions which you once thought would procure you immortality and Westminster Abbey. Bitter though that early disappointment was at the time, you have quite got over it, so that you can bear with equanimity the certainty that your name and fame will never penetrate now beyond your own town. Let other and younger men seek eagerly for the "bubble reputation" if they will; a comfortable home and an assured income are yours, which might not have been the case had you remained a follower of the Muses; for fame too often means empty pockets, as your father was once never weary of telling you.

It is fortunate for us at the present day that the spirit of the age induces, nay, almost compels us to refrain from loud and useless lamentations, like spoiled children, when anything goes wrong. Times have changed since Rousseau and Lord Byron brought melancholy into cultivation as a serious pursuit. Once the sentimental tear was dropped over the sorrows of Werther, and it was quite the thing for young ladies who had been crossed in love to pine away and die, be-

moaning their unhappy fate to the last. But now, instead of looking about for the most suitable location for our early grave when trouble comes, we promptly set about getting over it; and what we suffer we keep hidden in our own breasts from all the world. We know that by so doing we are taking the most effectual measures towards recovery; for to coddle and pet a grief is most fatal policy, and sure in the end to make it ten times worse. Every day a thousand little events and circumstances occur to assist in restoring our lost mental balance; and fresh interests, fresh friendships, fresh occupations arise in place of the blighted hopes of yore.

There is no grandeur in owning oneself defeated, no heroism in suicide—that last desperate resort of those who have been slighted by the world. We must all acknowledge that the truly courageous man is he who, after a rebuff, sets his teeth hard, clenches his fists, and pulls himself together once more for another grapple with his evil star, resolutely saying, "I shall get over it!"

Every great man's life is full of such episodes; if it were not, he would not deserve the title of "great." Talk not of individual temperament, of a naturally sanguine disposition, of the possession of extraordinary recuperative power as the secret of such heroism. It is not such mere accidents of birth which afford the best shield in the day of adversity.

Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With thy wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great!

MALINE'S CONFESSION.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. VERY DISAGREEABLE.

"I AM glad you have come in, Wilfred. I want to speak to you. Something very disagreeable has happened," said Mr. Caringham, the master of Everleigh Grange, to Wilfred Power, his ward and private secretary.

"I am sorry to hear that. What is it?" asked Power, a dark, good-looking man of about seven-and-twenty.

"That money you fetched from the bank this morning, I can't find it. I put it in this drawer. You know where I keep money, usually; and I had some other money—French notes; and the lot has gone."

"Gone!" exclaimed the other. "Do you mean that it has been stolen?"

"I don't want to use a word like that," replied Mr. Caringham, who was a mild, good-natured, and rather nervous man. "I should be very sorry to think the old Grange had a thief in it. But I'm almost sure I put the money in this drawer."

"I know you did," answered Power; "I saw you do it. There were two rouleaux of gold and some loose sovereigns—about eighty pounds in all—and a few notes."

"I thought you were here. Well, it is gone. I suppose I forgot to lock the drawer. I really ought to trust these things to you; you are so much more thoughtful than I am. Anyway, when I came in about an hour ago, I found the drawer unlocked; and when I looked for the money, I couldn't find it. It is very disagreeable."

"Disagreeable!" repeated the other. "It is a great deal worse than disagreeable. But have you looked everywhere? I suppose you did not take the money out afterwards and put it anywhere?"

"No. Besides, I have been out nearly all the time."

"What time did you discover the loss?"

"About an hour ago—that would be about six o'clock."

"Well, it is very extraordinary. I was working here, looking into these papers about Meadowley Farm, until lunch; and I came back after lunch, and did not leave the room until past four o'clock, when I walked over to Meadowley to get some more particulars of the stock. So it must have happened between four and six o'clock. Had we not better question the servants?"

"No, no," replied Mr. Caringham. "I would not for the world have it get about the place that we have a thief here. Leave things alone, and, if we keep our eyes open, something will probably show where the money has gone; and then we can quietly get rid of whoever the—the person may be," he said, avoiding the word thief. "Never mind the money. I had no right to be so careless as to leave the drawer open. It serves me right."

"You must tell Miss Caringham," said Power. "It will be necessary for every one to be careful."

"I'd rather not; girls do chatter so abominably. But I suppose you are right, and that Maline ought to be put on her guard. Here she comes, I think."

A horse cantered quickly up the drive,

and a moment afterwards a girl's voice was heard calling :

"Papa, papa, where are you?"

The library door was opened by a quick hand, and a bright young girl of about twenty ran in, looking bewitchingly pretty in her habit, her cheeks flushed with rapid riding, and her fair hair slightly disarranged.

"Oh, papa, I am nearly out of breath. I had to ride so fast, and dear old Ruby was so tiresome and would not canter. It was all either joggle or rush; and at last I was obliged to let her have her head and gallop home. I was afraid I should be late. I couldn't get out till very nearly six o'clock, for I was in here, and that novel I was reading positively chained me down to your chair there. People ought not to be allowed to write books that keep other people from going for their ride at a proper time, ought they? But it was very much your fault, too, Mr. Power," said the girl, glancing mischievously at him, "because I couldn't get in here till four o'clock. But," she broke off, suddenly, looking at them both, "what is the matter? You both look as grave as deaf mutes. I'm not very late, am I? Not too late to be forgiven, am I, daddy?"

She said this very caressingly, and went close to Mr. Caringham and put up her face to be kissed, like a spoilt child.

"No, my darling; no," he answered, smiling at her as he kissed her.

"I thought not," she answered, with a merry laugh, adding, with assumed seriousness, "if I was very penitent, you know. But what is it? Has something gone wrong somewhere? Is it another of those horrid farms going to be empty? You'll tell me, Mr. Power, won't you?" she said, turning to him with a pretty gesture of supplication, "even if papa won't?"

The man would have done almost anything in the world she asked him; for in his quiet, reserved nature was a great fire of love for the girl. But he did not reply, leaving Mr. Caringham to answer.

"Well," said the latter, in a hesitating way, "the fact is, Maline, I have lost some money."

The girl changed her manner directly, and went to her father's side and put her arm in his as she said, in a way that showed the true womanly sympathy that was in her nature, and touched both men keenly:

"I hope it is not very serious, dear;

not more serious than we can bear together."

And she took his hand in hers and kissed it.

"No, darling; no," said her father. "Not serious in amount; but disagreeable and disquieting in the way in which it has gone." And he told her what had happened.

"Yes, that is certainly very disagreeable, and I hate to be suspicious. Are you sure you put it in the drawer at all?"

"Yes, quite sure. Wilfred was here when I did so."

"What do you think about it, Mr. Power?" asked the girl.

"I do not know what to think; and you have made the puzzle greater."

"I?" said the girl, quickly, turning to him; "how is that?"

"Because, during the whole time since the money was put in the drawer, until the time of the discovery, the room seems to have been occupied first by me, then by you. I confess myself beaten."

"There must be some mistake somewhere. I should think you'll find the money, papa. But I must go and get my habit off. I will promise to be cautious about my things; but I have always left them about, and never lost a pennyworth of anything."

"Maline," said Mr. Caringham, calling her back for a moment and shutting the door, "be careful, my child, also, not to breathe a word about this in the house. I wouldn't have it get about for ten times the amount of the money."

"Very well, papa," she answered; "I'll not speak of it to a soul."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT WILFRED FOUND IN THE LIBRARY.

THE comfort of the little household at the Grange was very much affected by the unpleasant incident of the theft of the money; and though each of the three who knew of it searched everywhere, and endeavoured to find some trace of it, no result followed.

Three days after the discovery, Mr. Caringham was called away on magisterial business to Quarter Sessions; and Wilfred shut himself up in the library, determined to finish some accounts which had given him some trouble.

At lunch, Maline told him she was going for a drive to the little town near, to make

some few purchases; and shortly after lunch she came into the library to him, dressed ready for starting, with her purse in her hand, to ask some trivial questions about some one in the town. She stayed a few minutes, until her pony carriage was announced, when they rose together and went out.

Wilfred stood a short time by the little carriage, while a suggestion of his was carried out: that, as Maline was going to drive, one of the ponies should be put on the curb instead of the snaffle. And then he watched her as she drove away down the avenue.

The first thing that caught his eye, when he went back to the library, was the purse that the girl had left on the table. He picked it up and ran out, thinking to call her back; but one of the maids, standing in his way in the hall rather clumsily hindered him, and the carriage was out of sight when he reached the steps.

He carried the purse back into the library and tossed it down on the table in a hurry to get on with his work. The catch was faulty, and the purse opened as it fell, one or two of the coins rolling out. He picked them up to replace them, and glanced, as he did so, into the purse.

To his amazement, he saw two French one-hundred franc notes, clumsily folded, lying in the purse. The number of one of them was on the top, and he could not help reading it.

It was the number of one of the stolen notes. He knew this because Mr. Caringham had given them to him to enter when they had been received some weeks before; and, after the theft, he had referred to the entry.

He closed the purse and placed it where it had been left by the girl. Then he sat down to think.

What could it mean? How came the stolen notes in the girl's possession?

He could do no work with that thought in his mind. More than that, he could not bear to be in the room when she returned for the purse. He hurriedly put his papers away, and went out into the air.

Could she have taken the money?

He tried his best to put the thought away from him as he hurried on as fast as he could walk along the roads; but it kept recurring with every corroborative circumstance that seemed to grow out of the strange discovery.

He was so absorbed that he noticed nothing; and, as he turned a sharp twist in

the lane, he would have been knocked down if he had not sprung quickly to the side when some one called to him out of a carriage which was being driven swiftly towards him.

It was Maline, and she pulled up sharply.

"Why, Mr. Power, I thought you were going to be at work?"

He looked up quickly and saw, or thought he saw, signs of anxiety in her face as she continued:

"I have left my purse at home, somewhere, and have to drive all the way back to find it."

"Why, would they not give you credit in Marshley?" he asked, trying to make his voice natural; but failing so much and appearing so constrained that the girl noticed it.

"It is not that; but there is something in the purse I particularly want: some patterns, and so on."

And again the man thought he could see that she was very anxious.

"You left the purse in the library," he said, looking at her. "I saw it after you had gone, and tried to catch you with it; but could not. You will find it there now."

This time he was certain that her manner showed confusion, as she gathered up the reins of the ponies and drove off, saying:

"Then I must make haste and fetch it. Good-bye."

A fierce struggle raged in the man's mind as he continued his walk for some hours through the woods and lanes; and when he reached the Grange, just before the dinner hour, he was disquieted and agitated.

He saw Maline in the drawing-room a few minutes before dinner. They were waiting for Mr. Caringham, who had come in later than usual; and he said to her:

"Did you find your purse all right?"

"Yes, thank you," she answered; but in a manner so completely different from her usual tone, that he looked at her in astonishment.

She returned the look steadily enough; but she seemed so serious and grave that he was startled.

"I am glad of that," he said.

"But I am afraid I disturbed your papers," she said, not looking at him, but staring out of the window, and speaking in a voice that trembled. "I knocked your blotting pad on to the floor and scattered the contents; but I tried to put

them back, as far as I could, in the same order."

"It is not of the least consequence," he answered. And then they said no more until Mr. Caringham came down, and they all went to dinner.

During the whole of that night Wilfred Power did not sleep. All the facts of the robbery—as he knew them, and as they were coloured by the light of the day's discovery—were reviewed by him, time after time.

The sight of the notes in the girl's purse; her evident anxiety to get back quickly from her drive to secure the purse; and her manifest trouble and agitation when he next saw her and asked her about it—a condition of mind that had lasted the whole evening—perplexed and confounded him.

Try as he would, he could not get away from the conviction which, though it at first had seemed impossible, had afterwards gathered weight: the conviction that she had, for some reason, taken the money.

Then he tried to think what must be the consequences to her of discovery. What would the father think of the child he almost idolised if he had to know her as a thief?

This thought pained him beyond measure.

He loved the girl with all the force of his nature, and the father had been to him as a father; had taken him when young and friendless, educated him, and treated him just as a son.

Could he do anything to avert the blow which he saw must fall upon Mr. Caringham if once the fearful truth were known?

Out of this thought grew a resolve that was quixotic, but quite characteristic of the man: he would endeavour to draw upon himself Mr. Caringham's suspicion, and so shield the girl.

He thought long and anxiously of the best means of doing this, without actually stating that he was the thief. And he decided to tell Mr. Caringham that he must go away, and to tell him in such a manner as to make him connect the departure with the theft.

He rose in the morning looking haggard and ill after the night of struggle, but firm in his resolve.

"I don't understand you, Wilfred," was Mr. Caringham's first comment, when the other told him he wished to go away. "What is it? What's the matter? What do you want?"

"I want nothing, except to go away."

"Well, but—my boy, I can't do without you. You are just like my son—the dear lad whose place you've taken. Do you mean you want to go away for good and all and leave the old Grange? Tell me, my lad, why?"

"I can't tell you why, Mr. Caringham."

"Can't tell me why, Wilfred, not after all these years?"

"No, I can't tell you," answered the other, keenly touched by the old man's words.

"But it's so sudden. Can't you wait awhile—give me a little time to prepare myself? It will be like losing the lad over again." Then he paused and added: "Are you in any trouble, my boy? I mean, have you got into any kind of scrape? Tell me, and I'll do all I can for you."

"No, Mr. Caringham. I have a trouble; but none you can help me through," answered Power.

"Is it—is it anything to do with Maline?" asked the old man.

This was a home-thrust, and made Wilfred wince.

"I thought you were such friends, and I hoped—but there, what's the good of hoping? Have you quarrelled, you two?" he asked.

"No, Mr. Caringham. It is nothing of that sort."

"Then, what is it? There must be something. It isn't— But there, I won't hurt you by even thinking that you are leaving because of this confounded business of the theft. You're not the lad to leave a place because there's a bit of a slur somewhere about it."

"Unless it were better that I should be away from it," answered Power, at a loss how to make the other suspicious of him.

"But it isn't better. Surely I know best about that. Why, if you were to go now, and this business were ever found out, people would say—by Heavens!—I don't know what they wouldn't say about you."

"Still, it might be best for me to go."

"How on earth could that be, lad?"

"Suspicion must fall on some one—and rightly," he added, in an undertone.

"Maybe; but not on you, my boy. Eh! what? What do you mean by that look? Speak out, boy; speak out," cried the old man, growing terribly eager in his anxiety at the other's manner.

"I cannot speak out. Even after these

years, I dare not. But I must go; and I must go without an explanation, and leave you to think what you will."

"Don't say any more now, Wilfred, unless you want to kill me outright. I don't quite know what you mean me to think; but you have roused such horrible thoughts that I can't bear any more now."

"Try not to think too hardly of me, for the sake of old times; and tell no one," said Power, as he went out of the room and closed the door gently behind him.

The old man laid his face in his hands as soon as he was alone, and murmured to himself in broken tones:

"A thief! A thief!"

He had rushed, like many people, from the one extreme of the impossibility of holding a suspicion to the other of absolute conviction.

He sat alone a long time, and then rang and sent a servant for Wilfred. She returned and said Mr. Power had gone out, but had left a letter.

He opened it with trembling hands.

"Before I go away, finally, I should like to see you once more. I shall return to Everleigh in three days for this purpose, and this purpose only. Try to explain my absence if you can, and grant my request for one more interview. I am going now to Overton.—W. P."

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

THIS latest addition to the brotherhood of self-governing States bearing the British flag, has not a brilliant history. It is the Cinderella of the Australian colonies, and has suffered both from poverty and snubs. But now that it is developing from a Crown dependency into a full-blown colony with responsible Government, it will hold up its head with pride and hope among its sisters.

It is the giant of the Antipodean family, although a weakling. Its area covers quite one-third of the whole Australasian continent. Put into figures, its acreage, including islands, exceeds one million square miles, and its coast-line stretches for some three thousand five hundred lineal miles. These are very big figures, and as indicative of space, they compare ridiculously with the population, which barely exceeds forty thousand—forty-two thousand was the last estimate.

From an Imperial point of view it possesses two distinct claims to our atten-

tion. It was the last of our distant possessions to which we deported the refuse of our prisons; and it is the last remnant of the Imperial heritage, available for our surplus population, over which the Imperial Government has retained a hold. The first concerns its history; the second, its potentiality. Let us take a look at both.

Although the colony of Western Australia now comprises all the Australian continent west of the hundred and twenty-ninth east meridian, and between the thirteenth and thirty-fifth south parallels, its germ was what was long known as the Swan River Settlement—away down in the south-west corner of the present territory, south of the thirtieth parallel. What is now called the Victoria District, however, between the twenty-eighth and thirtieth parallels, was the portion of the continent first discovered. This was by a Portuguese navigator, called Menezes, who seems to have visited Champion Bay, and who gave his name, Abrolhos, to a group of islands off that inlet. This was in 1527, and seventy years later the same islands were visited by Houtman, who added his own name to them. Twenty years later still, Francis Pelsart was shipwrecked on the same spot.

Further north again, between the twenty-sixth and twenty-fourth parallels, is the great indentation of Shark's Bay, which was discovered by a Dutchman in 1616, who gave the name of his pilot, Doore, to an island there. The Captain, Hartog, gave his own name to the whole bay and district; but after him came Dampier, who re-christened it Shark's. Another Dutchman discovered, and named, Cape Leeuwin in 1622; and yet another in, 1627, gave the name of Nuytsland to the coast eastward of that cape. Then, in 1628, De Witt discovered and named De Witt's Land; and seventy years later the entrance to the Swan River was discovered by Vlaming. King George's Sound was entered by Vancouver in 1791, and in 1801 Captain Flinders sailed in the "Investigator" along the south coast, and discovered and named numerous bays and islands. About the same time two French vessels were exploring the western coast, and in 1820-24 the northern coasts were explored and surveyed by Captain King for the English Government.

Such is a brief resumé of the early history of the land, which, it will be seen, was unvisited for nearly a century—from 1697 to 1791. In fact, until Captain Cook went to Botany Bay in 1770, Australia seems

altogether to have been forgotten by Europeans.

The first settlement in West Australia was in 1826. In that year a detachment of the Thirty-ninth Regiment, and some fifty convicts, were sent from Sydney to form a station at Albany, in King George's Sound. A few years later this pioneer settlement was transferred to what is now called Rockingham, a short distance south of the present port of Freemantle, on the west coast. Freemantle is at the mouth of the Swan River, and is so named after Captain Freemantle, of H.M.S. "Challenger," who hoisted the British flag there in 1829. This last act is supposed to mark the birth of the colony, which accordingly celebrated its jubilee in 1879.

The first settlement at the Swan River was made on the recommendation of the Governor of New South Wales, and was placed under the charge of Captain Stirling as Lieutenant-Governor. He took with him, besides his staff, about a dozen artisans, with their wives and families and servants, some fifty head of cattle, a couple of hundred sheep, thirty horses, and a number of pigs and poultry. A chaplain was sent after them, and the little community set to work to found a new England under the Southern Cross.

Within a year or so, some forty emigrant ships were sent to them from home, conveying altogether about one thousand one hundred and twenty new settlers, with goods and property to the value of one hundred and forty-five thousand pounds. To these pioneers the Government granted liberal tracts of land; and to these over-lavish gifts the misfortunes of the colony are said to be due. Most of the colonists were quite unfitted for the work of forming a new community, and most of them left in a short time in disgust. But they retained their land-rights, so that later arrivals, unable to find favourable localities near the settlement, had either to go further afield, or, as many of them did, depart to one of the other colonies where the attractions were greater.

In 1830, the city of Perth was founded, about twelve miles up the Swan River from Freemantle, and was made the capital and seat of Government. And here, even in 1830, as we learn from Mr. James Bonwick's recent interesting account of the early struggles of the Australian press, a newspaper was started. It was in manuscript, and a visitor of that year thus wrote of Freemantle:

"The town at present contains about a dozen wooden cottages, as many grass huts, one or two stone buildings, two hotels, several stores and shops, an auction-mart, a butcher's shop, where once a week fresh meat may be bought, and a baker's shop kept by a Chinaman, where unleavened bread is sometimes to be had. A newspaper called the 'Freemantle Journal,' in manuscript, is published weekly, which, like everything else, bears a very remunerative price. It is issued, only to subscribers, at ten guineas yearly subscription, and three shillings a copy on delivery."

This manuscript newspaper consisted of one foolscap sheet; but, even at the high charge made for it, does not seem to have paid, for it ceased to be issued in 1832. A very few years later, however, Byrne, in his "Wanderings," reported that he found no fewer than three flourishing newspapers in Western Australia, besides the "Government Gazette." He considered it very strange that this new colony should want one newspaper for every thousand of its inhabitants; but he thought that the fact spoke well "for the character of the people, for their desire for information and thirst after knowledge."

The difficulty, one would imagine, would be for the publishers to get advertisements, as well as subscribers; but even to-day it is doubtful if any colony has so many newspapers to so few people as West Australia has.

For the first ten years the colony made practically no progress, owing to the mistakes made in and with the first emigrants. About 1840 it began to pick up a little, under Governor Hutt, so that by 1848 the population was reported at four thousand six hundred and twenty-two, the land under cultivation at seven thousand and forty-seven acres, the horned cattle at ten thousand nine hundred, the sheep at one hundred and forty-one thousand one hundred and twenty, the horses at two thousand and ninety-five, and the goats at one thousand four hundred and thirty. By this time there were two banks in operation, and the external trade had grown to forty-five thousand four hundred pounds for imports, and twenty-nine thousand six hundred pounds for exports.

But what a bagatelle, after all, were these figures for a community claiming dominion over a million square miles! Evidently the colonists felt that something must be done to add to their numbers, for in 1850 they resorted to the heroic measure

of petitioning the Home Government to make the Swan River a convict settlement. The Home Government were only too delighted, and promptly sent them ship-load after ship-load, until when, in 1868, transportation ceased, about ten thousand convicts had been landed on its shores. No doubt many of these made their way, from time to time, to the Victorian gold-fields. But with these additions, and the natural increase of population, the colony has so far expanded as to have now over one hundred and six thousand acres under cultivation, and one hundred and six millions six hundred thousand acres held for pastoral purposes. It now owns two millions of sheep, ninety-five thousand eight hundred horned cattle, twenty-five thousand pigs, forty-one thousand four hundred horses, and four thousand goats; and it carries on trade with the outer world to the extent of about a million and a half sterling per annum.

It will thus be seen that this colony is not quite the "one-horse" affair people at home have been accustomed to consider it. This handful of forty thousand people must be a fairly industrious community to have done so much, and to have, besides, constructed seven hundred miles of railway, and four thousand miles of telegraph.

So far it has been what is called a Crown colony, with the officials, as well as the Governor, appointed by the Home Government, and with a single Legislative Chamber of twenty-six members, five of whom are nominated by the Governor, and the rest of whom must have freehold property of the value of one thousand pounds, and be elected by freeholders or leaseholders. Henceforward it hopes to manage its own affairs, like the other Australasian colonies, with two elective Chambers, a popular franchise, and the choice of its own Ministry and officials. Under the new constitution it is obtaining from the Imperial Parliament, it hopes to do wonders. Let us see, now, what are its capabilities.

In the first place, it must be remembered that a very large portion of its million square miles is, as far as at present known, wholly useless. Along the entire western coast there are ranges of hills of moderate altitude, and vast forests. Between these hills and the coast the land is, for the most part, fertile; but beyond the hilly and wooded districts is a vast interior, which is supposed to present nothing but a sandy and stony waste, all the way to the

borders of South Australia. It is possible, however, that the extent, or, at all events, the uselessness, of this desert tract has been exaggerated, because, in the extreme north and north-west, large, fertile tracts have been of late years discovered where sterility was formerly believed to prevail. These northern lands are said to be adapted not only for pastoral purposes, but also for the cultivation of sugar, coffee, and other tropical products; for, of course, the northern portion of the colony must be accounted as within the tropics.

There are numerous rivers along the north and western portions, although many of them are dry for a good portion of the year; but the only navigable stream within the settled portion of the colony is the Swan River. In this region, too, the whole of the uncultivated portion is said to consist of a vast forest of jarrah and white gum.

There are two distinct climates in the colony. That of the southern portion, say from Perth to Albany, is declared to be the most delightful and salubrious in the world—at least for nine months of the year, the other three months being hot during the day, although cool and pleasant at night. That of the northern portion, within the torrid zone, has always a high temperature, and an excessive summer heat, but with a remarkably dry atmosphere, which makes it more healthy than most tropical climates. It is to this northern portion that settlement is now being attracted by the discovery of gold, and the reputed existence of coal.

The climate of the middle portion of the colony is likened to that of Southern Italy and Spain; that of the southern portion to a warm dry English or French summer. The seasons are wet and dry, the former lasting from April to October. There are none of the long droughts experienced in this colony which work such havoc in other parts of Australia, nor are heavy floods common during the rainy season. Europeans are able to go about freely in all weathers and all seasons, without inconvenience, and epidemic diseases are almost unknown. On the other hand, consumptive persons have often taken a new lease of life in Western Australia. There is, indeed, a strong belief that Albany, in King George's Sound, will become a sanatorium in connection with our Indian empire, as it is only ten days' steaming from Ceylon, and it may even become a health-resort for English people.

The principal products of the colony so far, for export purposes, have been wool, hides, leather, tallow, oil, lead and copper ores, gum, pearl and pearl-shells, horses and sheep. The pearl fishery, which is on the north-west coast, is an old and a growing industry, employing many persons, and yielding about one hundred thousand pounds per annum at present.

But of the natural products of the colony, timber is by far the most important. Visitors to the Colonial Exhibition of 1886 could see specimens of the more valuable of the trees which abound in West Australia. The principal is the Jarrah, or Australian mahogany, which is one of the hardest and most durable woods known, being almost impervious to the action of insects and of water. Of this valuable tree, which grows to immense size, there are said to be quite fourteen thousand square miles. Next to it in nature is the Karri, most useful for building purposes, which grows to the height of three hundred feet, and also covers thousands of square miles. Then there is Sandal-wood, which for many years has been exported to China and India, but which has been rather ruthlessly destroyed in the localities most favourable for shipment. There were several other timbers exhibited in the West Australian Court at the "Colinderies," on which experts reported in high terms, and in which a lucrative trade is gradually developing. And these are the gifts of Nature, which only require to be gathered without the preliminaries of cultivation.

Vine-culture is to be one of the leading future industries of the colony, according to a recent authority who knows the land thoroughly. Australian wines are now well known in this country; but, so far, none have come from West Australia. But wine is being made there, and is declared to be very palatable and sound. With a little more experience, and the assistance of skilled wine-growers from Europe, the West Australians expect to be able to outdo their neighbours of Victoria. On the Darling range of hills, vineyards are multiplying steadily, and the grapes are said to be equal in flavour to those grown in English vineries.

As regards the soil and its capabilities, we may cite the authors of a recognised authority, the "Australian Handbook."

"The soil consists of vast tracts of sand and scrub, which is of little value; of much land suitable for sheep-grazing purposes

and for farming operations; and of extensive areas that will yet become available for the growth of the sugar-cane and other tropical productions. The eastern side of the Roe and Darling Ranges is specially suitable for the grazier and farmer. In the north, too, there are extensive grassy downs, capable of pasturing vast numbers of sheep and cattle. On the Lower Greenhough River, one flat alone contains ten thousand acres of very fine land, giving, with very slight exceptions, thirty bushels of wheat to the acre. The presence of poisonous plants is one of the greatest drawbacks to stock-raising in some parts of the country. The greater extent of the sea-board is separated from the interior by low ranges of hills running parallel to it, and covered with forests, principally of jarrah. The fertile land exists in patches, and some of it is of a very rich character. On the whole, the soil may be said to possess immense productive powers, but as yet under unfavourable circumstances. It is proposed to introduce the buffalo-grass, in order to utilise gradually the sandy tracts. Couch, or doob-grass, has been largely introduced for paddocks. It thrives abundantly, grows upon the poorest soil, and, in the hottest and driest weather, affords substantial pasture."

West Australia is, in the southern portion, essentially a land of fruit. There apples, pears, peaches, plums, figs, almonds, olives—every fruit, indeed, of the temperate zone, grow to perfection, and with little effort. The distance is too great for these fruits to be sent fresh to European markets, but an industry is possible in preserved fruits.

There is no doubt, however, that the colonists are resting high hopes of future prosperity on the gold deposits they believe they possess, but of which until lately the country was supposed to be devoid. Mr. Woodward, the Government geologist, has reported the existence of rich mineral belts from one end of the colony to the other. Rich lodes of lead and copper have long been known in the region of Champion Bay; and lead and copper ores have been for some time regular exports. Something has been attempted, but not successfully, although the Government offered a bonus of a pound a ton for the first ten thousand tons of lead smelted in the colony. Still, its day will come.

Gold was first discovered on the Irwin River, and on the first report there was a great rush of diggers. The quantity was

not great, and most of the miners left in disgust. It was next found near Albany, and a year or two ago ago also at Newcastle, in the eastern district. But the greatest finds have been in the Kimberly district, in the north of the colony. There was a great rush to this district for a time, and although many of the diggers again left, swearing at the colony, some rich discoveries have since been made, and Kimberly is being added to the list of steady gold-producing regions of the world. It is, however, obtained by reefing, not by washing, and is not the place for the sudden making of splendid fortunes, like the Victorian diggings in their palmy days. Companies with capital are erecting crushing machinery; and very handsome yields are reported. About a thousand men are now employed in the new gold-fields, and the exports in 1888 were estimated at fifty thousand ounces.

Coal has also been found in two or three places, and is now being worked; and within the last two years several companies have been formed for tin-mining. Altogether, the mineral wealth of the country is proving very great, if not so great as that of Victoria and New South Wales.

Perth, the capital, is a well-laid-out city of some ten thousand inhabitants, beautifully situated, and well supplied with numerous public buildings, churches, clubs, schools, banks, etc. It is connected by railway and river-steamer with Fremantle, the chief port of the colony. This is a busy little place of some five thousand inhabitants, with a moderately good harbour, and a considerable export and import trade. Albany is located in one of the finest harbours on the whole Australian coasts; and it is predicted that King George's Sound will become not only an intercolonial harbour-of-refuge, but also a great naval station for Imperial, as well as for colonial, purposes.

Such, then, are some of the features and possibilities of the new addition to the honourable roll of British self-governing colonies. Our sketch has been necessarily rapid, but enough has been said to show that, although the past of Western Australia has not been brilliant, she has yet the making of a great colony. In her enormous area, much of which has never been trodden by the foot of white man, there must be room and to spare for tens of thousands of our own crowded millions.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellast,"
"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE EVE OF THE WEDDING.

No wonder that outsiders were puzzled by the unusual apathy that reigned at Rushbrook House with reference to Elva Kestell's marriage to Walter Akister. Ever since the day when she had consented, she had never—except to go to church—set foot outside the grounds of Rushbrook, and she had allowed no one to mention her marriage to her but Amice and her mother. From her mother, indeed, she tried to hide her motives; but with Amice she could not succeed, till she had decidedly and sternly forbidden the subject to be again mentioned between them.

Walter had come down to Rushbrook, summoned there by a letter from Mr. Kestell. He had found the old man kindness itself, settlements were soon agreed upon, and the pale, benevolent face of Mr. Kestell was lit up with true joy when he said:

"Akister, my dear fellow, I see that yours is indeed true, disinterested love; I believe you would marry Elva even if she were poor."

"I would," said Walter, decidedly; "I shall have enough for both. If"—he was suddenly fixed with the idea that Kestell of Greystone, might, after all, not be the rich man he was supposed to be, and that it was for this reason that mean scoundrel had made off—"if, Mr. Kestell, you have the least reason for not wishing to settle anything on your daughter at this moment please say so, I shall not mind in the least, neither will my father. Elva and I can wait till we are older to enjoy riches. We want so little for ourselves; and she loves you, I know, better than herself."

Mr. Kestell was at his knee-hole table, and he lifted his pale blue eyes to the lover's face. There was nothing prepossessing in the young man's appearance, the habitual scowl seemed even more pronounced than usual; but in his words there was much that was honest and noble. Even now the old man paused; was this another door opened to him, one more chance of escaping from these haunting thoughts that were slowly, as it seemed, killing him!

Here was one who loved Elva enough to send everything to the winds for her sake. Everything—even honour! Ah! if he could be sure of that, if he were certain that—No, he could not be sure, so he rose and grasped Walter's hand with more than his accustomed fervour, and said:

"Walter, your words prove you to be all I could wish. As to money, we will leave your lawyer to settle that. I—I will settle any sum in reason he likes to name on her; but let the wedding be soon, very soon, I am far from well, and mortals must not trifle with time."

"Soon—Mr. Kestell, I would it were to-morrow; but I must let Elva decide. You know she wrote to me; perhaps I might see her now for a few minutes. Otherwise I shall respect her wishes; she wishes to be left to herself till our wedding day. It is all nonsense about getting well acquainted; we have known each other from childhood."

"You are very generous, Walter; it is not every man who would respect her wishes."

"What care I?" he muttered. "When she is my wife she must love me, must put up with me at least."

Mr. Kestell led the way to the morning room, he knew Elva was there; he opened the door with a trembling hand and called out:

"Elva, dearest. Here is Walter."

Elva rose and came forward. Her father was gone, and had shut the door before Walter hastily approached her. She held out her hand; but she would not let him kiss her.

"I told papa I would see you now, to-day, Walter; and then you know what I said in my note."

"Yes," he answered, sullenly.

"I want to be quite sure you understand. I want to say it now, and then we need never mention it again—never——"

"As you like," he said, with a gleam of intense passion in his eyes, though his words were cold like hers.

"You have heard that my happiness was wrecked. For some reason, which I do not know, the man I loved broke off our engagement. I have never seen him again. Papa tells me I never shall. I cannot see how it can be possible. But I do love him still—I believe I told you so, Walter—and I shall never love another as I loved him. I do not love you; but I am touched that you should care for some one who is—— Well, as for me, I am

marrying you because papa wishes it intensely, and I love him better than any one else in the world now. I am not deceiving you, Walter; never reproach me with that."

"I never will. You are not deceiving me."

"Won't you reconsider your wish? Think, Walter, how much happier you could be if—if your wife loved you."

"I shall look after my own happiness," he said, biting his lip to keep in stronger expressions.

"Remember that, when I am your wife, I shall know how to make people respect you; but that I shall never pretend to more. And, and—oh, Walter, won't you think better of it again? Won't you give me up now—now, before it is too late?"

"By Heaven, I won't!" he said, fiercely. "Do you think that now I have proved to you the falseness of that man, now that you see how utterly unworthy he was to marry you, do you imagine that now I shall give you up? Why didn't you say yes when I first asked you? Why did you let me go through that other time?"

The ill-restrained force of the unchecked nature might have attracted some women. Elva only shrank from it as she would have done had she seen molten iron issuing from the imprisoning furnace. To her mind Love was not to be thus desecrated; for it was too beautiful a thing to be sullied with rude passion. She shrank away a little farther from him.

"I have suffered a great deal," she said, with the quietness of despair. "I can hardly bear any more. Good-bye now, till—that day. Remember, if—if you ever feel any doubt, say so, and I shall understand. I can face what people will say now," she added, with a smile so utterly sad that Walter turned away.

"You need not fear that I shall throw you over," he said, taking her hand and grasping it. "What do I care for the gossip of idle women? Some women's tongues are full of envy, some of them think you are a jilt; and if you were, I would still marry you, Elva."

She motioned him away. This personal possession, which he seemed alone to care for, not only frightened her, but repelled her. She experienced the feeling that, if he stayed much longer in the room, she would fling all her previous reasoning to the winds, and tell her father she could not accomplish the sacrifice she was making for him. Why was he so very, very

anxious to see her married? Why was she not a Roman Catholic, that she might fly to a convent and rest? Why was her love for her father so great that, for his sake, she had done this thing?

"Please go now, Walter," she said.

Walter had a moment's impulse to disobey her; but she was going to be his own so soon, he could humour her for a little while longer. Women were like that, so fickle and uncertain.

"We shall have time enough to talk during our honeymoon," he said, sullenly; and then he walked away without once looking back.

Left alone, Elva remained plunged in dumb misery. She did not feel as if she were the same Elva as she had been; she was some one else; she was speaking, walking, acting in a dream—a hideous dream; the daily events now made no impression on her mind. The last thing she distinctly remembered was telling her father she would do as he wished—she would marry Walter. Constantly she seemed mentally to be going to her father and saying the same thing:

"Papa, for your sake I will, for your sake."

If now and then she struggled into new consciousness, it was merely to experience a feeling of such fear and dread at what she was going to do, that she had at once to seek out Amice or her mother, and begin talking on indifferent matters.

This, of course, always turned on the wedding preparations. Mrs. Kestell once more began throwing herself into the preparations, only remarking:

"I hope, Elva, this time there will be no more jilting. I shall never show my face again in the neighbourhood if you throw over another lover. As it is, I see Mrs. Eagle Bennison looks upon you as a very badly brought-up young lady. Then the Fitzgeralds—all their long letters of sorrow make me see well enough how rejoiced they are that, after all, one of you will not be first married. Louisa has engaged herself to that decrepit Hungarian Count, so that she may be married first and be called Countess. I have told your aunt that as the Honourable Mrs. Akister you will hold a better position in society than any foreigner can hope to fill."

No; Elva made no allusion to herself. This time she was tied and bound to be married to Walter Akister, a man she had once despised and laughed at, but whom she was now beginning to fear.

She took no trouble with her trousseau; indeed, most of it lay ready prepared for female admiration. Wedding presents came, a little fitfully, as if to remind Elva that she was said to have jilted her last lover, or, at all events, had given no rightful explanation of her change of purpose.

Amice answered the notes, that was the only thing she could do, having now accepted the doom. To see Elva suffer was far harder than suffering herself. But what could she do as the days passed by so quickly, and as every hour brought them nearer to the wedding-day!

Mr. Kestell was the one decidedly cheerful member of the family. Elva did not notice that his cheerfulness was forced; she accepted his verdict that her marriage was going to cure him of his sleeplessness, and of all his ailments; so she forced herself to smile and to appear cheerful, as she sat with him in his study, whilst he talked to her of his boyhood, and of his parents, whom Elva had never known.

The past was a relief to them both. For the time being it almost blotted out the present.

But Elva could be obstinate about some things. Not even her father's gentle remonstrance could make her wear Walter's engagement-ring of diamonds; nor would she go and pay visits to rich or poor. She sauntered in the garden on her father's arm, but nothing more; neither would she see any one who called. To Mr. Kestell she said:

"Papa, I want to give you every minute of my last home days."

But to herself she repeated:

"I know they are curious about my feelings; they want to probe my motives, but they shall not. That pain I need not have, for how can I be sure that I should not say right out how much I dislike marrying Walter, and that it is simply for papa's sake? Will Hoel see the announcement? What will he think? Why did he not come to me? Hoel, Hoel, my only love, what did I do to displease you?"

And so the day drew very near. There were but two days now. It was Tuesday, and the wedding was to be at half-past two o'clock on Thursday; Elva had begged for that hour in order to avoid the wedding breakfast. Rushbrook House was to be thrown open, and a general squash and tea-party was to announce that Miss Kestell of Rushbrook House had been united to Lord Cartmel's only son.

Mr. Kestell's delicate state of health was excuse enough for avoiding a breakfast; and the tea was to consist of every choice fruit, and every possible hospitality to make up for the disappointment of speeches.

Happily when money is of no consideration, trouble is much minimised; and Amice, who wrote all the notes, was the only one of the family who felt the burden of the approaching wedding.

Amice was in a strange state just then. Elva was too much occupied with her own burden of sorrow to notice this, as she otherwise would have done; all her actions seemed mechanical. She was always at work, but it was because she made almost superhuman efforts not to give way. Formerly she had leant on Elva, now she knew she must keep up; formerly she would have retired to her room, and on her knees she would have prayed that the curse might pass away. Now she had to write notes. She had to interview tradespeople, dressmakers. She had to go out to the cottages and help Miss Heaton about the clothing of the regiment of maidens who were to line the churchyard path as Elva walked up, and were to strew white flowers for the bride to step on.

And Amice did all this, but all the time she was conscious that this busy, active Amice was not the real one. Her true self was a far different person; a girl who felt that she was under a mysterious power of which she could not explain the nature. She seemed to see, oh so terribly clearly, just as if it were revealed to her, every pang that Elva experienced, and which made her miserable. She could divine her sister's shrinking from her self-imposed task; and from this she could easily deduce the future misery of the being she loved most on earth.

"And yet," thought Amice, "I warned her long ago against Walter Akister, and she did not understand me; I did not understand it myself. Heaven sends me these warnings as a punishment, for they are useless, utterly useless — and that other warning, oh, what is it? What is it?"

Amice put her hand over her burning eyes as if she would force back the new image. Image, no, it was not that exactly; it was as if her eyeballs were burning in their sockets, as if the great pain this caused her spread a misty veil of red over everything she looked at; as if this red colour sickened her, and caused her to long intensely to rush away out of the house.

But when she did so the pain and dim red mist followed her, the air came like hot wind from a furnace, upon her forehead; the sickening thought that she was losing her mind would present itself to her, and yet she could go through all the daily duties with perfect clear-sightedness without a mistake. Only in prayer could Amice find relief, and time for prayer was not easy to get where the hours before the wedding could now be counted.

But one whole day before she should lose her sister! The realisation of this swept like a bitter destructive wave over Amice. Only now she seemed to understand that she had done nothing to save Elva, but that she had accepted the decision calmly. Yet how to act when the whole heart is sick, and when the brain appears about to pass over the narrow border which divides sanity and insanity. Amice fancied the air was oppressive; she fancied that it was not her own fault that she could not breathe, when all around was bathed in that dull-red colour. Did it appear so to every one else, or was it only to her—to her that the curse had come? Or were these the signs of some illness that was about to attack her?

Should she ask Elva's advice? No, it would be cruel; she must bear it alone; it was braver not to burden others with her fears, especially Elva, who was in such sore trouble already. Life was, after all, not such a simple thing as it had appeared to her and Elva when, as children, they wandered over their beloved heathy hills. No, life was a network of fearful responsibilities, the skeins of which were always becoming entangled; and those who tried to unwind the tangles only made matters worse.

Suddenly Amice started up; she had forgotten where she was, till Jones's matter-of-fact voice recalled her with his deep-toned:

"Dinner is on the table."

It was their last dinner together as a family. Amice remembered this now, and knew she had been dreaming. Was it dreaming, or reality? Behind the curtain, on the low window seat, Elva, in a black dress, which strongly brought out the paleness of her face, had been sitting at her father's feet, with her hand in his, whilst Mrs. Kestell knitted, and spoke now and then about her new nurse, who had captivated her by much sympathy with supposed ailments.

Amice knew she was certainly quite

awake now, even though the dull-red colour remained.

"Our darling's last dinner," said Mr. Kestell. "Dearest, you will come in, won't you?" he added, turning to his wife.

"Yes; Amice, give me your arm. It is fortunate you are not going to be married. Josiah, go on with Elva, and let me see how well she can take a position as lady of the house."

"The Honourable Mrs. Akister!" said Mr. Kestell, playfully, excitedly almost. "I am sure the array of presents in the big library is enough to furnish a palace. You will quite change the character of the observatory. We shall have fine doings there this summer."

"You must come and see me every day, papa, or else I shall come here. Both I expect."

Before Jones and the footman the conversation was chiefly about presents. Elva had wonderful power over herself, she was like a man going to execution; the last pride left to her was to show no white feather before the callous and heartless crowd.

After dinner, Mrs. Kestell retired to her room, and Amice went with her; but she was soon dismissed in favour of the new treasure. Where should she go? The oppression of every room increased, however. Elva might want her, so she ran down to the drawing-room, where her sister had been singing a favourite song to Mr. Kestell. Seeing Amice, she rose and went to meet her, and drawing her gently to her father, said softly, with a voice full of tears, and yet that struggled against emotion:

"Papa, I leave you Amice; you will soon find out how much better she is than I am."

Amice's large blue eyes dilated as Mr. Kestell raised his to them. Every nerve

in her body seemed to stiffen, her voice refused to speak; an overpowering breathlessness took possession of her, and the dull-red haze blotted out her father's face. She wrenched her hand away from Elva's arm.

"Let me go, dear, let me go. I don't feel well; I must have some air. Don't come with me, don't follow me. Stay with papa."

Then she escaped. She shut the drawing-room door as if she feared pursuit; she snatched a hat and shawl as she crossed the hall; then, opening the front door, she hurried out. She must get air—air. She must get away from herself and from that.

Down the drive and across the road and on to the bridge; and there, in another moment, she stood face to face with Jesse Vicary.

That brought her back to mundane thoughts when, straight and gaunt, he stood before her. His broad shoulders, mysteriously defined in the half-light—for it was still light—looked powerful, his very demeanour was new and strange, as indeed was his voice when he spoke.

"Miss Kestell, may I see your father? Or, rather, to do away with shams, I must see him."

His tone of authority displeased Amice.

"You have chosen badly. It is my sister's last evening at home. To-morrow is her wedding-day."

"Excuse me, I waited till to-day to come."

Again Amice felt that she was the culprit.

"Do you want me to announce you?"

"I don't care. I must see Mr. Kestell."

"Come, then. You will find out for yourself that he cannot see you."

"The time of cannot is past; now it is must," he muttered half to himself as he followed her.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOIS, on the upper floor, tossing restlessly on her bed, felt, like Herrick, oppressed by the great and sudden stillness which had seemed to fall upon the house.

"It is the coming of the Angel of Death," she said to herself. "All creation sinks into silence before him. Perhaps even now he stands upon the doorstep." And acting as she ever did upon impulses for which she could offer no reason, she sprang from her bed, flung wide her case-ment, and peered into the outer darkness as if she expected her eyes there and then to be greeted by some strange and awful sight.

And Lady Joan, keeping her drear night-watch in the room below, was likewise conscious of the sudden lull which seemed to have fallen upon creation, and which seemed something other than the herald of an approaching storm. As she sat there, a mute watcher beside the dying man, with eyes fixed, strange to say, not upon his pain-stricken features, but upon a small table at the foot of the bed, the thoughts of her heart seemed in that intense stillness to speak as with living voice to her:

"Southmoor to be sold! Only that feeble, useless life in the other room between you and wealth that would buy Southmoor thrice over! Thirty years of bondage for nothing! And there in that little bottle on that table is aconite enough

to end that feeble life a dozen times over."

This was about the pith of those thoughts which, with ceaseless iteration, had rung in her ears, and which now seemed to be, as it were, proclaiming themselves from a house-top.

That hard-featured Yorkshire woman with a handkerchief tied over her head, who sat like a wooden piece of furniture in a farther corner, must surely hear them, and would presently start up and put that bottle under lock and key. John, too, as he lay so white and still, possibly caught the gist of them in some troubled dream; and that was why ever and anon his breathing grew so painful and laboured. Herrick, even, in the other room, must be conscious of what was making such a racket in her brain, and would presently rush in and call her a——ah!

Lady Joan, with a start, put her hands over her ears. Would to Heaven the storm would break, the thunder crash over the house, and put to flight this awful stillness! It seemed to her as if all creation had suddenly ceased its own work on purpose to spy in upon her at hers.

This was a terror for which she had not bargained when she had made out her programme for the night.

She rose unsteadily to her feet. She felt she must break the spell of that terrible stillness, or else succumb to it utterly. A word with Herrick in the next room might put all her weird fancies to flight. Why was he, too, so still and silent in there? How was it that never a sound of movement came from the other side of the door?

As she pushed back that door her

question was answered. There sat Herrick, leaning back in his chair, locked in sleep. He looked pale and worn; his brow was knotted into a deep frown. Most mothers, looking down thus on a sleeping son, would have yearned to kiss the sad young face.

"My boy! my boy! Would to Heaven I alone could bear this sorrow!" would have been the cry of most mothers' hearts. Not so Lady Joan. Her thoughts flowed in another current. She took his measure, so to speak, and appraised him as calmly as if he were an utter stranger. How like to her own people he looked, with his handsome, clean-cut features, and dark-brown wavy hair! Why, there were at least a dozen Herricks to be found in the picture gallery at Southmoor; some in Elizabethan, some in Cavalier, and others in Jacobean dress. What in life could be more suitable than that he should marry a daughter of her house and settle down at Southmoor as a representative of the race? What in life would have been more likely to come about if he could have been earlier separated from the baleful plebeian influence of the old grandfather who, even in his dying hour, was bent on encouraging the young man's infatuated passion for a girl of no birth and breeding?

Here a sudden change of expression swept over Lady Joan's face; for the light of the one lamp which hung above Herrick's head was caught and refracted by a half-hoop of diamonds and rubies on his finger exactly similar to one she had noted upon Lois White's hand as it had rested in old Mr. Gaskell's clasp.

Her lips tightened.

What would be the end of all this, if she were to remain quiescent and inactive in this crisis of his life and her own? Now, supposing she were to go to him—not to-day nor to-morrow, but at some future time—and say: "Herrick, Southmoor is to be sold." Would he at once exclaim: "Mother, let us give up this odiously new place and detestable plebeian trade, buy the old acres, and settle down in your own county among your own people!" No, a thousand times no! Would he not be much more likely to say, as his father and grandfather had before him: "It would be Quixotic to invest money in such a non-paying concern."

Lady Joan turned sharply away. Instead, however, of going back direct to her husband's room, she went out by another

door, and along the corridor towards old Mr. Gaskell's room.

And if one passing along that corridor had chanced to meet her in her clinging grey draperies, he would not have needed to say: "Who is this approaching with weird white face and gleaming eyes?" but would rather have exclaimed: "Where is her knife hidden? Why, here is Atropos herself!"

Whether embodied or otherwise, Fate assuredly must have been abroad in the Castle that night. For there was Lois overhead flinging wide her casement and peering out into the dark, silent world for some invisible, nameless terror; there had been Herrick saying to himself over and over again: "I must keep watch to-night not over two, but over three;" and yet Lady Joan, with steady, silent footsteps, went her way without let or hindrance to old Mr. Gaskell's room.

Parsons lifted her head as Lady Joan entered, and rubbed her eyes, for the old body had been indulging in a quiet nap in her easy-chair between the intervals of her attendance upon her patient.

She made a little stumble and a rush towards a table on which stood cups and glasses containing beef-tea, egg and milk, or other nutritive food.

Lady Joan laid her hand upon her arm.

"Wait a moment, don't disturb him. I want you to go downstairs for me—give him that when you come back. What is it?"

"Beef-tea, my lady! Downstairs, my lady! It won't keep me away from the sick-room long, will it, my lady? For Dr. Scott he did say to me the last thing; my lady, 'Parsons,' he said, 'everything depends on you to-night—give the food and medicine regularly, and——'"

"It won't keep you five minutes out of the sick-room; and I will stay here till you return. There is a storm coming, as perhaps you know."

"Yes, my lady."

"Very well. Mr. Herrick's dog, Argus, has no doubt as usual been left by him in the outer hall; the dog has a terror of thunderstorms, and with the first peal will begin to howl (so terribly we shall hear him here. I want you to take him down to the servants' hall at the other side of the house, and shut him in for the remainder of the night. Stay a moment! Jarvis can go with you if you are afraid to go about the house alone in the middle of the night. I would ask Mr. Herrick to do this, but he

has fallen asleep in the other room, and I do not like to disturb him."

As Parsons and the other nurse departed in company, Lady Joan, softly looking in upon Herrick, saw that he still soundly slept.

After this her movements became hurried and nervous; one look she gave to her still unconscious husband. Was it her fancy, or was his breathing growing fainter and less regular than it had been before? She took possession of the small phial of aconite which stood on the bedside table, and made her way once more to old Mr. Gaskell's room; this time passing, not by way of the corridor, but through the intermediate room. Time was precious; three minutes it would take those two women to reach the outer hall, ten minutes must be allowed to their slow middle-aged movements for reaching the servants' hall on the other side of the house, fastening in the dog, and returning to their post. But no more; it would be rash to allow even a half-minute more than this.

She approached the bedside of the old man slowly, stealthily. Mute, motionless, helpless he lay; his faint, hurried breathing much the same as that of a tired child sinking to sleep after a day of play which has over-taxed his strength. His head and shoulders were propped high on his pillows, his face showed grey and sunken against the white linen; his silvery hair, pushed back from his brow, left every wrinkle bare to view. The contour of his head was noble and impressive, and was thrown into bold relief by the purple satin curtains which canopied the bed, and the purple satin quilt which covered it. Lady Joan could easily have persuaded herself that she was looking down on some dead king lying in state; so regal and motionless the old man looked amid his costly surroundings.

She took possession of the cup of beef-tea which Parsons had placed ready for her patient, and, with the phial of aconite in her other hand, went into the room which intervened between the rooms of the two invalids.

This intermediate room was lighted only by a single lamp, turned low. Lady Joan, with her cup and phial, stood beneath it. Her hand was perfectly steady now; every nerve in it seemed made of steel.

Yet that terrible stillness around, here, there, everywhere! Not so much as a ticking clock within, nor "lisp of leaves" without to drown the clamour of her own

thoughts, which once more seemed to cry aloud to her.

"Now or never, Joan," those thoughts seemed to say now. "Wait till the morning, and your chance is gone! Strike for your freedom, Joan; shake off your manacles! Why should you serve thirty years in bondage for nothing?"

One, two, three drops of the poison fell into the cup.

Hush! What was that? For a moment her hand paused, and her heart seemed to stand still. She looked hastily round. Ah! it was only the big yellow rose in a jar on a side-table falling to pieces. But her nerves had been shaken; her hand trembled; and now the poison drops fell uncounted into the cup.

Hush! Another sound. The door opening, was it? Once more Lady Joan looked round with terror in her eyes. Assuredly the door of the room—the door that opened into the corridor—had been softly opened, and softly, hurriedly closed again.

She set down her phial and cup, and went out hastily into the corridor. It could not be the nurses returned already, she thought, as she strained her eyes right and left along the long, dark passage. In view of possible emergency, this passage had been left dimly lighted at one end, the end at which she stood. Amid the deepening shadows at the farther end she thought she saw a fluttering white skirt disappearing round the bend of the staircase.

Lady Joan's thoughts flew to Lucy Harwood and her somnambulistic tendencies. No doubt to-night, as on the previous night, the girl had come down the staircase and gone along the corridor, feeling her way, and looking for the person or thing whereon her mind was set. Most likely the touch on the cold door-handle had thrilled and awakened her, and she had hastily fled, fearing to encounter Lady Joan's anger.

"She must be taken in hand to-morrow," said Lady Joan, setting her lips tightly together. "In the dim light, and in her half-sleeping state, she can have seen nothing definite."

Moments were getting precious now. Lady Joan swiftly and softly went back to her phial and cup of beef-tea; the one she replaced on the bedside table, the other she carried straight to old Mr. Gaskell's room. She paused for an instant in the doorway to ascertain if his slumber were

still unbroken. Then, swiftly and softly still, she approached his bedside. With one hand she covered her eyes, with the other she set down the cup of beef-tea on the small table.

One wistful, pathetic look from those blue eyes, which recalled at times so vividly the look in another pair of dying eyes, and she felt that her dread purpose might remain unfulfilled.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO o'clock struck in succession softly and sonorously, or briskly and blithely, from a variety of clocks in different parts of the Castle.

Herrick, with a start, awoke and jumped from his chair. All his fears, anxieties, and forebodings came back upon him in a rush. He had been sleeping for an hour! What might not have happened in that hour! He went at once and hastily into the adjoining room.

The nurse came forward to meet him.

"I was about to call you, sir," she said. "I fear Lady Joan's strength is giving way; and I fear, too, a change has taken place in your father."

"Go, call Dr. Scott immediately," was Herrick's reply; and then he went to his father's side and took his hand in his.

Yes; the pulse beat more feebly now; a slight change, a more rigid look, had come into the grey, drawn face. His breath, however, was as before—hard and laboured.

Lady Joan, at the foot of the bed, seemed clinging, as if for support, to the brass rail.

Herrick poured out a glass of wine and took it to her.

"Drink this, mother, or your strength will altogether give way," he said.

Her face appeared to him strangely flushed; her eyes shone with an unnatural light. She drank the wine—eagerly, it seemed to him—and as she gave him back the glass he could see that she was trembling from head to foot, and that the support of the foot-rail of the bed was a necessity to her.

At that moment his attention was diverted from Lady Joan by a sudden, uneasy movement of his father's arm which lay upon the coverlet. His hard, laboured breathing, also, suddenly ceased; his eyes opened wide, and fixed, with an odd, startled look in them, on the door which led through the ante-room to old

Mr. Gaskell's room. Slowly, slowly, his eyes, still with the odd, startled look in them, moved, as if following the motion of some one walking from that door towards the other end of the room.

Lady Joan, standing still at the foot of the bed, seized Herrick's hands in a state of nervous terror.

Clear, slow, and stern, at that moment came John Gaskell's voice from the bed.

"Stand back, Joan," he said, "and let my father pass."

At the same instant the door of old Mr. Gaskell's room opened, and Parsons, looking white and flurried, came in.

"Oh, my lady," she whispered, in a quaking voice, "Mr. Gaskell has just breathed his last. I went to his side a moment ago, and saw that he was sinking rapidly. I had not time to call you or Mr. Herrick before he was gone."

Lady Joan made a strange acknowledgement of the sad tidings. She still trembled from head to foot; her hands, clay-cold, still clutched at Herrick's arm; but she contrived to control her voice sufficiently to say:

"Let there be no mistake, Parsons. At once write down the exact hour and minute at which Mr. Gaskell died."

THE GAY SCIENCE.

THE Gay Science, as poetry was brightly designated by the troubadours, ought surely to promote, not only the gaiety of nations, as it unquestionably does, but the gaiety of its professors, which, according to a certain class of sentimentalists, it does not. A great poet has, indeed, acknowledged that he found his art its own "exceeding great reward"; but the writers to whom I refer persist in ringing the changes upon Shelley's complaint that "Poets learn in suffering what they teach in song," and upon Wordsworth's, that "They begin in gladness," but thereof "comes in the end despondency and madness." They love to connect the Gay Science—an unnatural union—with sorrow and misadventure; to represent the singer as the innocent victim of some mysterious but inevitable Doom—always with a big D. Now, no one can deny that poets have lived unhappy lives; but so have their critics, and many others, and my contention is that their unhappiness has usually arisen in their defects of temper and character, or in the pressure of

external circumstances. I do not believe that genius carries with it a heritage of woe. The poet who, like Wordsworth, or Tennyson, or Browning, dedicates himself to the service of the altar, may count, as it seems to me, upon a reasonable felicity of life. His course will probably be as smooth as—or even smoother than—that of men generally. But it is not less certain that in proportion to his experience of the “*Sturm und Drang*” of the passions, and his intercourse with humanity under varying aspects and conditions, will be the force, truth, depth, and vitality of his song. The poet, of all men, as Julius Hare remarks, has the liveliest sympathy with the world around him, which to his eyes “looks with such a look,” and to his ears “speaks with such a tone,” that he almost receives its heart into his own. Without his vast knowledge of men and manners, and of the darker sides of life, Dante could never have written his “*Divina Commedia*,” nor would Milton, without his share in the sharp contentions of his time, have composed his “*Samson Agonistes*.”

There can be no reason why the poet should be exempt from those vicissitudes which afflict his fellow-men. And there can be no reason, on the other hand, why the cultivation of the Gay Science should bring with it any special penalties. I think that a cursory review of the biography of European poets—I exclude the poets of the United Kingdom on the obvious ground of familiarity—will establish both these conclusions.

Let us begin with Francisco Manoel, a Portuguese bard, who experienced the rude usage of fortune. He incurred the anger of the Inquisition, and one of its agents was sent to arrest him. Suspecting the man's errand, the poet seized a dagger, and threatened to stab him if he spoke. Snatching off his cloak, he wrapped himself in it, turned the key on the emissary, and fled for shelter to the house of a French merchant, until he was able to escape on board a French vessel bound for Havre de Grace.

Benedetto Vardio, the Italian poet, was exposed to no less a danger—not through his genius as a poet, it is true, but through his meddling in politics. Cosmo the First, of Florence, engaged him to write a history of the civil war, in which the Medici had triumphed; and certain persons, who had reason to fear that he would depict them in no favourable colours, attacked him by night, and attempted to

assassinate him. Succour came before they had finished their deadly work; and, though his wounds were serious, he eventually recovered.

Guarini, the celebrated author of “*Il Pastor Fido*”—so admirably translated, with nervous seventeenth-century English, by Sir Richard Fanshawe—tasted the bitterness of banishment. Such was also the ill-fortune of Angelo di Costanzo. Strange was the fate of Alessandro Guidi. His translation of the “*Homilies of Pope Clement the Eleventh*” having passed through the press, he set out to present a copy to the Pope; but on the journey discovered so many misprints in its pages, that his vexation threw him into a fever; and the fever brought on an attack of apoplexy, of which he died. To this melancholy list of unfortunate Italian poets, I may add Silvio Pellico, whose liberal politics gave offence to the Austrian Government of Milan. He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death; but the sentence was commuted to imprisonment in the Spielberg, where he languished for ten weary years. The beautiful narrative of his sufferings, entitled “*Le Mie Prigione*,” is well known in England. The captivity of Tasso, the author of “*La Gerusalemme Liberata*,” who for upwards of seven years was shut up in the Hospital of Santa Anna as a madman, has moved the pity of many a sympathetic heart, but is still involved in mystery.

Banished from his beloved Florence, Dante, the immortal seer and poet of the “*Divina Commedia*,” wandered from town to town, homeless, dependent, and blown hither and thither “by the sharp wind that springs from wretched poverty.” One day he arrived at the convent of the Corvo alle Fori della Marca, where he was received by the monk, Frate Ilario. “And seeing him there,” writes the monk, “as yet unknown to me and my brethren, I questioned him as to what he wished and wanted. He made no answer, but stood and silently contemplated the columns and arches of the cloister. Again I asked him what he wished, and whom he sought. Then, slowly turning his head, and looking at the friars, and at me, he answered, ‘*Pacé!*’ Thereupon, my desire to know him, and whom he might be, increasing, I drew him aside, when, after speaking a few words with him, I recognised him at once; for though I had never seen him before, his renown had long since reached my ears. When he saw how I fixed my

gaze upon his countenance, and with what strange affection I listened to him, he drew from his bosom a book, and opening it gently, offered it to me, saying: 'Sir Friar, here is a portion of my poem, which, perchance, thou hast not seen. This I leave with thee as a token. Forget me not!'

Some time afterwards, the great poet, wrapped in the cowl and mantle of a Franciscan friar, and in the majesty of his austere but mighty genius, lay down to die in the palace of Ravenna. By his bedside lovingly watched Guido da Polenta, his friend and protector—the unhappy father of that Francesca da Rimini, whose sad unrestrained passion forms so touching an episode in Dante's poem. It was the day of the Holy Cross; and we may not unreasonably conjecture that some solemn laud or chant fell on the ears of the dying man, as, hovering on the brink of the grave, "he beheld eyes of light, wandering like stars." After he had expired, the cowl and mantle were removed; he was clothed in the poet's singing-robe, while his friend pronounced a eulogy on his character and genius.

But now let us turn for a moment to the other side of the shield, and we shall see that even Italy counts among its poets many a prosperous name. Petrarca, in the Capitol of Rome, received the laurel crown amidst the applause of the Roman nobles and citizens. Employed on many important public embassies, he gained the respect and gratitude of his fellow-countrymen; and was followed to his honoured grave by the Prince of Padua, the ecclesiastical dignitaries, and the students of the University. Boiardo, the author of the "Orlando Innamorato," discharged several diplomatic missions, and was made governor of Reggio. Bembo lived a life of singular serenity and prosperousness; and Ariosto, to whom we owe the fine extravagance of the "Orlando Furioso," made enough money by his writings to build himself a house at Ferrara. Chiabura enjoyed a life of lettered ease, marrying at fifty, and dying full of years and honour at eighty-five. Marini found a patron in Maris de Medicis. Redi was principal physician to Duke Cosmo the Third. And Vincenzo Monti, the greatest of Italy's later poets, after receiving various dignities at the liberal hands of Napoleon, was finally allowed a sufficient income by the city of Milan.

If we look at the German poets, we find that Fortune distributed among them her smiles and frowns with edifying impartiality. The even tenor of such lives as those of Hagedorn and Gellert leaves little to be desired. There was scarcely a cloud on the life-horizon of Klopstock, the poet of "The Messiah," once very popular in England. He died in his eightieth year. Lessing, famous as a poet—did he not write "Nathan the Wise"?—but more famous as a critic—passed his tranquil days in the enjoyment of lettered ease. As much may be said of Wieland, the author of "Oberon" and translator of Shakespeare, of Pfeffel, of Claudius, of Herder, who was made President of the High Consistory at Weimar, and ennobled; of Stolberg, Voss, Tiedge, Schiller, Matthiäson, Werner, Rückert, Uhland, Freiligrath, and the greatest of all, Goethe. The last-named, in truth, may be said to have lived among the immortals—in the serenest of atmospheres—high above the din and darkness of this lower world.

But how painful a contrast is the case of Heine, whose life, like that of Pope, may be said to have been "one long disease"! Disease of the soul and of the body—the former torn with impatient ideas, with doubts, and restless aspirations, and vague longings; the latter afflicted with an agonising spinal malady. Lying on his sick-bed—his "mattress-grave," as he called it—which for nearly eight years he never quitted, he described to his friend Meissner "the long tortures of his sleepless nights," and confessed that the weak thoughts of suicide sometimes rose upon his brain, growing longer and more intense, until he found strength to repel them in the recollection of his beloved wife, and of many a work which he might yet live to complete. Terrible was it to hear him exclaim with fearful earnestness and in a suppressed voice—"Think on Günther, Bürger, Kleist, Hölderlin, Grabbe, and the wretched Lenau! Some curse weighs heavily on the poets of Germany!" But in most instances, let me add, the curse was self-imposed. Grabbe broke down his health by habits of debauchery: the gifts received from Heaven he degraded to the meanest uses, and died at the early age of thirty-five—as much a suicide as if he had cut his throat or blown out his brains. More honourable is the record of Von Kleist. Having drawn his sword in the Prussian service, he was mortally wounded

at the battle of Kunersdorff, and died a few days afterwards. The glorious death of the patriot, which Southey likens to Elijah's chariot of fire, crowned the brief life of the poet Körner at the early age of twenty-two. He fell on the field of battle, near Rosenberg, in August, 1813, fighting against the hosts of Napoleon, having completed, only an hour before, his famous lyric, "The Song of the Sword," and read it to his comrades. Very different was the fate of Kotzebue. He fell by an assassin's hand, having incurred the hatred of Young Germany by his Russian sympathies and reactionary political creed. But he was no true student at any time of the Gay Science.

The last years of Burger—with whom Sir Walter Scott first made the English public familiar—were, I admit, most pitifully and meanly wretched; but the wretchedness was of his own making. With his first wife he had lived unhappily; and on her death he married her sister, for whom he had long cherished a violent passion. In less than a year she died. Four years afterwards the infatuated man took to himself a third wife—a young Swabian girl, who had made hot love to him in a poem. Flattered by the homage, he conceived the idea of an earthly paradise to be realised by the union of poet and poetess, but soon discovered that he had made a grievous mistake. In two years' time he divorced the poetess, and, a couple of years later, died in extreme poverty. But neither his poverty nor his domestic infelicity could be laid to the blame of Apollo. On the contrary, we may agree, I think, that the poet has always this signal advantage over those of his fellow-men, who, like him, may be afflicted by want, by physical disease, or by domestic treason. He can always escape from the presence of his trouble into a world of his own—a world created by his own genius; an enchanted island, like Ariel's, in "The Tempest"; a fairy-land as bright as that of Oberon and Titania—whereas, other men, who have no such resource, are tied to the stake by enduring bonds, and must bear as best they can the fierce heat of the flames that surround them.

If we direct our attention to the history of French poetry, we shall find that it does but confirm and strengthen the conclusions at which we have already arrived, namely, that the poet is governed

by the same laws as other men; and that the success or failure of his life depends upon the use he makes of it. When Villon lives like a rogue and a rake, like a rogue and a rake he must pay the miserable penalty. Ronsard the friend and companion of kings; and, if he had not wallowed in the mire of sensuality, might have gone down to his grave full of years and honours. No black mourning-borders surround the lives of Dorat, Belleau, and Desportes. Their careers were prosperous, and their deaths lamented. As for Jean Bertaut, his bark was borne on fortune's fullest tide; one's mouth waters as one reads of the good things that fell to his lot. Head Almoner to the Queen, Councillor to the Parliament of Grenoble, Abbé of Aunay, Bishop of Siez—was ever professor of the Gay Science more happily distinguished? Corneille had his detractors (of course, for was he not a genius?); but, on the whole, his life-course was enviably smooth, and when he died, at the age of seventy-eight, I do not think he had much to complain of. Molière, no doubt, had his "peck of troubles." His wife was not all a wife should be, and he suffered from pulmonary consumption; but he had a compensation denied to most jilted husbands in the applause which his genius extorted from the crowded theatre. La Fontaine's eighty-three years touched him gently. He was never without friends, and the careless geniality and easy simplicity which procured him the sobriquet of "le Bon Homme"—a jolly good fellow, as we may paraphrase it—prevented him from smarting under those pin-pricks of everyday life which sensitive natures feel so keenly.

A fair share of fame and fortune fell to the satirist Boileau—more than, as a satirist, he deserved. He had a little trouble with his critics; but then he was a critic himself, as well as a poet, and well knew how to hold his own. The Abbé Cotin attacked him in a satire which had the disadvantage of being dull, and Boileau extinguished him by the brightness of his raillery, so that he had no reason to regret the combat into which he had been provoked. Then what shall we say of Racine? He was pensioned, appointed Royal historiographer, and seated among the Forty Immortals. And if, in his declining years, he fell into disgrace, it was because he forsook his *métier* of poet, and turned politician.

Voltaire, somewhat idly, has been described as "a strange compound of virtues and vices, folly and wisdom, the little and the great," which will account for the mingled yarn which was woven into the web of his life. But, on the whole, he basked in the sunshine. "The farther he advanced in his career," says Barante, "the more he saw himself encompassed with fame and homage. Soon even sovereigns became his friends, and almost his flatterers;" and when, at the age of eighty-four, he paid his last visit to Paris, his welcome was one which a king might have envied. "The Forty" gave him an enthusiastic reception, and placed his bust by the side of that of Corneille; the actors waited upon him in a body; his tragedy of "Irene" was played in the presence of the Royal Family; at the sixth representation, he was presented with a laurel-wreath as he entered the theatre, and, at the close of the performance, his bust was crowned, while an excited audience roared applause. After this, there was nothing more for the old man to do but to go home and die.

Millevoys died young, but his life had been spent in the tranquil pursuit of letters. The old age of Béranger was cheered by the love and admiration of his countrymen; he had drunk, however, of the bitter cup of adversity, having been imprisoned, for the free tone of his lyrics, by the Bourbon Government in 1828. Such vicissitudes as Lamartine experienced were due to his political activity; but it was his fame as a poet which placed him temporarily at the head of the French Republic, when it rose on the wreck of Louis Philippe's throne. Of André Chénier, Sainte-Beuve says with justice that he was one of the great masters of French poetry during the eighteenth century, and the greatest French classic in verse since Boileau and Racine. There is a richness of imagery, a glow, a fulness in Chénier's poems which one too seldom discovers in the masters of French song. I admit that his life did not flow evenly. At first, he missed his vocation, and suffered accordingly; afterwards, ill-health crippled him; and, lastly, the fever of the French Revolution got into his blood, and he put aside the cultivation of his art that he might share in the strife and tumult of the time. By his bold and unsparing denunciation of the excesses of the Terrorists, he incurred the hatred of Robespierre, was thrown into prison, and sent to the guillotine—meeting

his fate with the calm composure of a hero.

Few poets have basked in such a sunshine of popularity as Lope de Vega, the great Spanish dramatist. He never made his appearance in public without receiving such marks of respect as are generally reserved for Royal personages. And just as we are nowadays accustomed to attach the names of eminent statesmen or soldiers to bags, collars, and wines, or of favourite actresses to bonnets and mantles, so did the Spaniards adopt that of their favourite poet as a cachet or "brand," indicative of superior excellence. Thus, a brilliant diamond was called a Lope diamond; a fine day, a Lope day; a beautiful woman, a Lope woman. In this connection I may repeat a curious anecdote. The honours paid to Lope in life were continued to him in death, and his obsequies were attended by the principal grandees and nobles of Spain, the stately procession passing through streets, whose balconies and windows were graced with thousands of spectators. A woman in the crowd was heard to exclaim: "This is a Lope funeral!" Little knowing that it was, in truth, the funeral of the great poet himself.

Considerable latitude is allowed to a biographer when he sings the praises of his hero; but it may be thought that Montalvon, the biographer of Lope, exceeds all reasonable limits when he speaks of him as "the portent of the world, the glory of the land, the light of his country, the oracle of language, the centre of fame, the object of envy, the darling of fortune, the phoenix of ages, the prince of poetry, the Orpheus of science, the Apollo of the Muses, the Horace of satiric poets, the Virgil of epic poets, the Homer of heroic poets, the Pindar of lyric poets, the Sophocles of tragedy, and the Terence of comedy; single among the excellent, excellent among the great, great in every way and in every manner!" Much of this is unmeaning, and more is inapplicable; and the whole shows an absence of critical discretion which necessarily weakens the validity of the panegyric.

Calderon, a much finer genius—the author of "Il Magico Prodigioso," which may be called the Spanish "Faust"—was singularly fortunate in attaining and retaining both the patronage of the Court and the favour of the common people. When one reads over the list of preferments of which he was the happy recipient, one at first supposes that one is counting

up the good luck of some adroit courtier; and one's surprise is overwhelming at the discovery that all this prosperity actually fell to the lot of a poet! However, as a set-off against this spoiled child of fortune, we may quote the case of Francisco de Quevedo, the author of the celebrated "Suenos," or "Visions," who was twice imprisoned, and, on the second occasion, treated with such brutality, that his health broke down, and he did not long survive his release. But I do not connect his misfortunes with his cultivation of the Gay Science. His offence seems to have been the praiseworthy frankness with which he attacked the vices of his time; though, in his own opinion, he was not so outspoken as duty demanded and the state of things justified. "I showed Truth in her smock," he said, "and not quite naked"—"Verdadero diré un camisa, Poco menos que dromedas." But as a prophet is not honoured in his own country, so a censor is never popular in his own time.

It is with some hesitation that I connect the name of Miguel Cervantes with the Gay Science. At least in England he is unknown as a poet and dramatist: his fame rests on his "Don Quixote"; and could hardly rest on a more solid and enduring basis. The principal events of his stormy career have admirably been summed up by Viardot, who adds, however, in the true sentimental vein, that he was one of the unfortunate guild who pay by a lifetime of suffering for the tardy reward of posthumous glory. This is altogether beside the mark. Cervantes owed his lifetime of suffering to his adventurous disposition; his glory to his genius. To connect the suffering and the glory is not fair or justifiable.

Born of a poor but honourable family; liberally educated, but at an early age thrown into servitude by domestic misfortunes; page, valet-de-chambre, soldier; deprived of his left hand by an arquebus shot at Lepanto; taken prisoner by a Barbary corsair; for five years tortured in the slave-dépôts of Algiers; ransomed by public charity when his courageous attempts at escape had failed; again a soldier, both in Portugal and the Azores; recalled to the pursuit of literature by love, but soon driven from it again by distress; recompensed for his service and his genius by a Government clerkship; wrongfully accused of embezzling public money, and thereafter thrown into prison; released after he had proved his innocence;

a poet by profession, and a general agent; when upwards of fifty discovering the true bent of his genius; pursued by privation and poverty even to his old age, and dying at last in obscurity—such is the life-story of Miguel de Cervantes.

We shall find a mournful pendant to this sad narrative in the life of the great poet of Portugal, Luis de Camoens, the author of the singularly beautiful epic—worthy of being much better known—"The Lusíadas."

Like Cervantes, he came of a noble family. He studied at the University of Coimbra; afterwards made a gallant figure at Court; but falling in love with a lady of the palace, was banished to Santarem, where he formed the design, it is supposed, of his immortal poem. Taking up arms, he served in Africa and India, and afterwards joined an expedition against the Moorish pirates. Returning to Goa, he exposed, in a bitter satire, the infamies of the Portuguese-Indian Administration, and was punished, like Quevedo, for his inconvenient candour by being sent to Macao. There, in a cave or grotto, which overlooked the broad Indian Ocean, he composed the greater part of the "Lusíadas." Being invited to return to Goa, on the voyage he was shipwrecked, but escaped with his life and his manuscript by swimming ashore, like Cæsar with his "Commentaries." At Goa he was arrested and imprisoned, like Cervantes, on a false charge of peculation; but released, like him, without a blot on his escutcheon. He served in various expeditions by sea and land; underwent much humiliation from pecuniary straits; made his way back to Portugal, where the Court ignored his services, and the people read his poem, and the man of genius grew poorer every day.

The hardships he had undergone, and the effects of a tropical climate on a not very robust constitution, compelled him to lay aside his pen; and he sank into such poverty that he depended for his daily subsistence on the loyalty of his Javanese servant, who begged by night for the bread on which his master subsisted by day. At last, having lost all power of exertion, he was removed to a hospital, where he died, at the age of fifty-five, in such absolute need that he was indebted to charity for a shroud.

"How miserable a thing it is," writes the friar who ministered to the dying poet, "to see so famous a genius so ill-rewarded!

I saw him die, in a hospital at Lisbon, without possessing a rag to cover his dead body—a warning for those who weary themselves by studying day and night without profit, like the spider who spins his web to catch flies.”

But the good friar's simile seems anything but pertinent. The spider catches the prize he aims at. Camoens was less fortunate.

To complete the survey I have undertaken, I must glance at the chronicles of the Gay Science in Scandinavia. The brightest name in Danish literature is, I think, that of Oehlenschläger, whose career by no means points the moral our sentimental critics are so anxious to enforce. On the contrary, it flowed with an even current, and there was no “despondency and madness” at its end! In his youth he wrote plays, and took part in private theatricals; as he grew older, he gave up the theatricals, and went a-soldiering; travelled in Germany, and made the acquaintance of Wieland and Goethe; visited Paris, where he was introduced to Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant; married; was appointed to a professorship in the Copenhagen University; spent his winters in lecturing, and his summer leisure in composition; lived in honour, and died in peace. Nor did the poet Ingemann turn over less prosperous leaves in the “Book of Fate.” None were blank; and but few were wet with tears. Then as to Bishop Tegnér, the sweet singer of Sweden, his life was really an idyll—a pastoral romance. On the other hand, the dark side of human affairs turns up in the pathetic story of Eric Sjögren. “While yet in his cradle,” says his biographer, “he was exposed to the frowns of fortune. Poverty attended the steps of the boy, checked the free and soaring genius of the youth, and stood beside the bedside of the man.” He taught himself to write by cutting letters—like Orlando—in the bark of trees. With fifty shillings in his pocket he made his way to the University of Upsal, where he gained a livelihood by instructing those of his fellow-students who were younger and richer than himself. But the hard buffets dealt to him by an unsympathising fate could not repress his noble aspirations. His poetic genius flowered and ripened, and he would have struggled into the sunshine of success had not his health given way. He was only in his thirty-second year when he died.

This last melancholy example may seem to lend some colour to the fallacy against which I am protesting—the infelicity of poets by reason of their being poets—but, after all, Sjögren's misfortunes were of an exceptional character. The most prosaic of men have met with quite as harsh treatment. And in Sjögren's case we may believe or hope that they were greatly lightened by the consolation he derived from his insight into the truth and beauty of Nature. As John Sterling says: “Poetry is in itself strength and joy, whether it be crowned by all mankind, or left alone in its own magic hermitage.”

MALINE'S CONFESSION.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT MALINE TOLD HER FATHER.

THE day on which Wilfred Power left the Grange was a very gloomy one, and both Mr. Caringham and Maline were low-spirited and depressed. Maline plied her father with questions as to the cause of Wilfred's going; but he did not tell her, and put her off with general reasons which only had the result of making her still more thoughtful and uneasy than she had been even on the previous evening.

She had asked Mr. Caringham plainly whether the cause had anything to do with the lost money, having her own reasons for the question; but he had replied by another question, asking in his turn how that could possibly be the case.

She felt certain that that was the reason, however; and wondered whether Wilfred had admitted that he had taken it; but she had not put this question to her father.

The next day was as gloomy as its predecessor; but, until dinner was over, she said nothing on the subject that was uppermost in both their thoughts.

Then like a true woman, she opened her battery suddenly.

The two were in the library, where, as it was chilly, a little fire had been lighted; and Maline carried a footstool to her father's feet and sat down, resting her head on his knee, and began.

“Daddy,” she said, caressingly, “did Mr. Power go because that horrid money was lost?”

Mr. Caringham started at the direct question.

"I told you before, Mal"—he only used this abbreviation of her name in moments of deeper feeling than usual—"that such a thing was impossible."

"No, dad; all you did was to ask me whether I didn't think such a thing was impossible. I have been thinking; and it seems to me most probable. Did he, daddy? Do tell me!"

"He did not say precisely why he was going away, Mal."

"Didn't he say anything more definite than that?"

"What he did say was not definite. I'm not at all sure that I understood him, either"—adding under his breath, not for his daughter's ear, "and I'm sure I hope I didn't understand him." But she was quick, and caught the words.

"Why do you wish you didn't understand, dad? Was it something very bad?"

"He did not wish me to say why he left," answered Mr. Caringham; "so you mustn't question me, Mal."

"Then it must have been something very bad?" she said, not noticing his last words.

"What was it, daddy? Do tell me, I'm so miserable."

He stroked her head thoughtfully before he answered.

"It would only make you more miserable, my darling," he answered; and spoke with a deep sigh.

The girl altered her weapon.

"I know it had to do with that money, papa;" she spoke so earnestly and seriously that Mr. Caringham was off his guard directly.

"How can you know that, Maline?"

"Did he tell you who took the money, papa?"

"I would rather not talk about it, Mal," said Mr. Caringham.

"Well, perhaps I won't bother you after to-night any more about it," answered the girl, looking up and smiling sweetly; "but you must let me have my own way to-night. Do you know why?"

"No, my child."

"Because—because," and she paused a long time; and then kissed her father's hand, and laid her soft cheek upon it as she said, "I am going to tell you something that nobody knows, dad, nobody in all the world; and perhaps nobody ever will know, but you and me; and it will be our secret, won't it, daddy darling, our very own!"

"Yes, Mal, if you wish it. I think you can trust your old father."

The girl got up and sat on her father's knee, put her arms round him and kissed him fondly; but did not speak.

"You are crying, Mal," he said, very gently; "and your tears hurt me."

The girl hid her face on his shoulder, and whispered:

"I love him, daddy, with all my heart; and now I've lost him for ever. I drove him away; and oh, dad, my heart is broken."

The old man felt the tears coming into his own eyes, and could not speak; all he could do was to press her hand and gently pat the head that lay on his shoulder.

His grief was that he could give her no hope.

Presently she grew a little calmer, and said:

"You'll tell me now, daddy, won't you, why he left?"

"Yes, darling, it was about the money."

"Did he tell you who had taken it, dad?"

"No, Mal; but he hinted it."

"He didn't tell you out plainly." She was very anxious to have this quite clearly told to her.

"No, Mal, he hinted; and only vaguely hinted, little one."

"Shall I tell you out plainly who took it? I know."

"No, Mal, no; no, don't tell me. Besides, you can't know." And he grew suddenly afraid that the girl was going to put in plain words—what as yet was only suspicion, and then ask for Wilfred to be brought back.

"But I want to tell you."

"No, child, no. I don't want to hear."

"But those who are innocent may suffer. Listen, daddy, and don't be too angry. Let me whisper it. I took the money, darling; and I'm so wretched."

"You took it!" cried Mr. Caringham, starting so violently in his surprise that he almost sent her off his knee.

"Yes, dad, I wanted some money to—to pay some old bills with, and I didn't like to ask you."

"But, my child, Maline——" he began; but she would not let him finish, stopping his mouth with kisses.

"Don't scold me to-night, dad, dearest; I can't bear it. I've been so miserable. I won't do it again—I won't, really. And to-morrow I'll come to you and be scolded ever so much; because you mustn't for-

give me without scolding me, and you mustn't scold me without forgiving me. And—and you'll send for Wilfred to come back, won't you?" she asked, in very low tones.

"This is a very serious thing, Maline," said Mr. Caringham, "and I——"

But she would not let him continue, throwing her arms round him and kissing him, and actually smiling, until the good man could hardly look grave.

"No; but, Maline, tell me, where is the money?"

"The money," she said, biting her lips—"the money; oh, I paid it away, dear, for the bills, you know."

"But the French notes, child—you couldn't pay those away."

"No, dad, I couldn't pay those away; they—they must be upstairs. Don't question me any more to-night, dad, please. And don't look so serious."

"But it's such an extraordinary thing for you to have done, my child. If you had come to me——"

"Don't be angry to-night, dad," pleaded the girl.

"I'm not angry, Maline; but I'm afraid I am terribly grieved."

Then she put her arms about him and caressed him fondly, trying to comfort him with many winning, affectionate ways.

"I'll tell you all about it some day, daddy darling, and then you'll see I'm not so much to blame as you think."

"Well, my child, I'll wait for that day. Try and let it be soon."

"And Wilfred will come back, won't he, daddy?"

"Yes, child, certainly. I shall send for him to-morrow."

"Then I'm so glad I told you." And she kissed him again, and smiled, and then slipped off his lap and went out of the room, leaving the old man completely puzzled what to make of her words, in view of what Wilfred had said to him before.

CHAPTER IV. THE TRUTH.

WILFRED POWER was greatly surprised to receive a short note from Mr. Caringham, asking him to return at once. But he did so. Mr. Caringham explained the matter to him literally, interpreting Maline's action as a freak, and asking Wilfred not to go away, at any rate, for a time.

Maline's reception of him was curious,

and there was something in the girl's manner he could not understand. If he had not seen the proofs of her act, and known of her confession, he would have thought that she seemed rather inclined to take credit to herself for what she had done, and to receive him as if he were really a returned prodigal. She was so very gentle and tender that he was puzzled.

Matters were not, therefore, quite on the same footing as they had been, though no one made any reference to the lost money.

On the second morning after Wilfred's return, Maline was alone in her room, when one of the old servants, who had been her nurse, came to her.

"If you please, miss, is this yours?" asked the woman, holding out a small blue paper to her.

"What is it, nurse?"

"I don't know, miss, quite."

"Where did you find this?" asked the girl, quickly, colouring with excitement as she examined it.

It was a French one hundred franc bank-note.

"The laundrymaid, Susan, gave it me, miss, and told me she had found it among the clothes—she thought among yours," she said.

"Tell her to come up to me at once," said Maline.

When the girl came, Maline questioned her closely, and discovered that she had really found the note, wrapped up in one of Maline's handkerchiefs, and placed in the pocket of a dress belonging to one of the maids, who had been only a short time at the Grange, and was under notice to leave.

The maid was sent for.

"Where did you get this, Rachel?" asked Maline, facing the girl, and eyeing her keenly.

The girl, taken quite by surprise, at first hesitated and coloured, and then denied all knowledge of it. Then Maline told her where it had been found, and the other equivocated and contradicted herself; and at last, after a promise of forgiveness, confessed with many tears that she had taken the money.

Maline was as much surprised as the girl had been.

"Did you place one of these notes in Mr. Power's blotting-pad for us to find it there?"

"Yes, Miss Maline," answered Rachel,

with a great burst of tears. "After I'd put two of them in the purse you left in the study. I watched him go out; and as your purse looked as if it hadn't been touched, I took the notes out again, and put one of them in Mr. Power's blotter."

"You put two of them in my purse, you say! When was that?"

"On Monday, Miss Maline. I slipped into the room while Mr. Power was seeing you to the carriage, and I saw the purse on the table."

The girl's answer was a revelation to Maline. She now saw, as by an inspiration, that Wilfred Power had gone away on her account, thinking she had taken the money, and thus had tried to shield her by drawing suspicion on himself.

"Where is the money? Fetch what you have of it."

"I have it all, miss, upstairs."

"Why did you do this, Rachel?"

For a long time the girl did not answer. Then she confessed that she had a friend who was in great distress for want of money; when she went into the study at lunch-time on the day she had heard of the trouble, she saw the money in the table-drawer, and the sudden temptation was more than she could resist. What she had afterwards done was merely to keep away suspicion from herself until the time for her to leave should arrive. She had thought that Wilfred Power would be most likely to be suspicious, and so she had first tried to draw his thoughts on Maline; and thinking she had failed, as the purse did not seem to have been opened, she tried to fix suspicion upon him.

"You are a bad, wicked girl," said Maline. "Go and pack your things and leave the house at once."

Mr. Caringham and Wilfred were both in the library when Maline entered.

"Is this the money you lost, papa?" she asked, quietly putting the gold and notes down on the table.

"Good gracious, Maline!" cried her father in amazement. "What does this mean?"

And then she told them.

Wilfred and Maline had a further and much longer explanation in the drawing-room after dinner that night, when Mr. Caringham was asleep in the library. At the end of it Maline said:

"And so, sir, you thought I was a little

thief, did you, when you saw the notes in my purse, and tried to shield me by pretending you had done it?"

"Not more than you thought I was one when that note tumbled out of my blotting-pad, and you confessed to the theft. But you were a little thief after all, for you stole my heart, Mal."

"Then we were both thieves; for you took mine away ever so long ago."

And the lovers' amen closed the dispute.

A DEMONSTRATION SKETCH.

"WHAT would the old Duke say to it all!" was the exclamation of a grizzled veteran, looking over at the crowd at Hyde Park Corner, where the Duke himself, in effigy upon his bronze horse, rising out of the forest of heads, might have been taken for the field-marshal directing the whole demonstration in this which is practically the workman's May Day. And nobody thinks of the old Duke now, any more than of Hector of Troy, or of the joyous popular fêtes that once ushered in the month of flowers.

"Where's Troy, and where's the May-pole in the Strand?" Where is the May Queen, and Jack in the Green, whom even the sweeps seem to have given up? Where is the procession of four-in-hand stage-coaches? Yet we have had the dust-carts and their horses all decked with ribbons and finery, and the omnibus-drivers have donned their white hats and summer coats, and there has been no lack of flowers and ribbons everywhere. And now people are turning out in their thousands, and tens of thousands, just to have a look at what is going on, and banners flutter in the breeze, and there is music in the air—anyhow, the braying of brass instruments, with the thud of the big drums. And all this on the first Sunday in May, which is likely to perpetuate itself into distant ages, in a succession of workman's Sundays.

It might have been otherwise had the day been wet, with everybody draggled and miserable, and the processions more or less of a failure. But for once the elements are favourable to a popular demonstration; and though there is a yellowish haze, resembling what gardeners call a blight in the air, and there is a lack of sunshine to brighten up the scene, yet it is the right sort of weather to march from Poplar, or Deptford, or Peckham, all

through London streets, to Hyde Park, and back again, without being unduly troubled with either heat or cold. So that this celebration may be fairly said to have "caught on"; and having a many-sided and even international character—for there is talk everywhere, in workshops and workmen's clubs, of the solidarity of working men all over the civilised world—it is probable that this will be an anniversary to be remembered in future times as the beginning of what these future times only will know.

But while the old Duke is presiding over the teeming crowd outside the Park gates, and the nurses and patients in the big hospital are peeping out of the windows, and the tall, aristocratic houses look down on the scene with a subdued kind of interest, within the Park the show is even more impressive. The well-known corner which in this merry month of May is the rendezvous of wealth and fashion, where rows upon rows of chairs are filled with lookers-on and idlers; where there is a general show of the finest horses and best appointed equipages in Europe, while through the trees you may see the fair horsewomen, and their cavaliers, cantering smoothly over the favourite ride—all this has been rolled away like the set scene of a theatre, and its place is taken by a thronging crowd of all ranks and denominations. Right up to the very heel of Achilles, as if in some great amphitheatre, rises the mass of round black hats and white faces, not unmixed with the feathers and flowers of feminine head-gear. There are carriages, too, drawn up by the railings—but not the costly equipages of duchesses and millionaires, but homely family vans, that work in coals and cabbages or potatoes during the week; the coster's cart, with miladi coster in tall hat and ostrich feathers, with a gipsy beauty of her own; the rag-and-bone man's four-wheeled repository, with the wiry pony in the shafts; the fat-collector and wash-contractor—for pigs, and not for complexion—brings his smart wagonette; and there are hundreds more vehicles of every kind—except the grand and aristocratic—all crammed with the families and friends of their owners, all bent on enjoyment, and with very little thought for any ulterior object.

Indeed, for the majority of these people who are on their own hook, so to say, and skirmish for their daily bread among the streets and markets, the eight hours' day

is a mere phantom of the imagination. "My day's when I've emptied my barrer," says a coster, dogmatically; but he adds in a more sympathetic tone: "Still, those chaps as want it ought to have it."

But while these are on pleasure bent, there are others intent on business. Oranges, nuts, and apples are already in demand—your Harry is never so mean as to grudge his Sarah the cost of a little light refreshment; and there are cakes of a peculiar demonstration compound, which do not appear in the market at less hungry times. Then there are men and boys hawking "Official Programmes," the "New York Herald," the "Commonweal"; the Organ of Socialism, the "People's Press" which represents certain Trade Unions; with sundry other papers and leaflets—here religious, and there very much the reverse; but no ballad, for, though these are socialist poets, yet no popular bard has yet arisen—in Hyde Park, anyhow—to mark the epoch with a spirit-stirring song.

There is not long to wait for the processions, the heads of which, with banners displayed, are seen struggling through the dense crowd about the gates, while the brass bandmen are deprived for the moment of the use of their instruments, and even of the breath to blow them. The big banners, too, are embarrassing in a crowd; the poles and their bearers are forced in different directions. There is a positive pole which will advance, and a negative one that hangs back; and the four men who hold the strings that steady the machine fore and aft, are hurried away by opposing currents. Yet the standard-bearers struggle gallantly through their difficulties, which are soon over, by the way; for once fairly within the Park, the crowd is more diffused, and the banners are gallantly advanced, while the societies who march beneath them come on, nine or ten abreast, in very good form and order.

All these who come in by Hyde Park Corner are connected with the London Trades' Council, a body which is considered a little slow and conservative by more advanced members of other organisations. For three different sections, having different aims and views, have united for this Sunday's demonstration. The Central Committee, which embraces all kind of skilled and unskilled labour; the Trades' Council, which combines the chief skilled artisans of the metropolis, and the Social Democratic Federation, whose programme

is more extensive than either of the others.

So that on this side of the Park, which is the first to score in the business, we have the leather and metal-workers, the cabinet-makers, the carpenters, with shipping trades, and clothing trades, and printing trades—indeed, with almost every trade that could be mentioned. But hardly are the Trades' Council men fairly under weigh, when a rush of people towards the other road announces the arrival of the Marble Arch contingent, preceded by a very fine-looking horseman, brilliant with coloured scarves and decorations, and wearing a red Phrygian cap of the good old "Mourir pour la patrie" order, who bestrides with grace a veteran cream-coloured steed. The effect of a little colour and display on the popular imagination is evident, for there is a general crush to witness this horseman, whom we suppose to be the Field-Marshal commanding-in-chief. When this conspicuous figure has passed, there is nothing to cause excitement except the banners, many of which are of elaborate design in rich silk, which are costly enough, and easily damaged, and of which their bearers are naturally proud and careful. There seems to be no end to the men as they come on briskly enough, but dusty and a little fagged some of them, such as those who have come from Woolwich and Deptford, who have been on foot since ten o'clock, and it is now past three. But they are certainly well organised; and if, as used to be said, we had no British general who could get ten thousand men into Hyde Park and out of it again without a muddle, here we have a Field-Marshal who can give our commanders points, for he has marched a good many more than ten thousand in already, and the cry is still they come.

Yet all find their way with very little confusion, in spite of the crowds that surround them, to the neighbourhood of the platform assigned to each section—platforms which are arranged in a quadrilateral across the Park. There is no time wasted, for when the first detachments have taken up their ground, speaking begins from one or two of the vans which are appointed for the purpose. By this time the Park, as far as the eye can reach, is black with human beings; and yet it is easy to get about, for there is no central pageant to pack the people together; and the crowd, though pleased and good-humoured, is not enthusiastic in any way, except, perhaps,

in favour of the female contingent—the laundresses, who step out with characteristic courage, and seem to enjoy the popular ovation.

But here at one of the platforms there is a pretty tight squeeze, and a crowd that goes on swelling in dimensions, for the sturdy-looking man, with the short, crisp black beard and moustache, and the air of one who has some authority hereabouts, is Mr. John Burns, the popular hero of the hour; and when it is his turn to speak, there is more enthusiasm than has hitherto been elicited. Yet Mr. Burns' method is not exactly that of an orator, but he is ready and confident, quick to seize a point, and with a sense of humour that puts people on good terms with him. Then it is refreshing to hear some good-tempered, honest-looking working man, who is conscious of having had a good deal to say, but who finds it all running out rather thin under the pressure of circumstances. "What the eight hours' day—the legal eight hours—will do for us is just this. We can do our work with our shirts on."

And as this utterance is rather enigmatical, the speaker refers us to a banner, on which, indeed, is conspicuous—first, the man of long hours, working stripped to the skin, and evidently taking it out of himself very much; while the companion picture is of a smiling artizan, with a fine white shirt on, and wristbands delicately tucked up, who is wielding his hammer with a skill and dexterity that puts his companion in the shade.

And one is struck by the limited range of the human voice in such open-air meetings, and thinks how the higher qualities of oratory are, perhaps, wasted under such circumstances. And there are so many unavoidable interruptions, as when a powerful brass-band marches up in full blast, and drowns the leader's voice altogether, so that he can only gesticulate in dumb show, and shake his fist at the too successful competitors for a hearing.

But, after all, it is best to wander about from one platform to another, and take the speeches for granted, and to watch the late arrivals taking up their ground and doing their best to pick up the more forward ones in the way of speeches and resolutions. Tired members of the processions are stretched on the grass in little groups, resting after their weary walk, and re-

flecting, perhaps, that there is an equal distance to be travelled back again.

Vendors of lemonade are doing a brisk trade; oranges are in full demand; and even the rock-bound cakes find ready purchasers. And the old cream-coloured horse is resting, too, and yet does not find much refreshment in the trampled grass or in the coating of orange-peel which, in places, almost conceals the natural herbage. His eight hours' day must be well-nigh completed; and a feed of oats and a bucket of water would come in nicely now.

Indeed, the general aspect of the representatives of labour seems to say: We have demonstrated enough, and now let us go home. And, with this, there is a general packing up of speech and resolution into small compass. The banners are on the move again and beginning to jostle with others belonging to bodies that are still pouring in, and that will have to speak, and resolve, and march off again in double-quick time if they mean to get home to-night. And so there follows a general break-up and exodus, and, coming into the Bayswater Road, it is astonishing to see how the whole street is crowded up as far as the eye can reach; while omnibuses are carried by storm and furiously overcrowded, while, for the great bulk of us, there is only the leg-wearying tramp over long miles of stones.

It is a far cry from here to Clerkenwell Green, and yet, when that is reached, it is for many only a halting-place in a longer pilgrimage. How would you like to tramp to the Triangle, Hackney, as a half-way house; or to look forward to the end of your journey at Barking? And what of the people from Erith or Dartford? When may they expect to see the cheerful lights of home, brighter for them than the gariish splendour of the lights of London?

The bands, too, are silent now; the poor bandsmen, in their old regimental coats and tarnished facings, look more fagged than anybody, unless it be the standard-bearers, who have to struggle on with their load without the excitement of the morning's display. Yet everybody trudges off contentedly enough, and it is marvellous to see how little roughness or larking there is among such a vast assemblage; the rough element is very little noticeable, far less so than at great ceremonial functions where the whole police force is poured out, with Horse Guards and Foot Guards, to keep the streets.

BREVITY.

THE soul of wit is often also the soul of good nature as well as good sense. "The less said the soonest mended," is applicable to numberless events in our mottled course of life. Cannot, therefore, some compressed form of speech, such as, "and so on," or, "et cætera," be devised for the shortening of superfluous talk? It would prove a blessing on many an occasion in both public and private circumstances.

Brevity does not mean absolute silence; only moderation in the output of phrases. Talk need not be a torrent in order to avoid unpleasant resemblance to the stagnant pool of taciturnity. A moderate flow of words is preferable, and will produce a better effect than either of the two extremes. One's meaning can mostly be expressed with clearness without speeches that would fill a daily newspaper.

As an example of judicious abbreviation, a foreign journal once contained the following announcement:

"Yesterday, at one o'clock of the afternoon, M. le Général Espinasse received the officers of the National Guard of Paris. The Minister told them that the Emperor reckoned upon their support and concurrence if ever public order should be threatened; that, hitherto, people had made the mistake of erroneously believing in the subsidence of evil passions; that, consequently, it was necessary for all honest men to unite and make common cause against the common enemy," etc.

It might have been hoped that this rapidly-conclusive style of eloquence would have found a few imitators. What labyrinths and abysses of circumlocution might be avoided by the adoption of a like comprehensive formula! It is a branch of rhetoric which patriotic orators—anxious to deserve their country's gratitude—would do well to cultivate. It is the concentration of a host of arguments into the shortest possible space. It comprises a vast cloud of hazy sentences, by condensing them into a single luminous point. In short, it is the sparkling nucleus of a comet, which shines all the brighter for having devoured its own tail.

The hydraulic press of brevity in speech is equally applicable to domestic life, and with equally happy results.

After a hard day's work I come home tired and hungry. I sit down to dinner

opposite to my dearly-beloved Amelia. While eating my soup, she tells me that both the fish and the leg of mutton, which are coming, are utterly spoiled, because Betsy's—the cook's—second cousin has been lounging up and down our street the whole afternoon. The fish and mutton make their appearance. Spoiled they certainly are. And all the while that I am serving, carving, and partaking of them, I am made to listen to an endless dissertation on Betsy's innumerable delinquencies: how she tried my own Amelia's newest bonnet; how she put her fingers into the sugar-basin and her spoon into the tea-caddy; and how she did a great many other naughty things, the history of which is not concluded when I have finished my cheese.

I try in vain to put an end to the doleful tale by gently remarking: "Well, dear Amelia, if such be the case—although I do not like such frequent changes—you had better get rid of Betsy at the end of her month."

Now, would it not be a great advantage if ladies, under similar circumstances, would contrive to conclude their harangue before the removal of the soup, by observing: "Betsy has ruined the dinner. Betsy is evidently crazy after a sweetheart. Betsy will probably ruin the dinner to-morrow, the next day, and in *secula seculorum*, until she gets married to the idol of her heart, when she will probably get a beating for every dinner she spoils. I need say no more; you know all about it. We had better look out for a new cook. That's all."

Would not the happy introduction of "That's all," allow many a man to eat his mutton in peace?

Again: I go to bed with an ill-digested meal, which oppresses my chest like a lump of lead. I try to sleep off the incubus; but my darling Amelia, reclining by my side, returns to the charge.

"It is quite impossible," she says, "to keep Betsy to the end of her month. She answered impertinently this very evening. What will my mother and the rest of my relations think if I keep Betsy after that? What will Miss MacCrustie and Mrs. MacGrumpie say?"

Thereupon follows an expounding and an improvement of this text, which renders repose so impossible that I quietly slip out of bed and walk up and down the room until dear Amelia's regular snoring announces that she has talked herself to sleep.

But would it not have been a great improvement if my better half, while disrobing, had laconically observed: "John, my love, I can't stand Betsy any longer. Betsy must pack up her bundles to-morrow morning. And so, good night!"

It would have prevented the waste of a deal of breath, and have spared dear Amelia's lungs for more pressing occasions.

With such an agitated commencement as this, my night's rest is naturally troubled. All the bulls of Bashan are rushing after me; or, I am standing on the edge of Dover Cliff, and Betsy is on the point of pushing me over, in revenge for my consenting to her discharge from our service; or, I am walking along Cheapside at ten in the morning, and some miscreant has robbed me of my coat and small-clothes.

At daybreak there is a robber in the house. Yes, certainly there is a robber. This time it is not a nightmare; for I hear his footsteps coming upstairs as plainly as I hear the beats of my heart. I seize the poker and rush to the landing, to protect Amelia and the plate-basket, and there I encounter my first-born, Joseph, his mother's pet, in evening dress considerably disarranged, looking dusty in costume, haggard in countenance, and a little *won't-go-home-till-morning-ish*.

"How did you come here, sir, at this time of day? And where have you been spending the night, sir? I insist on knowing that."

"Dear mamma has allowed me to have a latch-key lately. And—and—I have been introduced to—to a very select club; to a very fashionable and select club indeed."

At which response to my enquiries I commence a long lecture; in truth, an interminable jobation, in which I tell my son and heir that he will come to the gallows, and that he will turn my hair grey—it is brown, with a slight tinge of red, at present—before the end of the week.

My youngster really seems ashamed of himself; notwithstanding which outward sign of penitence, I believe that, being in the vein, I should have gone on scolding from that time to this if the draught from the attic stairs had not set my teeth a-chattering.

On second thoughts, however, I fancy it would have been quite as well, and would have made quite as great an impression on the culprit, if I had simply observed: "Joe, my dear boy, I am glad, at least,

that you have told me the truth. But, Joseph, my son, if you consider, you will have the good sense to perceive that select clubs, like yours, are [bad for the pocket, bad for the character, bad for the next day's office attendance. I will take charge of the latch-key which your foolish mother gave you. There, that's all! That will do for once. Go to bed now if it is worth the while."

In the course of that very same morning while going to the City on urgent business — business that did not admit of a second's delay—when half-way up Ludgate Hill, I met, travelling in the opposite direction, an old and valued friend. Indeed, I may as well state at once that it was Spriggins, my Joseph's godfather at his own particular request, the worthiest creature in the universe, only he can never find the word he wants, and he keeps you waiting until he has found it.

"What a dismal day, Smith, isn't it?" he observed, taking my arm to prevent my escape. "Still, I have hopes that the sun may break out; for Brown has just told me that his—hum! You know what I mean—his—bless me! Why, I know the name of the thing as well as I know my own. He says that his—ha!—his instrument for measuring the— No, not the weather exactly—his barometer—yes, that's it—is getting up. And, what is remarkable for this time of the year, he assures me that he has in his back garden a—ha! Why, how strange! I have it at my fingers' ends: he has a—hum—a—dear me! It was called after the nymph—who was—in Ovid, you remember—who was metamorphosed into—yes, it is that. He has a Daphne mezerion in full blossom. Wonderful for the season!"

Anybody else I would have shaken off; but my old bachelor friend Spriggins, Joseph's godfather, with no relations nearer than fifteenth cousins—impossible! Nevertheless, I should have saved ten valuable minutes if Spriggins had confined his salutation to, "Dull day, Smith. Hum! ha! Good-bye."

I might discourse of what is to be heard at, or rather after, public dinners; also at august assemblies, which may not be alluded to more pointedly than by saying that each calls each "another place."

For once, I will practise what I preach, and cut the matter short by quoting: "A word to the wise suffices."

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*," "*A Faire Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVIII. REALLY IN LOVE.

HOEL FENNER had not dared go and lodge nearer to Rushbrook than Greystone; neither here, even, had he found the courage to go to the hotel where he had put up on a previous occasion. First, because the associations connected with it were of too painful a character; and, secondly, because he was afraid of being recognised. He had chosen a quiet lodging, where the good woman who kept it was, happily for him, a new-comer, and had never heard any gossip about Miss Kestell.

His intention was to find Jesse Vicary; his conscience now told him he owed it to this man to give him all the information he had unfortunately found out.

He set off to Rushbrook, therefore, with the full determination of at once making a clean breast of it; but before he reached the well-known place, Hoel was thinking only of Elva. Every new scene of beauty that unfolded itself before him this May morning brought back painfully the thought of what he had lost. It was more than painful—it was maddening.

"My own folly, my own cursed hypocrisy; I fancied myself better than others, and, as that good, simple-hearted Sister Marie said, in judging others I injured them. I thought him a scoundrel, and now I cannot be sure that I did not act the part of one myself. Not sure? Yes, I am sure. But what is the use of accusing myself? It is too late, too late; she has long written me down a rascal; and it will not be Walter Akister who will undeceive her. Very soon she will be his—out of my reach for ever."

His clenched hand, and the perspiration that started from his pale forehead, proved well enough his mental sufferings.

"I must see her again, if only once more—yes, even if it is on her wedding-day. I must!"

The longing to see her face was like the longing of a man, who is dying of thirst, for cold water.

"Will she look changed? Will she bear any trace of suffering?"

He paused as he set his weary feet on

the heather, now still wet with dew. Hoel Fenner was by no means the strong, energetic man he had once been. The French doctor had told him plainly he might feel the effects of that cruel immersion all his life, and that he would always, or for a long time, have to take care of himself. Already Hoel had found that after walking a few miles he was much spent. Bodily weakness, more than anything else, inclined him to humility of spirit.

The great, lonely heath was the same as when he had wooed and won Elva Kestell; but to him all appeared changed. The grey clouds swept slowly above him, only occasionally allowing a peep of blue to be seen; there seemed to be a feeling of sorrow in Nature, which Hoel thought did not alone mean the echo of his own thoughts. Was the strong-minded Hoel becoming superstitious?

Having reflected on Jesse's probable movements, he decided that he would certainly not go to the Home Farm. Perhaps he would lodge with the Joyces; and if not, they would know of his whereabouts. Most likely Vicary had come, in despair of better sources of information, to make enquiries of the forest villagers about his parents.

"He will not find the clue," thought Hoel; "but it is better he should try than— No; what am I saying! I wish to spare her again, and I must not. But, at least, I will do all I can to soften the blow. Elva, Elva, you have conquered! I love you still."

By the time the Joyces' cottage was in sight Hoel was very pale and weary—so much so, indeed, that he was glad to hear when he reached it, that Mr. Vicary was sleeping there for a few nights, but that he spent all his days wandering about the country, and was not likely to be in soon.

"If you want him, sir," said the old woman, "I'll tell him to stay in to-morrow."

"No, no, do not trouble him about me; we are sure to meet. I came down to see him; but there is no hurry, I am lodging at Greystone. I shall be coming over again."

Hoel hurried out; and when he was once more walking on the springy heather, his conscience felt eased about Vicary. He had sought him out, and it was not his fault that he had not seen him. Now he would wait till after the wedding to reveal every-

thing to Jesse. That would be time enough, and by then Elva would be gone. It did once come across his mind that Jesse might go to Rushbrook House, but he dismissed the idea as unlikely. "He cannot go without proofs, and these—how should he find them? Let Elva at least know nothing of all this; better so, for her sake—for her sake. Have I not brought enough misery already into her life? I fancied I could forget her, that I could root out the remembrance of her from my mind, and now I see it is hopeless; but, good Heavens, will it always be so—always?"

He could not bear to stay on this beautiful moorland. Its beauty repelled him, maddened him; he could not stand being within sight of Rushbrook House, and yet so far away—near or far, what did it matter? He was an outcast from it, and from her. One day more, and then he could return here and see Elva giving herself away to another. Hoel Fenner turned his back on Rushbrook, and hurried away in the direction of Greystone; his brain seemed to reel. Weak he might be, but this thought gave him strength to hurry away. He fancied he should never have the fortitude to return and see Elva again; but, at the same time, he had an overpowering longing to see her. Once more—only once more, if even on her wedding-day!

To himself he appeared a changed man. All the feelings which had driven him away from Elva seemed to sink into insignificance compared to her love; all the pride which had forced him to throw away her happiness and his own vanished, although the obstacle remained black and hideous as before; but all this remorse came too late, it would now be dishonourable to try and see her, and speak to her. How intently he longed to go and seek her out, and to throw himself on her mercy! Would she forgive him? No; why should she? Her very act showed how utterly she renounced him, and how utterly she despised him!

At times he tried to comfort himself with the thought that he could not have done otherwise, that if he were once more placed in the same position he would act in like manner; but even as he said this he knew that now at least it would all be different, that Elva was as pure and as innocent as it is in the power of humanity to be, and that for her he could face shame. Now it was, however, useless to speculate on the might-have-been—useless, by useless, the

word rang out with the clearness which despair seems to give to mental words; it was only while walking on Elva's own heather hills that true love made itself felt in the heart of Hoel Fenner. Clever, highly polished, honourable, a gentleman in the world's understanding of that word, he had never known what true love meant till this moment when it was taken from him. Only now was Hoel a lover, in its noblest sense. Only now he forgot himself in thinking of Elva's happiness, whilst before it had been that he had thought first of his own happiness in possessing Elva.

It was this which made the struggle between love and duty so difficult; and it was this which made him put off seeking out Jesse Vicary, for he could not resist the desire to sacrifice any one rather than Elva.

"What can it matter that Jesse should remain in ignorance a day longer?" he thought again and again, as the next morning, after a miserable and sleepless night, he rose with his mind filled with only one thought. "Let my darling begin her life without another cloud at least. When she is gone, then I will do the best I can for the man her father has wronged. But it is not possible that she can love Akister. No, no, Elva, you cannot understand what you are doing; you cannot understand the wrong you are doing to yourself. And to-morrow morning—Good Heavens! Is it too late even now? Shall I go to her and tell her all—all! No, no; what right have I to do so? She would say, 'Why did you not come to me at first? Was it to save me, or yourself?' Fool that I was—it was to save myself. What could I say? Would she not scorn me a thousand times more—she, so noble, so utterly single-minded? No; now it is for her happiness that I let her go on believing that I do not love her; she would not believe that I could see things differently; she would scorn me as I deserve to be scorned. And Vicary, what will he say? Will he not call me a coward for running away? I have not been a true friend even to him. It is enough to make a man throw up everything. Well, to-morrow it will be all repaired. To-morrow, Elva will be avenged, and Jesse can be, too, if he so wishes."

But to-day seemed unbearable. Hoel could settle down to nothing; he longed to fly over to Rushbrook, and demand, insist on seeing Elva. And then all the

old reasoning came back, and he shrank mentally from the scorn he would read in her face, and perhaps hear her express.

It was terrible to Hoel to see his own conduct placed so clearly in the wrong—not by others, but by his own conscience. It was this self-abasement, achieved by his own acute reasoning, which was to a man of his temperament harder to bear than even public reproach.

Now, however, he mistrusted his own judgement; now he would not follow the instinct which told him not to delay because he felt it must be mixed with jealousy and hopeless love.

"You have wronged the woman who loved you and trusted you," said his silent accuser. "And you have also wronged the man who believed in you. And both these wrongs arose from your self-love."

For the first time Hoel understood the meaning of some words he had once read: "*Conscientia est cordis scientia*"—"Conscience is the knowledge of the heart"—not a mere petty holding of the scales of actions, not an anxiety to balance the pros and cons, but a much grander motive power, striking directly at the heart and asking for the same justice to others which we give to ourselves.

The mental agony he had gone through reacted on his weakened frame; by the afternoon he felt quite unable to make further exertion, and a terrible fear possessed him that he would not be able the next day to reach St. John's Church in time for the ceremony. He must creep in among the crowd, for it would be impossible to go to the Heaton's and ask for hospitality; it would put them in a false position. Besides, it was more than possible that the estimable Clara would shut the door in his face; for Hoel believed that every one knew it was his doing that Elva had been forsaken. He must, therefore, pass in with the crowd. Should he be able to get so far? He felt already that the strain was too much for him, and that he was doing a foolish thing in going to have one more look at his darling's face.

He threw himself on the horse-hair sofa in his dull lodging, and tried hard to compose his mind. How solitary he felt now the illness had impaired that former perfect health! How he craved for sympathy and love; and, for all answer to his cravings, conscience told him he had, with his own hand, cut himself off from both! He looked forward and saw in the future a

life of success, perhaps, but always a life with so-called public friends and public applause. He wondered if he should marry; but not one form but Elva's rose before his mind. She alone had been able to win him, and she alone, he felt almost though unwillingly certain, would never be displaced. Hoel was not a man to be easily influenced or easily touched by love. Well, perhaps then, in the future, he might marry—for convenience—and what then?

"Without true love, as well leave it alone; I have had enough of shame. Besides, now I shall not be rich enough to tempt the seekers after matrimony."

The outlook was dull, intensely dull, because Hoel felt he should sink back into the literary bachelor, the man who lives on small admiration, and on the impertinent patronage of the ignorant, who admire talent simply for its reflected light. Pshaw! that life anyhow would be wasted—would be easily replaced when it was extinguished; and after that—?

"I suppose," he said at last, weary, utterly weary of everything, "I shall, somehow or other, manage to exist without ambition. Thousands of men do so. I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that, if Kestell of Greystone is a scoundrel, I am as bad."

At that moment the landlady entered with a cup of tea.

"I'm sure, sir, you do look bad," she said; "but a cup of tea is safe to do you good. As long as my poor dear husband could drink his tea, I knew he was going to die. It was only when he turned from it that I began to be afraid. Look, sir, there's a fine carriage going by! There's to be a grand wedding to-morrow at Rushbrook Beacon. It's the daughter of a gentleman who is well known in the town. The milkman's been talking about it. Milkmen do pick up news, and waters it, too, as they do the milk. Mr. Kestell of Greystone—it's his daughter as is to be married to the son of Lord Cartmel. It will be a pretty affair. They say the young lady is very handsome; and, anyhow, she's rich. Mr. Kestell has got an office in this town. Mr. Hope's his partner."

"Ah—I—I—think I shall walk over and see the wedding," said Hoel, trying to appear indifferent.

"You don't look fit for the walk, sir; they say it is five [miles]; but there, a bit of excitement is good for us all; and, maybe,

sir, that if you are contemplating matrimony, it will interest you."

"I am doing nothing of the kind," said Hoel, impatiently.

"Ah, there's another carriage—look, sir; it's Mr. Kestell himself, I believe; leastways, that's the same old gentleman with white hair, and kind face, they showed me before."

Hoel started up just in time to see the face of Mr. Kestell of Greystone. "To-morrow," said Hoel to himself, "to-morrow." Aloud he remarked:

"Yes, that is Mr. Kestell."

"Then you know him, sir; well, no wonder you wish to go to the wedding! Mrs. Moreton was telling me yesterday that Miss Kestell was to be married before to another gentleman; but she jilted him. I dare say, now, it was to make the lord's son propose to her. Girls are so very flighty in these days. It's fortunate it's turned out well; but if she's one of the flighty sort, the first gentleman has had a good riddance of her, that's what I think! Most people pities the women; but I pity the men, for, queer as they are, there is some very strange women among the sort as get married."

Hoel only retained one idea out of all this, and this was that Elva had encouraged him to get an offer from Walter Akister.

The idea was insane, and he knew it to be so; but all the same he said: "I will go to the wedding to-morrow, even if it brings on the fever again, I will." What small things determine the great events of lives!

CHAPTER XLIX. A STRANGE SIGHT.

JESSE VICARY had heard of Hoel Fenner's visit and enquiry for him, and he had laughed it to scorn. It was this very visit that had hurried on his own action, and his determination this time to act for himself.

"Mr. Fenner will ask me to wait another week and to do nothing," he said to himself, as he went down towards Rushbrook House on the evening before the wedding. "I will not trust to him or any one else again, I will believe in myself only; it is because I am poor and an out-cast, that the rich are willing to trample me down. Heaven knows I am willing to be poor; but at all events let me have justice, let the man who poses for benevolence itself know that his sin will find him out, has found him out. He may be too busy

to see me, but he will not refuse; he shall not. Do not I see the whole thing now as clearly as if it were written in red on a white sheet? Yes; his benevolence when we could not help ourselves; his careful patronage for fear Symee and I should presume on his kindness; his anxiety that we should rely on ourselves and on our own work, for fear the world should say that he had led us to expect too much. Well, let all that pass. We were entitled to so little by the justice of the law, and that little he has given us; but when he saw that I had discovered his secret—no, I had not discovered it, I merely wanted to know, as every man may want to know, to whom he owes his life—then his conscience trembled, and he turned against me. Did his paltry artifice hide it from me? No, indeed; when the truth burst upon me, did he have one spark of honesty and own it? Not he! no, he had better ideas. Having lived in a lie all his life, he thought to bury his lie and to ship off the children, whom he had doomed to a life of outcasts, to another land. I can see him now offering that advantageous farm in Canada. How near I was to accepting it, and kissing the hand that offered me such a blessing; how near! And then, with this last act of benevolence, Kestell of Greystone could have posed again as an incomparable friend. But Heaven does not blindfold justice as we do. I refused him, and balked him in his well-laid scheme, and then Kestell of Greystone begins to work his evil plans still further. Does the scoundrel believe that I am ignorant of the name of the man who caused me to be dismissed? Does he think that I am such a poor fool as to believe Card and Lilley were not paid to dismiss their clerk? No, I was a weak fool before; but I have to thank Mr. Kestell for opening my eyes. What better person could have offered me the fruit of the tree of knowledge of evil? The good he never knew, except when falsely painted to make a show in the world.

"I was dismissed, and then he believed that I should come and crave humbly for that Canada farm. He little knew me if he thought this; I would a thousand times rather die of starvation on his doorstep than accept another crust of bread which was paid for with his money. And Symee's coming—yes, I dare say if one were able to follow the workings of such a mind, that, too, was his doing. He thought Symee would work on my feel-

ings; that she would smooth me down; that, perhaps—for what does he care?—that seeing her suffer would humble me. He little understands me, his own—"

At this point of his meditation, which was nearly word for word the same which had seethed through his brain for days and weeks, Jesse Vicary had come upon Amice Kestell standing on the bridge.

She was his daughter, that was all he knew at this moment; and as for the rest, whatever obstacle might be in his way, he would now—yes, now, at last, he would trample it under foot.

It is terrible to be possessed with one idea, terrible to feel that life or death, joy or sorrow, are all of no account in comparison with the realization of the supreme thought. Had Amice decidedly denied him an entrance, Jesse would have taken no heed to her words. Nothing could stop him now, and certainly not Amice Kestell, his daughter.

When they reached the hall—which was not yet lighted up, as the daylight had barely crept out of it, and Jones was very busy with solemn overlooking of the plate necessary for the next day's function—Amice Kestell paused, and shutting the door, turned and stood face to face with Jesse Vicary. She could not see the expression of his face, but she recalled only too well how he had looked when she had seen him in London.

"Jesse Vicary, will you reconsider your wish to see my father? I am afraid you are not in a fit state to think calmly. Will you not wait till after my sister's wedding? We have had much trouble here since last year."

Amice's tone was very pleading and very humble. At another time it would have seemed strange indeed that she should be asking something of him which he would not grant. Now he only chafed at the slight delay.

"I must see him. Tell him, Miss Kestell, that Jesse Vicary is here, and must see him now or to-morrow morning. I have told you so already. Why will you try and alter my determination?"

"Because you may live to regret this. If we have wronged you, Mr. Vicary—and that is what you believe—will you not think better of acting hastily?"

Amice crept up to him as if impelled by an unseen power, and laid the gentlest hand upon his arm. So gentle was it, indeed, that for a moment Jesse did not realize what she was doing; and so

powerful was it that for a moment it was able to calm him enough to bear to listen to the end of her sentence.

"Will you try and remember that it is infinitely more blessed to suffer wrong than to inflict it; that it is not you who need a divine pity, but all those who have betrayed their trust, whatever it may be. It is not because I wish to be spared that I ask for your pity. Heaven knows, if I were capable, I would willingly bear all the misery for them—for those I love—but I cannot. I can only entreat you to have patience, to accept the part chosen by the Great Example we pretend to follow; and whatever is in your heart to-night, for His sake, not for ours, to crush it out."

Powerful must have been Amice's voice and her words to have quelled, even for this short time, the tide of human passion; but Jesse Vicary had given his wrath place for too long to be able to master it now, or, indeed, to be kept back for more than an instant. He shook off the gentle hand with a movement of passion; and the flood, arrested for one moment in its furious course, raged only more terribly when the slight barrier was hurled away.

"Are you then in his secrets? Is this another trap for me—another way of putting off the day of justice? I have sworn to be revenged, or at least to have common justice. Miss Kestell, I will not sink into the slum of outcast society without one effort at getting righted, or of making——"

"Hush!" said Amice, "you forget you are talking to Mr. Kestell's daughter. I do not know what you are speaking of. Wait here, in my father's study, and if he chooses he will come to you."

Amice opened the study-door and beckoned Jesse in. Weak woman she might be when compared with this strong man; yet she possessed that dignity which, conscious as she was that Jesse was in the right, could not be crushed. At this moment she had the strength of weakness; and Jesse, though blinded with passion, could not have spoken another word to her after she had bidden him to be silent.

But, in truth, she did not wait for another word; she closed the door upon him, and, quivering in every limb, she went towards the drawing-room. She did not give herself time to think, she positively dared not; that Jesse Vicary was determined to see her father she felt sure, and if her

father would not go to him, then most likely Vicary would force his way into the drawing-room. This must be prevented, and, though she herself was quite unnerved, she was strong enough when duty spoke to follow its dictates.

She opened the door gently so as not to alarm Elva, and, pausing a moment, Amice saw something which made the blood appear to freeze in her veins.

There was a lamp on the piano, and Elva was seated there; she was conscious of this, though she saw only one object—this was her father lying flat on the sofa, one arm was hanging down so that she noticed his hand touched the floor. His eyes were shut and his face perfectly colourless.

Amice made one step forward with a suppressed cry of "Papa!" The thought darted through her mind: "How can Elva sit there so unconcerned? Papa is very ill, he has fainted."

All at once, however, Elva rose up and said:

"Amice, dear, what is it? Papa is here in the window-seat. We can't bear to shut out the light of our last evening."

Amice paused, horror-struck; she gazed again at the sofa—no one was there; what she had seen was—— Her pale lips refused to form the word; even her brain rebelled against the notion that what she had seen was but a false creation of her brain.

What really roused her was her father himself rising from the low window-seat, and coming a step towards her. With the light behind him she could not see his features, but his white hair gleamed in the hall-light in contrast with his black coat.

"Well, Amice, what is it?"

His voice unconsciously altered now, when he addressed his younger daughter. To Elva's ears it grated harshly. Amice made an effort to control herself.

"Papa, Jesse Vicary is in your study, but do not go to him—do not see him; send word by Jones that you are occupied."

The short sentences were jerked out as if by a great effort of will.

"What do you mean?" said Mr. Kestell, very slowly. "Why should I not go and see Jesse Vicary? I did not know he was at Rushbrook."

Amice dropped her hands helplessly by her side. She seemed to hear Elva's voice as if it were very far off. She did not

move one step backward or forward ; but stood in the middle of the room where she had just uttered her startled cry.

"Dear Amice thinks you are tired, papa," said Elva. "I thought you said Jesse Vicary had behaved very ungratefully. Please do as Amice suggests, and tell him you are busy. It is true, you know. I want you."

Mr. Kestell walked back to Elva as if he meant to obey her suggestion. He took her hand in his, and kissed her.

"You will miss your old father, eh, dear?"

Elva's arms were round his neck in a moment, and a little sob was heard in the big, silent, half-darkened room.

"Miss you? Oh, papa, I am only going because you wish it. Even now—oh! even now——"

"Hush, dear—yes, yes; for your happiness."

He unclasped her hands.

"By the way, darling, I had better just go and see what the young man wants. Your mother is asleep, I hope. I will tell Jones to bring you a light. It has suddenly become very dark."

He walked hastily away, not once turning to glance at Amice, and Elva heard him shut the door behind him with decision. At this moment, however, she thought more of Amice, who stood there so still. Elva went quietly towards her, fearing that she must be in one of her strange moods; and what could be done if this were so, because every one in the house was depending on her for the morrow?

"Amice, what is the matter? Speak, dear. Are you ill?"

Amice opened her lips and tried to speak. She even raised her finger and pointed to the sofa. She tried, oh, so hard, to say: "Look!" but all her senses appeared to forsake her at once, and she

fell forward in a dead faint into her sister's arms.

At that moment Jones opened the door. He was carrying a lamp.

"Jones, go quickly and fetch the nurse, and tell her to bring water and salts—anything. Miss Amice has fainted; help me to lay her on the sofa; and please, Jones, tell no one. She will soon recover. It is better not to frighten Mrs. Kestell, and your master is engaged. Thank you; now go, quickly."

Jones was a wonderful servant. He obeyed to the letter, and kept his own counsel. Elva knew how terribly annoyed Amice would be if any one made a fuss about her. It was Amice's way.

It was a long time before Amice opened her eyes again; but when she did so Elva noticed at once that she was perfectly conscious, and recognised them all—Jones, the nurse, and herself.

"You are better now, dear. Nurse has such powerful salts here. Put your hands in this cold water."

"Thank you. Did I faint? How strange! It is the first time in my life. Don't say anything about it. You can go, nurse."

She tried to sit up, and saw she was on the sofa. The blood rushed back to her cheeks as she struggled to her feet.

"I will get up. Thank you, Elva. I will go upstairs. Where is papa?"

"He went to the study to speak to Mr. Vicary," said Jones, respectfully, as he handed Amice a light shawl. "I hear the front door, miss. I think Mr. Vicary must be just gone."

"Elva, go and wish papa good night, and then come upstairs. Tell him nothing about me, but ask him if he is well. He looked so—pale just now."

"I will, dear. Nurse will give you her arm."

Then Amice went out by the side door, and walked upstairs.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XX.

THE storm which had so long threatened broke before day dawned; thunder, lightning, hail, and rain came in one terrific outburst. The sky had the whole of the grandeur and beauty of the storm to itself; for in this low-lying country there were no sharp-peaked mountains to rip open the packed clouds and make them discharge their cargoes of fire, nor amphitheatre of hills to throw back an echo to the loud-voiced thunder.

The racket of the storm set the household at the Castle stirring at an early hour. The first crash of thunder sent Lois down on her knees praying for all poor souls in danger or distress; and there she remained, with hands covering her face, until the last peal had growled itself out in the far distance where daylight was faintly breaking.

There were two sleepers in the Castle that night, however, for whom it mattered little whether the thunder growled high or growled low—John Gaskell and his aged father.

After those brief, stern words addressed to his wife, John Gaskell never spoke again, and within two hours from the time at which his father had died he breathed his last.

Lois, coming downstairs, dressed ready to set off for Summerhill, had the sad news told her by Lucy Harwood, who chanced to be crossing the corridor at the moment.

A door on her right hand suddenly opening, led her to hope that her eager longing to clasp Herrick's hand, to look up in Herrick's face with eyes that spoke their sympathy, was to be gratified. She turned hastily round, and her heart fell, for not Herrick, but Lady Joan stood before her.

No pale, heavy-eyed watcher this, such as one might expect to see issue forth from a chamber of death, but a woman with bright, tearless eyes, hard-set mouth, and two brilliant spots of red on either cheek.

She closed the door behind her with a steady hand. The room she had just quitted was old Mr. Gaskell's room; she had nerved herself to pass through it on her way to the corridor, without so much as turning her head away from the white-swathed form lying still and silent beneath the purple-curtained bed.

Thirty years ago Lady Joan, as she had heard the door close behind Vaughan Elliot, had said to herself, "That man must go at once and for ever out of my life." Now as she closed this door behind her, the same words were in her heart. "What is past is past," she said to herself. "This man must go as utterly out of my life as that other did."

But the remorselessness of the tearing, ravening beast of prey is not attained by the human animal without cost. Lois, as she looked at the hectic spots on either cheek, and noted the feverish, dancing eyes, said to herself:

"She will break down before night. Ah, if only I could be a help and comfort to Herrick's mother!"

Lady Joan's first words were addressed to Lucy, not Lois.

"You are up singularly early—how is

this?" was all that she said; but the voice which spoke the words had a ring of iron in it.

Both the girls shrank from her instinctively. Lucy looked confused and frightened.

Lady Joan repeated her question, fixing what seemed to Lois a hard, scrutinising look upon the girl's face.

"I had bad dreams, my lady—I could not sleep," answered Lucy, "and so I thought it better to get up, and come down."

"Quite so. I shall have something to say to you presently about those bad dreams of yours. Go into my sitting-room if you please, I will speak to you there."

Lucy hurriedly departed. Then Lady Joan addressed Lois: "I see you are ready to go. I will give orders for one of the grooms to drive you to Summerhill. No doubt you have well thought over the conversation I had with you yesterday, and have come to the conclusion that the course I advised was the right one."

"Come to a conclusion!" She might as well have asked a rain-cloud, with a hurricane blowing, if it had come to a conclusion whether it would travel east or west, as this poor child with her heart counselling one thing, and her conscience another.

Words did not come easily to her, so Lady Joan resumed:

"In the course of the day I will send you a cheque that will amply provide for your travelling and other expenses. America I think you said was likely to be your destination. Of course you will lose no time in leaving Summerhill, and I would farther suggest that your letter to my son, breaking off your engagement—that is if one has ever existed—should not be written until after your departure."

Lois looked all around her helplessly. Where was Herrick? How was it that Lady Joan dared speak in this way, as if Herrick were miles away, instead of under the same roof, and perhaps not twenty yards distant.

But Lady Joan knew well enough where Herrick was—kneeling in a stupor of grief beside his dead father, with his warm young hand clasping the clay-cold one, as he had clasped it in the moment of death.

Again she waited for Lois to speak; but as never a word escaped the girl's lips, she went on once more:

"An details on this matter which may

embarrass or trouble you, I shall be very pleased to arrange for you; but I would suggest that all our communications should be by letter—to any letters you may send me I will promptly reply."

Lois gave another hurried look around her. With all those doors in sight, was there no hope of any one of them opening, and Herrick coming forth?

Her eyes drooped beneath Lady Joan's fixed gaze, and she said, timidly, "Before I go this morning, may I say good-bye to old Mr. Gaskell? Herrick promised me last night that I should do so."

A peculiar expression passed over Lady Joan's face. "He was too free with his promises," she said, coldly. "Old Mr. Gaskell is dead."

"Dead!" repeated Lois, blankly. Her eyes grew round and startled. She staggered against the wall of the corridor as if her limbs had suddenly failed her and she needed support.

Lady Joan frowned.

"There is nothing surprising in the fact, I suppose. Will you be good enough to tell me what there is in it to affect you so strangely?"

But Lois only grew white and whiter, and kept repeating, with her large startled eyes fixed on Lady Joan's face:

"Dead! dead!"

Lady Joan lost patience.

"My words are easy enough to understand, I imagine. At any rate, I have neither time nor inclination to repeat them. I will wish you good morning. I suppose you are leaving at once?"

Lois clasped her hands together impetuously.

"And you are Herrick's mother!" she cried in a low, passionate voice. "Go! Yes—I will go! I will never look upon your face again in this world if I can help it!"

Then, with an effort, she seemed to gather her strength together, and, with feet that stumbled as she went, she crossed the corridor and went towards the hall-door.

It had already opened that morning to admit and despatch messengers in spite of the storm and the early hour, so its heavy belts were drawn back, and she could let herself out without difficulty.

Lady Joan for a moment stood watching her.

"An ill-trained, hysterical young woman," she said to herself. "Madly in love with Herrick, not a doubt! Well, so

much the better in one way; it gives me a sort of guarantee that she will not mar his future for him!"

And without so much as a thought of what Lois might suffer in the effort "not to mar Herrick's future for him," Lady Joan went on her way to her boudoir, there to question Lucy as to her "bad dreams."

Outside the deluge of rain had ceased, and only a heavy, drizzling mist fought with and quenched the brilliancy of the early dawn.

It was about half-past five when Lois passed through the park-gates and gained the high road, which ran a very river of mud. Her feet were wet through before she had gone a quarter of a mile towards Summerhill. She shivered from head to foot, yet her cheeks burned and her eyes glowed and danced as if from fever. Her steps grew swift and swifter, as if a matter of life or death hung upon her speed. Her breath came in quick gasps; the drizzling heavy mist seemed to choke her; all sorts of strange noises were humming and buzzing in her ear, yet on and on she went with ever-increasing speed till she gained the cross-roads which lay between the Catholic church of St. Elizabeth and the private road leading to Summerhill.

Then, from sheer want of breath, the girl was compelled to pause. So far along her road she had met no one, not even a farm-labourer or gipsy-tramp. Now, as she leaned for a moment against a wet, mossy fence, and tried to think where she was going, what she meant to do, she could distinctly hear the sound of approaching footsteps.

Something else, beside approaching footsteps, made itself heard above the rush and murmur of strange sounds in her ears—the tolling of St. Elizabeth's bell.

She started, and for a moment felt puzzled and bewildered. Then, as her thoughts began to clear themselves, she recollected what Father Elliot had said to her about the early and other services which he intended holding daily. And, lifting her eyes, she saw the Father himself approaching by a lane which led from his cottage straight to his church. He saw and recognised her immediately.

"Good morning! You are an early riser!" he said, as he crossed the road towards her. Then, as her tearful, scared face caught his eye, he added, in a changed tone: "My child, what is it? What has happened? Tell me."

Lois clung to his arm.

"Help me! help me!" she cried, piteously. "I want a hiding-place!"

CHAPTER XXI.

AT whatever cost secured, Lady Joan's calmness, as she cross-questioned Lucy as to her "bad dreams," presented a marked contrast to the manner of the girl, who was flurried and nervous to a degree, and seemed utterly incapable of giving a clear account of her broken rest of over-night.

"I have no recollection whatever what my dreams were, my lady," she reiterated. "Indeed, indeed, they have quite gone out of my mind."

"Do you ever have any recollection of your bad dreams when the morning comes?" asked Lady Joan, bending a curious look on her.

"Oh yes, my lady, when I wake up and find myself in a strange place."

"Then you are in the habit of walking in your sleep?"

The girl grew confused. She had evidently been surprised into making this admission.

"Not in the habit. Oh no, my lady. I have done so once or twice in my life," she said, after a moment's pause.

"When did you last walk in your sleep—I mean before you came here?" pursued Lady Joan.

"About a year ago, my lady."

"Well, and you woke up and found yourself—where?"

"In the churchyard, my lady," said the girl, and her eyes dropped; her colour changed again.

"In the churchyard. Then, of course, you recollected the dream which had sent you there?"

The girl hung her head lower still. She was evidently too frightened of Lady Joan to refuse to reply, and too truthful to prevaricate. So she answered, falteringly: "I dreamt I was looking for—for some one's name on a gravestone, and I suppose in my sleep I got up, put on my hat and cloak, and walked to the churchyard—it was the touch of the cold gravestone which woke me."

She nearly broke down as she finished speaking. Lady Joan, however, went on mercilessly as before.

"And I suppose, when I met you two nights ago in the hall walking and talking in your sleep, you had been dreaming of

the same person, and had come down from your room in search of him or her."

"Ye-es, my lady."

"Now be so good as to fix your mind steadily for a moment on the thoughts which filled your brain when you went to bed last night, and see if you cannot recall some vestige of those bad dreams which made you get up so unconscionably early this morning!"

But the question was a useless one. Lucy's only rejoinder to it was the repetition of her assertion that here her memory failed her altogether.

So Lady Joan resumed her cross-examination at another point.

"Have you ever," she said, still steadily eyeing the girl, "walked in your sleep, and—having no recollection of so doing—been told of it afterwards by some one who had seen you?"

"Yes, my lady," answered Lucy, hesitatingly. "If I wake up in my bed in the morning I have no recollection of what I have done in the night—I mean, I cannot tell whether I have really done a thing, or have only dreamt it."

"Ah-h." And here Lady Joan drew a long breath, and thought awhile. After all, the danger might be less than she had imagined it to be. Lucy had perhaps opened and shut the dressing-room door in her sleep, and in her sleep had returned to her room and got into bed. It might be this, or it might be that the girl was so accustomed to prevaricate and tell falsehoods as to her somnambulistical propensities—about which she appeared to be very sensitive—that she was able to give an air of veracity to her narrative which a less-practised story-teller would have found an impossibility. In any case, it would be as well to keep an eye on the girl for the present, and in a variety of ways at different intervals to test the truth of her narrative.

So, after a few moments of thought, she said in a less stern voice than that in which she had pressed her interrogatories:

"You may go now. Later on I will speak to you again. I think, as I told you before, that you should have medical advice. And I will like to see your—your—I forget—father or brother, was it?"

"Brother, my lady."

"Your brother, and speak to him on the matter. Write to him in the course of the day, and tell him I wish him to come here to see me."

As the girl withdrew, Herrick's voice was heard outside the door, asking her:

"Is Lady Joan here?"

The question gave Lady Joan time to withdraw her thoughts from Lucy to the matter on which, without a doubt, Herrick had come to interrogate her.

Most mothers and sons meeting thus within a few hours of the death of husband and father, would have been in each other's arms in a moment, and tears and kisses would have done duty for any amount of spoken sympathy.

Not so this mother and son. Their common sorrow had been no "cord of love" to draw them nearer to each other, but rather a measure that enabled them to gauge the distance they stood apart. When, at the moment of his father's death, Herrick's voice had rung forth its one passionate cry of rebellion against the iron law which made death, not life, the ruler of the universe, Lady Joan had stood by saying never a word; and when he had knelt in a stupor of grief, clasping his dead father's hand, she had quietly left the room, bent on her own business and on dismissing from the house the girl he loved.

The young man looked white, dazed, forlorn as he entered the room. He bent one long, scrutinising look on his mother. The terrible suspicion of her wavering reason which he had found himself compelled to entertain overnight, had not yet faded from his brain, and he was in hopes that the morning light might put it to flight.

Lady Joan's flushed face and brilliant eyes were scarcely reassuring.

"I thought you had gone to your room to lie down, mother," he said, still prepared to show her any amount of kindness, though tenderness in the circumstances could scarcely be expected of him.

Then he put the question she was prepared for.

"Have you seen Lois this morning? Or is she not stirring yet?"

"Pardon me, Lady Joan. One moment!" said Dr. Scott, coming into the room in a great hurry, "but will you kindly tell me what has become of the aconite, and other liniments, which were in use in the sick-room overnight? The nurses seem to know nothing about them."

"I have locked up all the medicines and liniments in my medicine-cupboard," said Lady Joan, calmly; "I do not like such deadly poisons lying about."

"Ah, quite so! Then it is all right," said the doctor, as he withdrew.

Then Lady Joan turned to Herrick:

"I saw her about half-an-hour ago," she replied, "just as she was leaving."

"Leaving!" exclaimed Herrick, incredulously; "she surely cannot have gone without a word to me."

"She seemed in a hurry to get home. She came down with her hat on. I told her I would give orders for some one to drive her home; but she evidently preferred walking."

With an exclamation of annoyance, Herrick turned and left the room. The thing seemed to him easy enough to understand. Lois, in compliance with his wish that she should return to Summerhill that day, had come downstairs prepared to depart; and, on the look out for him, had been met by Lady Joan. Some cold and formal speech had scared the timid girl, and she had fled precipitately. Lady Joan's stately "I beg your pardon," had sufficed to put her to flight on a former occasion; most likely some equally trivial speech, spoken with equally frigid emphasis, had done the deed now. What a nervous, impulsive child she was! How marvellous it seemed that his mother's heart had not opened towards her, and her strong nature yearned to protect her, as most strong natures yearn to protect the fragile and weak!

Sick at heart, and sick at brain, and though the muscles of his hand almost refused to guide his pen, he nevertheless sat down at once and despatched a few loving lines to Lois—a tender chiding for her hurried flight, a hint of his own weariness and sadness, and a promise that, when his week of dreary duties had come to an end, he would at once repair to Summerhill, for he had many things to talk over with her.

The "many things" to Herrick's mind represented Lois's resignation of her post in Mrs. Leyton's household, and the selection of a suitable home for her, in the house of some intimate friends of his own, until the wedding-day could be definitely fixed.

He did not expect a reply to this letter; for as yet he and Lois had not fallen into the habit—so dear to lovers—of making trifles an excuse for correspondence.

Before nightfall his vexation at Lois's abrupt departure had had to give way to other and more pressing claims upon his time and thought; for Lady Joan had

broken down utterly, and the arrangement of all matters, small and great, devolved upon him. Lady Joan was found by her maid lying upon her bed in a high state of fever, and half unconscious. Before evening delirium set in. Upon which, Parsons, the faithful old creature that she was, at once took possession of the sick-room, carefully keeping every one, except Dr. Scott, on the other side of the door.

"Poor soul, poor soul," said the doctor next morning to the old nurse. "It's only what one might expect. I suppose, last night, Parsons, she raved incessantly about her dead husband!"

"My lady's ravings," answered the discreet Parsons, "were mostly incoherent; and when she did say a word I could understand, it was not worth remembering."

And the shrewd look which she gave the doctor as she said this, might have been understood to mean:

"I know my place, Dr. Scott, and I know yours; and I don't intend to make my lady the talk of the town in order to gratify your curiosity."

HOLLAND HOUSE.

A PLEASANT corner is that by Holland House, where the road to the west is bordered by lofty trees. The cab-stand is at the corner, where even cabbie seems to enjoy a leisured and lettered existence, with no anxieties about "fares," which are sure to come in due time, and with the daily journals to study meanwhile. Here must hackney coaches surely have stood in the old time, while the jarvie thumbed an odd copy of the "Spectator"—with Addison himself calling a coach, sometimes to take him off to "Buttons," or some other of his favourite haunts. Yet the trees are growing old; those solemn elms that could whisper, if they would, the histories of stirring times, and tell us secrets of grand and beautiful dames long turned to dust, are dying away at the top, although they still show a screen of golden leaves to the pale sunshine of autumn.

Where the solid brick wall of the park gives place to an open railing, are a pair of drinking fountains, dedicated to the memory of the Lord Holland of hospitable fame, where urchins loiter to drink, or porters rest with their burdens, or the cabman fills his teapot, while the poodle snatches a hasty quencher through the

bars of his muzzle from the tank beneath. And his lordship himself presides over this banquet of the Barmecides, sitting there in bronze, bare-headed under the drip of the trees, surrounded by fallen leaves that are thickly scattered over the turf grass, that grows thinly and rankly under the shade.

Above one of the fountains we read the following distich, which Lord Holland seems to have penned shortly before his death—an event which, according to the inscription on his statue, occurred in 1840.

Nephew of Fox and friend of Gay,
Be this my deed to fame:
That those who knew me best may say,
He furnished neither name.

The kindly old lord had known many whose names were still more famous than these. At his hospitable board had sat nearly all the choicest spirits of the age; but there is a touch of family pride and political loyalty in his last deliverance, that commands a certain sympathy.

From the top of one of many of the embassies that pass that way, one may catch a glimpse, before the leaves of summer are thick upon the trees, of the gables and turrets of old Holland House. And it still wears an aspect of seclusion, although surrounded by the tall houses of a fashionable and artistic quarter. And a somewhat better view of the place may be had from a side walk dedicated to the public, which bears the name of Holland Walk. The lane affords a pleasant shaded walk, a favourite resort of children and nuns, in the summer time, with seats here and there. And in autumn, with the tinge of russet and gold in the dying leaves, the quiet sunshine steals among leafy glades and rests upon the heavy, stately mass of the ancient mansion, bringing out the deep-toned hues of its weathered brickwork, and casting deep shadows of its quaint turrets with their pyramidal roofs.

The general appearance of the house suggests reminiscences of Hatfield. The two houses are of the same period, and the builders of them were in alliance; in such alliance anyhow as lion and jackal, for such must have been the relation between the Lord of Hatfield, that Robert Cecil, who for a time had the destinies of England in his grasp, and Watty Cope, as he was known to his familiars, who was but a subordinate official of the privy chamber. Walter Cope, of the Strand, Esq., as he appears first upon the stage, had contrived by gift or purchase, to piece together the long divided Manor of

(Kensington. The Abbot of Abingdon's share had fallen to the Crown: after the Reformation, and Walter got a grant of that from Queen Elizabeth. Then there was the Manor of West Town, with an old moated house on the hill, and the district known as Earl's Court. And Cope, flourishing more luxuriantly under James than under the penurious and exacting Elizabeth, began, in 1607, to build this noble mansion. And it was first known, slightly in mockery of its owner's rising pretensions, as Cope Castle. An old friend visiting him soon after his house-warming, writes to Dudley Carleton: "July the seventh, 1608, went with Lady Fanshawe to visit Cope Castle, Kensington. Sir Walter Cope grows more and more into the great lord." He was now Chamberlain of the Exchequer, and fastening on the forfeited lands of recusants. But he was not destined to found a family. His fine house and great fortune were settled upon his daughter Isabella, who married Henry Rich, presently Earl of Holland, at the church of St. Bartholomew the Great, in Smithfield.

The Rich family, too, had come to fortune hard on the misfortunes of others. Chancellor Rich, the founder of the family, had, as the King's Attorney, headed to destruction the venerable martyrs, Bishop Fox and Sir Thomas More. The Chancellor's fortune had been built up of forfeitures and confiscations. His descendants were brilliant courtiers and men of the world who followed the fortunes of the rising star, the brilliant Buckingham; and were rewarded with lavish hand by the great favorite. One brother was created Earl of Holland, taking his title from the little Holland in Lincolnshire, which, with its drains and great sea-banks, rivals the greater Holland on the other side of the North Sea. Another brother received the proud title of Warwick, once made illustrious by Neville and Dudleys, a title that eventually descended to the heirs of the Earl of Holland.

Where Walter Cope had built, Henry Rich embellished and enlarged, and Cope Castle was henceforth known as Holland House. The Earl's handsome person and graceful manners brought him into favour at Court; he was one of the envoys charged to negotiate the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria of France; and he was ever after the Queen's devoted follower, and the chief personage in her household. In Henrietta's honour the

Earl proposed to give a grand entertainment in Holland House, at which both King and Queen were to be present. And for this event the house was re-decorated and furnished, and the great gilt-room, as it is called, adorned with extraordinary magnificence. But Charles had come to dislike and mistrust his wife's brilliant favourite, and the promised visit was never paid. The stress of civil war found out the weakness of the Earl's character. He vacillated between the two parties, and finally lost his head on the scaffold for an abortive rising against the ruling power of Cromwell and the army.

It is the ghost of Henry Rich that, according to tradition, haunts the rooms which he had prepared for the entertainment of his Royal mistress. He is richly dressed, as he appeared on the scaffold, but bears in his hands his own head, with the long love-locks matted with blood.

After the Earl's execution, Holland House became for a time the rendezvous of Cromwell, Fairfax, and the other chiefs of the array of the Commonwealth. According to tradition, an important interview between Cromwell and Ireton took place on the lawn in front of the house—for Ireton was deaf, and within four walls there was no security against eavesdroppers. But on the open lawn, where none could approach without discovery, Cromwell could speak his mind, in such loud tones as were necessary.

Before long, however, the widowed Countess, who had many influential friends among the victorious faction, was permitted to return to Holland House. And here it is said that the proscribed drama found a refuge during the severities of the Cromwellian reign. The poor, frozen-out actors—suffering under the Puritan black-frost of the times—found a patroness in the kindly Countess, and dramatic performances were given with as much secrecy, and as many precautions as attended the holding of a conventicle in other days.

At the Restoration, the young Earl of Holland came to his own again, and soon after—by the death of his uncle—inherited the more famous title of Earl of Warwick. His son and successor is chiefly noticeable as having left a widow, who, taking counsel as to the education of her only son from the famous Mr. Joseph Addison, of the "Spectator," eventually married her sage adviser. Soon after, Addison becomes Secretary of State and Right Honourable;

but probably he was not very easy as the master of Holland House, or, rather, as the husband of its mistress. For the Countess had a shrewish tongue; and, probably, Addison's happiest hours were those he spent among his old friends of the literary persuasion, where he could forget the chains of his splendid bondage. But the room is still shown, which was the library in those days, where Addison meditated a forthcoming "Spectator," pacing to and fro, with a bottle of wine at each end of the room to stimulate his imagination.

But Addison's lease of the splendours of Holland House was only a short one; and soon we find him stretched on the bed of death, but didactic to the last, and sending for his noble stepson to witness "how a Christian can die." The stepson, however, took little by the lesson, and was noted for nothing but a certain sottishness. At his death the honours of the family became extinct, and the estates were bequeathed to a certain Welsh cousin of his mother's, who was the daughter of Sir Thomas Myddleton, of Chirk Castle, one William Edwards, who was created Baron Kensington on the strength of his acquisition. But my Lord Kensington did not care to live in the fine old house, and sold it to Henry Fox, who was then paymaster-general of the forces—the most lucrative office under the Crown—and the leader of the House of Commons under Earl Butts.

Henry Fox was the son of an old courtier and cannie official, Sir Stephen Fox. And Stephen is said to have been an eye-witness of the execution of Charles the First; and he might very well have been, as a youth of seventeen or eighteen years of age. At all events, he was of humble origin, from Dorsetshire; but taking service with the exiled Charles the Second, he proved himself such an excellent manager of that Prince's tattered finances, that at the Restoration he was promoted to the office of paymaster of the land forces. At the age of seventy-five he married for the last time, and became the father of three sons. Henry Fox was one of the three. And in this way we have the extraordinary spectacle of the lives of father and son, covering the wide period from the reign of King Charles the First to that of King George the Third.

The paymaster of the forces resembled rather one of the old French surintendants, such as Fouquet, than a modern English minister. He had the control of millions

without any effective check or audit. Henry spent his millions judiciously in securing a majority in a venal House of Commons; and for this feat he was rewarded by being created Lord Holland.

"Ah," said the sighing Peer, "had Bute been true, I would have been Earl instead of Baron," for such had been the bargain, according to Fox's account of the matter. Few men were better liked, or worse hated, than Henry Fox, who was possessed of a marvellous personal influence, a wonderful charm that won people over in spite of better judgement. In mature years he won the affections of the daughter of the Duke of Richmond, a nobleman prouder of his somewhat tarnished descent from the Royal line, than a Valois or a Bourbon could be. The *mésalliance* was not to be thought of. Holland was next in descent to a shoe-black. Perhaps the Duke exaggerated a little in his rage. But Lady Georgina remained faithful to her middle-aged Adonis. She would look at no one else in the way of a lover, and when commanded by her father to appear at some assembly to meet a pretendant for her hand, she cut off her eyebrows—it was said the Lennoxes had them uncommonly dark and thick—and made herself such a fright, that she was sent back to her chamber again in penance. Then there was a rope-ladder at the window, or something equivalent, and Lady Georgina and her lover were married by a Fleet parson.

When a son was born to the runaway pair, the Duke relented and forgave them; and thereafter there were gay doings at Holland House. Lord Holland was a most genial father, and quite superior to the illiberal prejudices of the age as to family discipline. That children should never be thwarted in anything, was one of his leading principles; and, on the whole, it answered better than might have been expected. The second son, Charles James Fox, the "Fox" par excellence of the drinking-fountain inscription, inherited his father's wondrous charm. We see him, a dark-haired clever-looking boy in Reynolds' famous picture, one of the chief art treasures of Holland House. His youthful aunt, "lovely black-haired Sarah Lennox," looks down from a window in Holland House with that arch, winning glance of hers, upon her nephew and playmate, Charles James, and upon another fair girl, her cousin, Lady Susan Fox Strange-

ways, who holds in her arms a pet dove. It is curious, by the way, in respect of this picture, to note how easily experienced observers may be a little bit out when they describe from memory. Leigh Hunt writes: "Lady Sarah stands below with a dove in her hand, while Lady Strangeways looks out of the window." Thackeray says: "A canvas worthy of Titian. She, Sarah, looks from the Castle window, holding a bird in her hand, at black-eyed young Charles Fox, her nephew." Thackeray being right in essence, but wrong as to the bird. By the way, Thackeray seems to have got a hint from this picture, or the family history connected with it. The girl with the dove afterwards contracted what was then thought a "dreadful low marriage" with O'Brien, an actor, and the pair were shipped off to the Colonies, just like Lady Maria and her actor in Thackeray's novel.

But Lady Sarah, after all, is the heroine of Sir Joshua's piece. Who does not remember her story, how George, the farmer's boy, fell in love with her, and ogled her silently; only, instead of being the farmer's boy, it was Georgius Rex, of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. That black-eyed damsel might have been a Queen. It was quite on the cards as she made hay upon the lawn in front of Holland House in the most charming rustic costume, and George rode by upon the tall horse, and looked and sighed. What a difference it might have made perhaps. A bright and clever woman as a wife might have been the making of George, and have saved him from that dogged obstinacy which brought such woes unnumbered upon the hapless land. And everybody knows the story of the Royal wedding when George married homely Charlotte. How the Archbishop read out the passage in the marriage-service which speaks of the blessing vouchsafed to Abraham and Sarah; and the King winced and cast one last look at Sarah herself, who stood there in her loveliness among the bridal train.

But Sarah herself did not take the matter much to heart, and was gay enough afterwards as the wife of a sensible Suffolk baronet. And ever young as she appears for us in Reynolds' canvas, it is difficult to think of her as a grandmother with those sturdy boys, the Napiers, at her knees.

But at Holland House all was bright and joyous for Lady Sarah and the young

people, who were allowed to do whatever they pleased, and took full advantage of these opportunities. Horace Walpole tells us something of the gay doings there, and of the private theatricals in which Lady Sarah and Charles James took part. A pleasant story is told of father and son, the former having promised that Charles should be present at the blowing up with gunpowder of an old wall that interrupted the view from one of the windows of Holland House. But by some misunderstanding the operation was successfully performed while Master Charles was away. On his return he did not fail to cry out against the breach of faith. Lord Holland acknowledged the justice of the reproach. He ordered the wall to be re-built precisely as it had previously stood, and then it was blown up again, to the lively satisfaction of Master Fox.

The death of the first Lord Holland brought this brilliant period for Holland House to an end. The eldest son of the house died soon after his father, and the son's son, an infant of a year old, became Lord Holland, and the owner of Holland House. Charles James Fox was his nephew's guardian, and well discharged his trust. An inveterate gambler, a mighty drinker, crippled with debts, and the most improvident of men; yet with a noble and lofty soul, he rose above all his infirmities. As his nephew grew up, he introduced him to the society of the most distinguished people of the day. And as soon as Lord Holland came of age, he began to make Holland House a rendezvous for the leading spirits in politics—of course on the Whig side—and in literature. Fox's room and Sheridan's room are still honourably distinguished at Holland House. The latter was a constant guest, and a little story is told about him, which suggests a doubt whether Lord Holland's cellar was altogether worthy of his reputation as Mæcenæus. Opposite the house, but within the limits of Kensington High Street stood, and still stands, a tavern known as the "Adam and Eve." It has recently been re-built and modernised, but not long ago it presented a quaint, old-fashioned appearance, which carried it back to the date of the Regency. In leaving Holland House, Sheridan invariably called for a dram at the "Adam and Eve," and as regularly "chalked it up" to Lord Holland.

The landlord, proud of his distinguished guest, did not trouble his lordship about

the matter till several years had elapsed, and the score had reached a somewhat heavy amount, which Lord Holland discharged with a wry face.

But Holland House would have been nothing without its mistress. But in following the advice, "take a wife," Lord Holland took somebody else's wife. There was the usual scandal and divorce suit, and then Lady Webster became legally Lady Holland. She was a Miss Vassal, and had a fine fortune of her own, and a handsome person. Banished from Court, Lady Holland held a kind of court of her own at Holland House.

All the poets, wits, and statesmen—of the Whig persuasion—paid homage to Lady Holland, while her husband bustled about and blew the fanfare assiduously. Yet great things were done at Holland House—reforms planned and accomplished, literary lions fed with appreciation and encouragement. All the great names of that brilliant period may be found on the lists of the Holland House entertainments. These lasted well into the present reign. And it is a curious fact that a biographer, taking up the lives of the three Foxes—Sir Stephen, his son Henry, and Henry's grandson, the third lord—would carry his reader consecutively through the reign of Charles the First, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, the "glories" of 1688, the reign of Queen Anne and the four Georges; and also through the short reign of William the Fourth, to the earlier part of the long reign of her present Majesty.

During such a long and eventful period, all kinds of relics, and curios, and works of art have become family possessions, and have been stored in Holland House, and there accumulated undisturbed. When Lord Holland died in 1840, Holland House suffered an eclipse. His son and successor, the fourth Lord Holland, was a diplomatist, and resided chiefly abroad, and the traditions of Holland House were almost forgotten when the widow of the last lord came back, and at intervals gathered together some of the celebrities of recent days. The last of these gatherings, which brought down as it were a faint echo of the old glories of Holland House, took place in the jubilee year of grace. And now Lady Holland is gone, and the last link is severed of the long chain. And what will become of Holland House and its grounds, that still show a little of the wilderness of ancient forest among the genteel villas and elaborate newly old-

fashioned dwellings of Kemington? Who can tell!

But there is nothing like Holland House anywhere near London; it is the last survivor of its age—a solitary example of an epoch of domestic architecture. Happily it has not fallen into the hands of strangers, but has come into possession of a nobleman who represents an elder branch of the family of Fox; and it is to be hoped that the totem of the family, which occupies the place of honour on the park wall, may long remain there, in evidence of the inviolate existence of the house which has so long been the home of the race.

CONCERNING PEAKS.

By a peak I do not mean the fore part of a jockey's cap or a soldier's helmet, nor even the becoming point which terminates the front of a lady's bodice, about both which articles of dress a lengthy essay might be written; but I do mean those upstart portions of the terrestrial crust which give themselves airs—often, plenty of them—and, from their lofty eminence, look down haughtily upon all around them, although they be themselves wearing, in penitential guise, dust and ashes on their brow.

Warm-hearted, indeed, they frequently are; still, they pour down good and evil on their neighbours with stolid and stony indifference; and, though they stand as firm as a rock, they are nevertheless liable to the ups and downs to which all things geological are subject.

Without going far abroad, we ourselves possess, in Derbyshire, a famous Peak the foot of which is more curious than its head, and its entrails more interesting than its outward aspect. Its altitude does not appear so great as it is, because it rises from an inland station; but its internal conformation is marvellous. It loses much in dignity by not having been planted on the coast.

Of peaks which do rise directly from the sea, that Teneriffe is the loftiest in the world is a fact of which geographers are not ignorant; but the physical consequences of that fact are less familiar to people in general—even, perhaps, to the health-seekers staying at the Orotava or the Icod hotels, who have the phenomenon within easy reach, or spread out before them, if they had but the eyes, or the

instruments and the skill to use them, to convince them of its actual existence.

Most of us suppose the surface of seas and oceans to lie at a dead level—that is, uniformly following the curvature of the earth's surface—throughout, or through-over the terrestrial globe, a due average allowance of course being made for tides and waves. Monsieur Bouquet de la Grye has shown that such is not the case. The sea, like the plain, has its undulations of surface.

Some five years ago that gentleman was sent to Senegal and Teneriffe, to determine the geographical position of certain points. The recent establishment of a telegraphic cable between St. Louis (Senegal) and Santa-Cruz (Teneriffe) made it desirable to fix, with astronomical accuracy, the position of the capital of the French colony, because it would have to serve as the fundamental meridian for the basins of the Senegal and the Upper Niger.

The details of this delicate astronomical task are not likely to interest unprofessional or unscientific readers, except to note that, at the present day, observers are expected to attain—and they do succeed in attaining—a precision which would have filled the old geographers with stupefaction.

From the time of Ptolemy to the seventeenth century, errors of one or two degrees of longitude were regarded as a matter of course. Forty years ago, the tenth of a degree, or six minutes, was a difference which had often to be corrected on maps. Twenty years ago that figure was reduced by one-half, where certain fundamental meridians were defined. At present, when two stations are connected by a telegraphic wire or cable, the errors tolerated ought to be inferior to a half-tenth of a second, that is six thousand times less than the errors contemporary with great geographical discoveries.

This measurement of infinitely small portions of time is obtained, with science transformed into patience, by repeating the trial proofs indefinitely, and especially by analysing and allowing for what are called "personal equations"—physiological quantities dependent on the observer's acuteness of hearing, sight, and touch—three senses which contribute, each their share, in taking observations. Nevertheless, the first of the three is on the point of being dispensed with.

Le Verrier's question, put to candidates who offered to serve under his orders:

"Are you a musician?" to which the obligatory answer was "Yes," is at present needless and out of place. In observatories, now, instead of listening to the harmony of the starry spheres, astronomers will give "tops" on a chronograph.

On returning to Teneriffe, Monsieur de la Grye, having a week to spare before the starting of the mail-boat for Cadix, thought he could not employ it better than by ascending the Peak, in order to measure the density of the mountain. One of the results may at once be given. It was proved that the sea which bathes the Canaries' Archipelago has a strangely undulated surface; and that, by the effect of attraction, its level rises to a considerable height round Teneriffe, greatly exaggerating an effect similar to that which capillarity produces round a tube plunged into a glass of water.

In this way the surface of the sea forms an inclined plane, sloping down from the base of the mountain outwards to the distance, at which the attraction of the mass becomes so feeble as no longer to exert any perceptible influence.

It might be supposed that a floating body, such as a boat or a ship, would naturally slide down this inclined plane, like a ball rolling from the top to the bottom of a hill, until it reached the normal level of the ocean; but it should be remembered that the same attraction which raises the waters, acts also with equal force on the floating body, so as to maintain it in position, just as if no inclination of the surface existed.

It would be interesting to ascertain whether seaside mountains of much smaller mass, like the Highlands in the West of Scotland, or the Archipelago of the Scillies, exercise any perceptible attraction on the waters bathing the foot of the chain, or surrounding the group of islands. For the same physical reason, a long lake with big mountains at one end and a dead plain at the other, ought, in calm weather, to have the water at the mountainous end slightly higher than that bordered by the plain, and to continue so upraised in stable equilibrium.

It has been shown that the surface of the Lake of Geneva, and of course of other equally large or larger lakes, follows the curvature of the terrestrial globe. In this, indeed, it only follows, on a small scale, what necessarily occurs on the ocean itself.

When Monsieur de la Grye informed the

Consul of France that, in order to complete his observations effectually, it would be needful to pass several nights aloft on the Peak, he was advised not to breathe a word of the project. Not a creature would consent to accompany him if it were known that he was going to encamp in the region of the "fumerolles," or, smoke-vents. The isleños who mount the Peak in summer, in search of snow, sulphur, and pumice-stone, would refuse to follow; so afraid are they of the squalls and gusts of wind which sweep people away like feathers, and certainly still more of the volcano itself, which, according to the Guanches legends, was an infernal divinity who is not to be braved with impunity.

With the Consul's assistance, a small caravan of eight persons was got together, and they started early from Orotava, with favourable auspices as to weather. As long as they remained in the cultivated region, the morning mist was laden with the strong odour of toasted bread, which is the characteristic of the island. In every cottage, wheat, previously roasted on an iron plate, is crushed in a small hand-mill, and the resulting brown powder, "goffio," is the basis of the isleños' alimentacion.

Each guide had hung at his side a leather bag full of this roasted flour, which, in principle, at least, was to serve as his only nourishment during the whole time of the excursion. It is related that, during the Franco-Spanish war at the beginning of the century, a Canarian regiment landed at Cadix, who had to traverse the peninsula from south to north, had no need to draw on the commissariat during the whole journey. The soldiers performed marches of eighteen leagues at a stretch, requiring no other support than the goffio brought with them; and not a single laggard was left behind.

Many peaks, like Teneriffe, are the chimney-tops or outlets of volcanoes, more or less active, more or less dormant, sometimes believed to be extinct; but their absolute extinction can seldom be depended on sufficiently to justify building an hotel or an observatory on their top, like those on the Niesen and Mount Pilatus in Switzerland, on Ben Nevis in Scotland, and on the Pic du Midi de Bigorre in the Pyrenees. As we are told to beware of a sleeping dog, so should we be cautious about contracting too intimate an acquaintance with a slumbering volcanic peak,

for it often sleeps with one eye, or just one little crater open. Ev'n in its ashes live its wonted fires. Its intervals of rest are provokingly irregular and intermittent.

In times past, Vesuvius kept quiet, perhaps for ages; and now its outbreaks are so frequent that every tourist in Italy complains if he fails to witness an eruption, or to feel the mild shock of a diluted earthquake. With all these drawbacks, as Vesuvian wines are good, Vesuvian vineyards are a valuable property; but fancy being the tenant—for life, or death!—of a fine estate on the sunny slopes of Krakatoa!

These semi-dormant peaks can boast of one useful qualification; namely, to fulfil the functions of a cooking stove. They can mostly boil, can sometimes bake, but less frequently roast safely or satisfactorily. The meat might contract a taste of sulphur, which, although its medicinal virtues—in brimstone and treacle—are acknowledged, would be less acceptable by epicures as a condiment. Teneriffe cooks eggs to a nicety. That, however, is only a trifle, and is greatly surpassed by other fire-warmed islands.

When the French mission, headed by Admiral Mouchez, went to observe the transit of Venus, on the little islet of Saint Paul, in the Southern Hemisphere, they found it to be the crater of a by no means extinct volcano, rising from the bottom of the sea to the height of more than nine hundred feet above the level of the water. Although of so comparatively moderate an altitude, it is really and actually a partly submerged peak.

It is an absolutely sterile rock, not habitable, without potable water or vegetation, except a sort of tough, leathery grass, frequented solely by flocks of seals, sea-birds, and penguins, whose eggs might be hatched by the warmth of the soil, if the uppermost faces of the cliffs were not selected as their breeding places. The penguins themselves are so familiar and fearless, that, in order to pass through their crowded groups without crushing them, the astronomers had to push them aside with feet and hands. They allowed themselves to be taken up and caressed, resuming their usual occupations immediately afterwards, as if the only event that had happened was the arrival of a few more penguins on the island.

Down below, at the foot of the crater's circumference, were numerous springs of thermal water hot enough to cook, in the

usually required time, the lobsters which were caught in extreme abundance amongst all the surrounding rocks. In many places about their huts and sheds, the soil was burning hot at a few inches depth; and on digging down to a couple of yards, as much as two hundred degrees centigrade of heat—twice as hot as boiling water—was found, thereby supplying the party with an easy means of warming themselves, and cooking their food, if combustibles should happen to fail.

Amidst a cluster of peaks—the mountains of Gomera, an island lying close to the south-west of Teneriffe—are to be heard what may be called prehistoric or fossil sounds, a survival or remnant of the Guancho's vocal powers. Occasionally, they startle the ear on Teneriffe itself.

The Feast of Saint Anthony, at which domestic animals are blessed, is celebrated in the small village of San Antonio, not far distant from the now well-known valley of Orotava. Here is a little hill-side chapel, containing what is supposed to be a peculiarly sacred image, with such miraculous powers that all animals brought before it, when blessed on this day, are preserved from evil during the coming year.

Before the blessing of the animals commences, the little image of the saint, under a flower-decked canopy, is carried round the chapel in procession. At the door, the procession stops; the image is thrice inclined towards the people; and the blessing of Saint Anthony is read from a great book by the priest. This ceremony is performed three times. At the conclusion of each blessing, the men raise a curious wild cry, almost like that of sea-birds, believed to be derived from the ancient inhabitants of Gomera, the said Guanchos.

On this subject, Monsieur de la Grye directs attention to a custom which he thinks to be still "unpublished," and deserving to be studied. The shepherds of Gomera have a whistled language, also inherited from the Guanchos, the modulations of which represent ideas and articulations. The sounds they utter reach prodigious distances. General Carlos de Riveira, Commandant of the Archipelago, communicated facts, whose truth he had verified by making two Gomerians converse at a distance. He thinks that antiquaries and philosophers might advantageously study a language the origin of which, lost in the night of ages, has been

preserved on summits which may have once belonged to the antique Atlantis.

The General believed that no traveller had as yet made mention of this language, which will furnish hints to adepts of the new school of music styled "descriptive." Nevertheless, Berthencourt's chaplains, in their narrative, speak of the Gomerians' mode of talking, "practised with the lips," because they descend, it seems, from a race of men of which every individual member, made prisoners of war, had their tongues cut out.

Here we have a popular legend putting us on the track of truth. On the other hand, Spanish historians say that the shepherds conduct their flocks by whistling; moreover, they whistle so loudly, that an Englishman going close to them, in order to hear better, was deaf for a fortnight afterwards.

'BUILDING CASTLES.

BUILDING castles! April gleams
Flickering round the fairy dreams,
That fling a halo rare and rich
Where, in fancy's fairest niche,
Eager hands of happy youth
Raise a shrine to Love and Truth.
Not a cloudlet in the sky,
Not a cold breeze rushing by;
No touch of fear, no stain of guilt,
In the castles that we built.

Building castles! August's sun
Lit us ere our work was done;
Glad and glorious in the strength
That the noonday wins at length,
When the fitful morning light
Steadies in its perfect height;
When the joyous hope is crowned;
When the trust its rest has found;
The full cup no drop had spilt
In the castle that we built.

Building castles! Wind and snow
Sweep the plains of long ago;
Over many a tended grave
Rise the fragments that we save
From the ruins of the past,
To raise the shrine that is our last;
To guard kind memory's tender tear
For the few that love us here.
"Not as we will, but as Thou wilt,"
For the last castle life has built.

THE GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC.

WITHIN eighty-five miles to the eastward of the coast of Nova Scotia, is a crescent-shaped, death-fraught island, which among Atlantic mariners is known and dreaded as the graveyard of North America. Statisticians have failed to record the sum-total of shipwreck and death for which this sand-bank is responsible;

but although countless disasters have passed unobserved and unrecorded, more than enough have been made known.

A sand-bank, we say, for such does Sable Island appear to one approaching it from the north. As he gets nearer, the sand-bank reveals itself as a collection of low sand-hills, partially covered with a scanty vegetation, rising gradually from the sea-level at the west side to an elevation of about eighty feet at the east end. The whole formation is crescent-shaped, and measures about twenty-two miles from point to point of the bow, but only about one mile in breadth at its widest.

This fatal sand-bow not only lies at the interlacing of three great currents, and midway between the coast of British North America and the Gulf Stream, but it lies directly in the pathway of Transatlantic commerce. It is enshrouded for weeks together in dense, impenetrable fogs, and it is surrounded by eddies and erratic currents; it is so low, that the mariner does not see it until he is upon it; and for centuries it has lured unnumbered ships and crews to their doom.

A few years ago a friend of the present writer's, Mr. S. D. Macdonald, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, prepared a wreck-chart of Sable Island, marking the place on it of every known wreck within living memory. The appalling number of one hundred and fifty-two wrecks were localised; but the process of compilation led to the conclusion that for every wreck whose history could be recorded, at least one more must be added as lost in the mystery of the tempest.

It is not the visible island alone which is to be dreaded. At the north-east end is a dry bar of two miles, a shallow bar of nine miles, and a deeper bar with a heavy cross-sea for four miles. At the north-west end is a more or less shallow bar of seventeen miles, over which, even in fine weather, the sea breaks heavily. There is thus, with the island, a continuous line of over fifty miles of foaming breakers—the most deadly spot on the face of the navigable waters.

When the storm breaks, it seems as if the whole body of the Atlantic were being discharged on this sand-bank with a force which shakes it to its centre. And scarcely a storm passes, but the anxious watchers for derelict mariners pick up on the surf-covered beach a broken spar, a bit of furniture, a hen-coop, or some other mute, pathetic evidence of disaster and death.

Sport of the tireless winds and seething currents, Sable Island is ever changing its configuration, and even its position. Let us take a look at its history and its physical peculiarities.

Three hundred and forty years ago, John and Sebastian Cabot, in their little ship "Matthew" from Bristol, coasted Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and sighted the sand hummocks of Sable Island. Cabot brought home such reports of waters teeming with fish, that expedition after expedition of Portuguese fishermen followed. Some of these adventurers must have landed on the island and left cattle, for which those who followed them had reason to be thankful.

Later on, in the sixteenth century, Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed over from England, with five armed ships, to St. John's; and, although he found there a considerable fleet of fishing-vessels of all nations, formally took possession of Newfoundland in the name of Queen Elizabeth. Some of the Portuguese there told him about Sable Island, and thither he sailed, as thus recorded in the chronicle of the voyage:

"Sable lieth to the seaward of Cape Breton about forty-five degrees, whither we were determined to go upon intelligence we had of a Portugall during our abode in St. John's, who was also himself present when the Portugalls, about thirty years past, did put into the same island both neat and swine to breed, which were since exceedingly multiplied. The distance between Cape Race and Cape Breton is one hundred leagues, in which navigation we spent eight days, having the wind many times indifferently good, but could never obtain sight of any land all that time, seeing we were hindered by the current. At last, we fell into such flats and dangers, that hardly any of us escaped; where, nevertheless, we lost our 'Admiral' with all the men and provisions. Contrary to the mind of the expert Master Cox, on Wednesday, twenty-seventh of August, we bore up toward the land; those in the doomed ship continually sounding trumpets and drums; whilst strange voices from the deep scared the helmsman from his post on board the frigate. Thursday the twenty-eighth, the wind arose and blew vehemently from the south and east—bringing withal rain and thick mist; and we could not see a cable length before us. And betimes we were run and foulded amongst

flats and sand, amongst which we found flats and deeps every three or four ships' lengths. Immediately tokens were given to the 'Admiral' to cast about to seaward, which being the greater ship, and of burden one hundred and twenty tons, was performest upon the beach. Keeping so ill a watch, they knew not the danger before they felt the same too late to recover, for presently the 'Admiral' struck aground, and had soon her stern and hinder parts beaten in pieces. The remaining two ships escaped, by casting about east-south-east, bearing to the south for their lives, even in the wind's eye. Sounding on while seven fathoms, then five, then again deeper; the sea going mightily and high."

Such was the first recorded wreck on Sable Island. Only twelve out of the crew of one hundred and seven escaped; and, afterwards reaching Nova Scotia, were taken by a French vessel to England.

The next we read of Sable Island in history is in connection with the French attempt to colonise North America. In 1598, the Marquis de la Roche obtained a Charter from Henry the Third, and set sail for "New France," taking with him forty convicts from the French prisons. When he arrived off the Nova Scotia coast he began to be a little uneasy about these passengers, and landed them for safety on Sable Island, until he could organise a settlement on the mainland. On his way back to the island, he encountered a furious gale, before which he was driven for fifteen days, until he found himself back on the French coast again. For some reason or other—some say that the Marquis was captured by an enemy, and not allowed to communicate the result of his voyage to the King—Henry did not hear for five years that forty poor wretches had been left to starve on an ocean sand-heap. He at once ordered out a ship to their relief, and when the expedition reached Sable Island, only twelve of the forty remained alive. Many had fallen in the general scramble for existence, when the men found themselves deserted and became enraged with each other as well as with those who had left them in such a plight. Others had died of exposure and privation. The remainder had managed to erect huts out of the wreck of a Spanish vessel, and lived on the raw flesh of the cattle which the Portuguese had placed on the island. When their clothes were worn out, they dressed themselves in the skins of seals,

an immense number of which they had accumulated, and took back to France with them.

In after years some of these unfortunate castaways actually made their way back to their island prison, tempted by the knowledge they had gained of the facilities it presented for seal-hunting.

The next definite record is of one John Ross, a mariner of Boston, U.S., whose ship the "Mary and Jane," was driven ashore here. For three months he was left on the island, and in that time built for himself a boat out of the wreck of his ship, in which he managed to reach the mainland. He reported the existence of eight hundred head of wild cattle, and many black foxes, and his reports induced both the Nova Scotians and the New Englanders to seek a hunting-ground on the island. A company was formed in Boston for the enterprise; but when they reached Sable Island they found that the Frenchmen, who had come back, had built houses and a fort, and had killed off all but a hundred or two of the cattle.

Thereafter Sable Island remained the resort of adventurous fishermen and seal and walrus-hunters; as also of many with less lawful occupations. Awful tales used to be told in Nova Scotia of pirates, and smugglers, and ragamuffins of all sorts, who found temporary refuge on Sable Island, which was beyond the arm of authority.

The tales of piracy, wrecking, and murder became so common, that the Colonial Government were at last moved to do something.

What brought matters to a climax was the loss of the "Princess Amelia," a transport carrying all the household effects of the Duke of Kent, and about two hundred officers and recruits. Every soul on board perished; but there was a strong suspicion that many of them actually reached the shore alive, and were murdered by the pirates. A gun-boat called the "Harriet" was despatched to investigate matters; but she also was wrecked.

At last a proclamation was issued, declaring that all persons found on the island without a license from the Government would be removed and imprisoned for not less than six years; and at the same time a grant was voted for the establishment of a life-saving station. This was founded in 1802, under the superintendence of James Morris.

As Sable Island is now entirely given

over to the life-saving establishment, we must describe this useful organisation.

This Government establishment consists of a Superintendent and eighteen men, who are placed at various parts of the island. There is a main station about the centre, and there are five out-stations, in which the men reside. Besides these houses there are two houses of refuge, in which are fireplaces always ready filled with wood, candles, and matches, a bucket, and a bag of biscuits hung on the wall out of reach of the rats. The doors of these refuges are simply latched, and inside are written directions posted up, telling castaways how to obtain fresh water by digging in the sand, and how to make their way to the inhabited stations. Many a heartfelt prayer has been offered up in these shanties by storm-drenched mariners cast up by the sea on the island.

At all the out-stations there are signal-staffs, for the purpose of communicating with vessels, and also with the main station; and at the main station is a "crow's nest" on a mast one hundred and twenty feet high, from which a view of the entire island can be obtained—when fog permits. During the fogs, however—which are constant—patrols make the rounds of the whole shores once in every twenty-four hours.

There are several metallic life-boats, surf-boats, life-buoys, rockets and mortars at the different stations, and a supply of horses is always kept on hand to drag the boats and appliances to wherever they may be needed.

The life of the surf-men, we are told by Mr. Macdonald, is by no means an idle, although a somewhat monotonous, one. In fine weather they employ themselves in repairing the stations, hauling firewood, attending to the cattle, practising rocket and mortar drill, and in preparing the shipment of wreck-material for the next call of the Government steamer.

In foggy weather they are constantly on the alert. The patrol mounts his pony, and often in the teeth of a blast that nearly sweeps him off the saddle, or amid blinding showers of snow and sleet, or of sand-drift that cuts the face with furious force, he struggles on, now and again seeking shelter between the sand-hills, now and again mounting the crest of one to gaze to seaward, anon travelling down to the beach to examine some spar or other fotsam he espies there; but always steadily working on until he meets the next patrol

from the opposite direction. They exchange notes, compare observations, and work their way back again to the station from which each started. Thus not a day now passes but the area of the desolate sand-heap is thoroughly examined, and the ocean scanned for leagues around. In 1873 two lighthouses were erected, one at each end of the island. But some people think these lights a mistake, and that they deceive more than they warn vessels caught in the encircling currents.

It is to these currents that the dangerous disturbances, of which Sable Island is the centre, are due. The Gulf Stream, after sweeping between the coast of Florida and the islands of Cuba and the Bahamas, runs northward along the American coast until it reaches the shoals of Nantucket, when it swerves off to the north-east, and passing to the south of Sable Island, stretches across the Atlantic eastward to Europe. The cold, ice-laden current of the north passes out of the Arctic Ocean, along the east coast of Greenland, and there joining with another current from Baffin's Bay, sweeps along by the coasts of Labrador to the banks of Newfoundland. There it meets the north edge of the Gulf Stream and splits into two. One part, from its greater density, sinks below the warm current of the Gulf Stream, and continues its southward course as a submarine current. The other portion, after striking the Gulf Stream, turns off to the west and sweeps along the coast and bays of the northern continent. This is the current which mariners dread, and which in the neighbourhood of Sable Island runs at such a rate as to carry them out of their reckoning before they are aware. Then there is a third current, which, detaching from the Polar Stream at the south end of Labrador, rushes through the Straits of Belle Isle, joins the outflow of the St. Lawrence, and becomes the Gulf of St. Lawrence current. This third current skirts the east side of Cape Breton, and, passing south, strikes the westward-flowing portion of the Great Polar current in the neighbourhood of Sable Island.

There is this sand-heap in the midst of a swirl of waters, which, as they are affected by the prevailing winds, will put a ship all round the compass in twenty-four hours.

A curious illustration was found by one of the Superintendents, who one year had his provisions devoured by the rats, and

had seen large masses of the island washed away. He became alarmed for the safety of his company before the arrival of the relief-ship in the spring, and thought to despatch a message to the mainland for help. A small boat was put together, and letters being put on board, the sail was hoisted, and she was despatched before a south-east gale in the hope that she would either be picked up by some inbound vessel, or be blown on to the mainland. Thirteen days later the boat floated right on to the beach just six miles from the place from which she had been despatched!

In calm weather an empty barrel will circle round the island again and again; and, indeed, one is often sent adrift on this journey for the purpose of testing the velocity of the currents. Bodies from wrecks will also make the same ghastly circuit in full view of the watchers, who, when the wind is off-shore, will go to the opposite side from that on which the wreck occurred, in order to receive the sea-tribute.

The island is treeless, and the vegetation is confined to the central valley, so that there is nothing but the lighthouses to distinguish it from the surrounding sea. Even the colour is much like that of the ocean itself on a cold, grey day; and ships have been known in dirty weather, and before a stiff breeze, to run straight for the island, unaware of its proximity and their own danger until the red ensign on the flagstaff was sighted. Dense fogs accompany nearly all the winds all the year round, caused by the warm, moist air above the Gulf Stream meeting the cold air above the Polar Stream.

There have been, says our informant, some memorable tempests here which have marked periods in the history of the island—nights of terror never to be forgotten. The inhabitants of this lonely sand-bar have sometimes despaired of ever seeing the dawn again, and have sat for hours, speechless, terror-stricken, listening to the howling blast which threatened to hurl their dwellings into the angry waters.

After one such occasion they were horrified, on going forth again, to find that not only had the whole surface of the island been altered by the removal of some sand-hills and the formation of others, but also that a portion, about three miles long, forty feet wide, and from twenty to sixty feet high, had been cut off bodily from the north end. This forms now one of the parallel bars over which the seas break in

frightful tumult during those awful storms, the suddenness and violence of which are phenomenal.

Perhaps one morning the sun rises clear, with every indication of continued good weather, and with no premonition of coming woe, beyond the moan of the surf along the shore. All at once a dull leaden haze obscures the sun; the clouds gather fast; the sky becomes wild and unsettled looking; the wind begins to rise in fitful gusts, driving the sand in blinding swirls. Darkness increases as the low driving scud shuts off the horizon, and then the gale bursts with awful fury, cutting off the summits of the sand-hills as with a knife, and wrapping the island in a cloud of sand and spray. As night comes on the horror increases. The rain comes down in a deluge, and amid the roar of the elements the human voice is inaudible. The lightning for a moment lights up the waves as they madden along the beach; and then follows a sudden, strange calm. A pause—a few short gusts at brief intervals—and then the storm bursts forth anew from the opposite direction. For hours the hurricane continues, overborne in noise only by the crashing of the thunder; and then, as it gradually ceases, the clouds break away in dense black masses to leeward.

On one such night in 1811, thousands of tons of sand were carried up from the beach, first from one side and then the other, and strewn over the island, so that the vegetation was covered, and the outline of the island completely changed. Sand-hills were tumbled into the sea, and new hills piled up where before had been valleys; known wrecks disappeared, and the skeletons of others appeared above the sand—relics long buried of which there is no history.

When Sable Island was first occupied by the French convicts, it was about eighty miles long, by ten miles broad; it had a height of not less than three hundred feet; and it had an extensive harbour, a northern entrance and a safe approach. Even fifty years ago there was a commodious harbour to which fishing-vessels used to run for shelter, when caught on "the banks" in a storm. The entrance to this harbour was closed during a gale in 1836, and two American ships were shut in, whose ribs are now buried in the sands. A shallow lagoon now occupies the place of the old harbour, separated from the ocean by only a narrow ridge of sand. Meanwhile, the station, erected first in 1802, has

had to be repeatedly moved further and further inland.

In 1833, there was but half a mile left between the station and the sea. It was moved four miles inward, but the sea followed; and new buildings had to be erected about the centre of the island. At that time it was computed that eleven miles of the west end had been swept away in thirty years. In 1881, about one hundred and fifty feet of the whole breadth of the island was carried away; and the place where the lighthouse then stood is now covered with water. Instead of forty, the island is now only twenty-two miles long; instead of two and a half miles, it is only one mile broad; instead of three hundred feet, it is now only eighty feet high at its highest part.

Not only is it diminishing in size, but it is also actually travelling eastward at a rate which confuses the chart-makers. Account for it as experts may, the fact remains that, since the beginning of the present century, there has been a change of not less than twenty-five miles in its position. Sir William Dawson's theory is that the island is the summit of a vast submerged sand-bank, to the edge of which it is being gradually driven by the winds and currents, and that when it reaches the submarine edge, it will topple over bodily into deep water.

Meanwhile, with such characteristics as we have endeavoured to describe, can we wonder that Sable Island is one of the greatest terrors to those who go down to the sea in ships? A moving graveyard, acting in apparent fiendish collusion with the demons of the storms and currents, the most skilful seamanship is often unable to resist its deadly seductions.

Sable Island is not all a sandy waste. On the shores, it is true, nothing is to be seen but sand, thrown up in fantastic drifts, and scooped out into hollows, from which protrude the skeletons of many an unfortunate wreck. But as the hummocks are mounted, the scene changes. The lake-valley of the centre resembles a western prairie, with green knolls, and waving meadows of tall grass. On the shores of the lake, which extends for about eight miles, may be gathered in their season the wild pea, wild roses, lilies, asters, strawberries, blackberries, and cranberries. From these wild fruits a small revenue is derived by the men of the life-saving station, who gather and ship them to Nova Scotia. Here, also, are herds of

wild ponies dotting the hill-sides, while around a few fresh-water pools flocks of wild-duck and sheldrake paddle, and myriads of sea-birds circle in ceaseless flight.

It is in this little oasis that the Superintendent's house and stores are erected, and where the gardens and fields of the man are cultivated. It is a fair enough sight on a fine day, when, also, the seals are sunning themselves in thousands along the beaches. But how few are the fine days! Sometimes not half-a-dozen in as many months.

Sable Island is the home of ghosts. Not a spot of its area but is associated with human suffering and death; and, as if authentic tradition were not full enough, the supernatural fears of the seafarers have peopled it with legend and with spectre. It is, indeed, a weird spot, well adapted for the vagaries of unquiet spirits; but a regiment of them could hardly deepen the natural terrors.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Furio's Marriage," "Joan Fellacot,"
"A Fairer Diamond," etc., etc.

CHAPTER L. WHAT COMPENSATION?

WHEN Mr. Kestell first left the drawing-room, he met Jones in the hall. This latter was placing a small lamp on the carved oak table, and the softened light shed a pleasant gleam on the tessellated pavement and over the old oak furniture. Rushbrook House was very perfect in all that related to its interior decoration; the harmony of colour always impressed newcomers, and prevented the wealth, that evidently reigned everywhere, from appearing in the least ostentatious.

Mr. Kestell, pausing as he watched Jones, with his usual precision, stooping to adjust the lamp, realised for a moment that, though he was the owner of all this, he was not part of it; that, for years, he had lived an outside life, and that, beautiful as this place was, he had been always forced to view it from the outside. This psychological truth—that a man may never really be able to make himself at home in the place where he lives, and of which he should by right be the keystone—belongs purely to the realm of that which we call spirit, or soul.

Kestell of Greystone, for reasons which he knew but too well, but which he never analysed, looked upon all his possessions with the eyes of a stranger. Yet he had spun the silken threads so closely around him that he was imprisoned in the cocoon, and knew that it was impossible for him to make his way out. He had the power, but not the will, to face the cold blast of the world which lay outside Rushbrook and all its possessions. But the longing to come out of it was always there, and with it the dread also of some rude hand piercing his cocoon and commanding him to come forth out of his silken chamber.

Mr. Kestell, pausing in his own hall, could not so much as lift up his eyes and say: "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner." Long ago, religion—the belief of a humble soul in a power above himself—had ceased to have any influence over him; long ago he had turned away and said: "I must rely on myself;" and now, terrible thought, self seemed to fail him. But courage is the last virtue to leave the spirit of man; and Mr. Kestell gathered up what remained of it. So, by the time Jones faced his master, Mr. Kestell had made out his plan of action.

"Jones, the ladies want the curtains drawn. By-and-by, put another light here. I want the lamp in my study. I won't wait for my own to be lit. Viery is in my study, I suppose? I will let him out."

"Yes, sir. Shall I take the lamp into your study, sir?"

"No; go to the drawing-room. I will carry the light myself."

Mr. Kestell felt that nothing would have induced him to enter that room in the dark; and certainly he had never in all his life been called a coward.

Thus it happened that Jesse first saw the dazzling gleam of the lamp before he recognised that it was Mr. Kestell himself who carried it.

This latter placed it on the writing-table, without saying a word; and Jesse, who was standing by the fireplace, was silent also. Neither of them held out his hand; and, without any previous words, each understood—but how differently!—that there was to be no peace between them.

Blind with anger as was Jesse, the force of habit is so strong that—as his quick glance noted the outline of the old man; noted the white hair, as of old, just

touching the coat-collar; noted the more haggard lines of the features and the far greater pallor of the face—he was stopped in his first mad wish to seize him by the arm.

The result of this feeling on Jesse was that for a few moments he remained silent, and that, unlike his original intention, he allowed Mr. Kestell to have the first word.

The lamp was on the table and the door was shut close before Mr. Kestell turned towards Jesse and said:

“You told my daughter that you wanted me, Jesse. I have come, though you have chosen a very unfortunate time.”

“Yes,” said Jesse, so strong in his virtuous indignation, that he did not notice that Mr. Kestell called him by his Christian instead of surname; nor did he choose to notice the tone of deep sadness in which the words were uttered. “Yes, I have chosen this time because all time is the same to me; and I care not at all whether you are marrying your daughter or further inebriating upon the world by some act of benevolence. I have come here to get justice at last; justice from you, Mr. Kestell. Remember, I have asked for it before; but now I insist upon it. If you—refuse me”—Jesse’s voice quivered, for, having once found the power of speech, he was not to be stopped—“I will proclaim it publicly. If you deny me, I will insist on your proving me wrong; otherwise, your own silence will condemn you as it has done once before.”

Jesse had nothing to hide. His conscience, so he thought, was guiltless, and he stood up straight and powerful, and fixed his eyes upon Mr. Kestell’s face. Here was another proof of the old man’s guilt—if that were wanted—for Jesse saw that the blue eyes were at once bent to the ground, and that the hand that rested on the table trembled visibly.

“What justice do you want?” said Mr. Kestell, in a very low voice.

“What justice? How can you ask me; you—you who have posed so long for a good man; you who made me believe in you when I was young; who—who— And now you ask what justice? Is it not the justice of my whole life that I am asking for: the justice of my birth; the justice of the lonely boyhood; the scorned youth; the struggles of my manhood? Is not that enough reparation to ask for; but if you want more, take it. Do you think, Mr. Kestell, that I am the blind Jesse

Vicary you once thought me, and that you wished me to remain? Do you think that I do not see clearly the truth now, and that anything can veil it from me any more? Do you think that it has not eaten into my very heart, and taken from me peace of mind and soul, and all because you are a mean coward, and cannot own, even to yourself, that you have broken the laws of man and of God; and you fancy that by hiding them and making me suffer for your sins, you can blot them out?”

The storm of passion seemed to shake Jesse as the blast of wind sways the forest trees; stranger still, it appeared to have the opposite effect on the accused who stood before the bar. His calmness was as the calmness of the cyclone: calm, terrible, and awe-inspiring. Whilst Jesse had been hurling out his accusation, Mr. Kestell’s ashy-pale lips had moved. The inaudible words he said were:

“How can he know? Who has told him? It must be Hoel Fenner. But no one can know the whole truth. Even now I can repair the evil—even now.” When Jesse paused, Mr. Kestell said again, quite calmly:

“Tell me, Jesse, what justice do you want? What sum of money will satisfy you? And, if you are a man, tell me plainly what you want, and I will do my best to satisfy you; but spare me many words for the sake of the innocent.”

Jesse was not pacified by these words; on the contrary, they were like a sudden blast upon a burning rick of hay.

“What justice? What sum of money? Money, money! Do you ask me that? Do you so little understand any honourable feeling belonging to a man who—Heaven help him!—calls himself a gentleman? Money! Why, I have already had too much of your miserable gold. I have had more than the law allows me; but, if it was in my power, I would throw you back every penny you ever spent upon me, ay, to the uttermost farthing. Have you not tried to force me to accept mere of your money by depriving me of honest employment? Do you think that I do not know that it was your evil work that turned me out of Card’s office? You thought to make me accept your Canadian farm. Now, here is my answer: Not one penny of your money will I accept, not one; but all the same I will have justice.”

Mr. Kestell raised his eyes to Jesse’s face, and the look that was in them was one of utter amazement. Had Jesse not

been mad and possessed by evil anger, he might have read astonishment in the look. As it was, he put down to another hypocrite's trick both the look and the words that followed. Mr. Kestell put out his hand in a deprecating manner, and was going to exclaim; but suddenly he altered his mind as he said:

"I do not understand you. If you will not have money, what will you have? Have you no pity? Do you want me to—"

"Yes," said Jesse, quickly. "I want you to be honest and proclaim the injustice you have done me all these years. You, who have posed as my benefactor, as my protector; who have pretended I was but a child saved from the workhouse. No, not me alone, but my sister—an innocent girl. I wish you to own at last your sin, and to take away from us the stigma of our birth. Own it once, and then do not be afraid I shall trouble you again or allow Symes to do so, for the sake of my poor mother, whom, no doubt, your cruelty killed. You shall own that, if we are outcasts, it is because to you, the rich man, the much-respected Kestell of Greystone, it is because it is to you we owe our existence."

Jesse made a step forward, as if, in his blind anger, he would willingly seize Mr. Kestell by the throat and make him speak out his confession then and there at the risk of his life.

No wonder that anger is called blind; no wonder that its fierce power entirely sweeps away judgement and sense; otherwise, Jesse must have noted that the man before him seemed all at once to change; that a faint colour stole over his thin, pale cheeks, and then he heaved a deep sigh, as it were almost of relief.

"You want me to sign a declaration of the truth about your birth?" he said. "Is that the justice you want?"

"Yes. If I am to carry the stigma to my death, at least you, the author of it, shall bear it, too."

"You will not accept compensation?"

"No! a thousand times no! Besides, I have no right to any. You have done your legal duty. It is in the sight of Heaven that you will learn the moral right of every one of its children. There are some crimes which will be judged only at the last day."

"Jesse, you shall have your rights," said Mr. Kestell, in a very low voice, "you shall have your rights; but have

some mercy—wait till to-morrow. After all these years, it is not asking much of you. Wait till my dear child is married; to-morrow afternoon or to-morrow evening. Give me till six o'clock—till eight o'clock. Name your time, and then come and find me here. If you like, after that time, you can proclaim your wrongs; only wait till then. I am asking a very short respite. If you have ever had a kindly feeling towards me, let that influence you a little, and grant me till then—till to-morrow. I want to spare her. She is a daughter whom no father could help loving. For her sake, not for mine, not for mine, wait these few hours."

The old man's voice trembled in its suppressed eagerness; the very mention of Elva's name gave him strength to humble himself before his accuser. Had it been necessary, he felt as if he could have knelt to ask this short respite, only this for Elva's sake. He had hoped so much—not prayed, how could he pray?—that his enemy would not find him out till after that; nay, more, let not the truth be suppressed, Mr. Kestell had hoped to escape altogether. But the blow had now fallen in a way that gave him, even at this eleventh hour, the power of asking for this delay.

Jesse Vicary had expected scorn and anger. He was utterly unprepared for this supplicating tone. It suddenly unnerved him, threw him off the high pinnacle of passion he had climbed up to. He felt bewildered for the moment.

"Mr. Kestell of Greystone wants to avoid publicity," he said, scornfully, stooping to pick up his hat. "It did not matter how many months and years the children, good enough only for the workhouse, were pointed at in scorn. But let that pass; it is perhaps impossible for some natures to understand honour. Have your delay, Mr. Kestell. Go and have yet one more triumph; but to-morrow I will have your written acknowledgement to do with as I like, and as I think best. I will have the truth."

The two men, who had so terribly changed places, were standing close by each other as Jesse said these words, throwing into them all the scorn learnt from mental suffering; but Mr. Kestell seemed barely to hear them. He was evidently calculating the precious minutes allowed to him.

"Very well, Jesse. Then to-morrow, at seven o'clock, come here. I will leave orders that you are to be admitted. And, one

thing more, I should be very glad if—if it were possible that you should try and forgive. Remember, you will never be able to judge of another man's temptation."

Jesse Vicary did not answer. He merely walked out of the room, and into the chilly evening air of the wide moor.

CHAPTER LI. ALONE AT NIGHT.

WHEN the door shut upon Jesse Vicary, Mr. Kestell remained standing in deep thought, near to the window, which had not had the curtain drawn across it. He watched the retreating form of Jesse with a dull, puzzled look upon his face, as if he hardly took in the result of the interview. Gradually, however, his ideas shaped themselves into some sort of coherence, and the inward agitation showed itself by a cold clamour which spread all over his white forehead. He looked ten years older than he had done before entering the room.

"It has come at last," he murmured; "but not as I expected. He fancied that it is that which has ruined him. What will he think when he knows the truth? What will the world think? What is the world compared to Elva and Celia? No, they must never know—never. How can I prevent it—how, how? Whilst there is life there is hope, men say. Something unforeseen must happen; something may turn up. Strange things have happened. He may die between now and then—die!"

He dwelt on the word as if it were one he had only just heard, and was trying to accustom his ears to. He took hold of the heavy curtain with his left hand, and supported himself thus, whilst he passed his right slowly across his forehead.

He then realised that he was wishing Jesse Vicary to die; that if some one could at this moment bring him the news of his death he would reward them handsomely. Was that murder? Something like it. And the hideous idea seemed to take shape, and become like a thin phantom, that floated near him and nearly touched him.

"Button died, and I felt freer. But there were other proofs. They have been growing, growing for years. The cloud was no bigger than a man's hand at first; it has grown—it has been increasing for years. It is like a weight upon me. The air is heavy—oppressive. I cannot breathe."

As if it were really hot, Mr. Kestell pushed back the spring-lock of the window and threw up the sash. The cold night-air poured in, like water into a newly-made rift in a ship, and with this fresh tide of air the ideas in his over-heated brain changed suddenly.

"Oh, Heaven, is there mercy in man? What if I had told him all—all? Would he have had pity, would he have understood? No, youth is pitiless—pitiless. For this mad idea he was ready to kill me. But for the truth—ah, no. I did well to wait—to ask for this delay. Shall I face it, face it like a man, or face—that other thing? They will all know—all, but Celia and her relations. Celia, oh, my darling, it was for you, for you that I did it. But what have I given you, and what have you given me in return? Has it been altogether a vast deception? Would it have been better otherwise? No, no, it could not have been. At least, you have been happy, and the others—your children—our children. Elva, yes. But Amice— There, there again, curse it! that phantom follows me—looks at me with those cavernous eyes. Eh, what am I saying? Are my senses going? Was it all worth this—this agony, such a little sin—sin? What is it? Ambiguous word, invented by the priest-craft of all ages! Who made it sin? Why not do the best we can for ourselves? Thousands of worse things are called good every day. Sharp practice? What is all life but sharp practice? The law is founded on it. If I had done it openly, what would any one have said?

"What would John have said—John—John Pellow. You are here. No, what am I saying? If you knew you would forgive. I spent every penny on them, and more—much more. And their name—what is in a name; how many care about a name? A man makes his own name; Jesse would have made his if he would have been guided. Foolish fellow, he would not, he would not—What am I doing here? The time is so short, so very short, and there is much to do. If I could go back step by step to the very beginning I would act differently. I would have guarded myself better, but then at the end, the very end, would John have required it of me? Humbug! pure nonsense! Who has come back from the grave to explain it? Ah, but if it should be true!"

A gentle knock at the door recalled Mr. Kestell to common thoughts, for very

seldom is it that a man, even in the crucial moments of his life, indulges in long soliloquy. The floodgate of thought is so strange and overwhelming that it is difficult to represent it through the medium of words, any more than one can describe how the breeze becomes a hurricane, for thought is one of life's greatest mysteries.

"Papa, papa, are you there? Is Mr. Vicary gone? Amice was afraid you were ill."

Elva entered; her own face was pale and careworn, she had gone through a great deal this day, and now the evening had brought new anxiety in the person of Amice. She was evidently in a very nervous state.

"Ah, it is you, Elva. Come in, dear; I am alone."

"What did Jesse Vicary want, papa? Has he thought better of the Canadian idea? Did he mention Symee? How I do miss her now. Our new maid is so stupid."

"A little matter of business, dear; you must go to bed and rest. You will have so much to think of to-morrow."

"Don't talk about to-morrow. It is to-day I shall remember all my life. Papa, you don't half understand what I am doing for you, you believe it will be for my happiness; well, there, to make you think yourself a good prophet it shall be for my happiness."

"Walter loves you," said Mr. Kestell—then going to his desk, he drew from it a sealed envelope. "Look, dear, I was going to give you this to-morrow, but I will do so now. When you are on your honeymoon think that your old father is happy because you are enjoying yourself."

He himself opened the envelope and drew from it a Bank of England note for a thousand pounds.

"But, papa, that is too much—I shall want for nothing; remember——"

"I wish you to keep this, dear, and spend it in things for yourself. It is safer in this way so that you can change it easily." He folded it up and closed her fingers over it with a smile. "There, go away and sleep, and I must rest too. Your mother will not rise early."

"Good night, papa, good night."

She kissed him very tenderly, and moved away for fear of breaking down; but he called her back.

"Say it again, darling, put your arm round my neck. It is very terrible to lose a child. It unnerves me."

She could see this was true as she obeyed, but this time her tears fell fast upon his cheeks.

"We must be brave, dearest," he said; "for my sake you will be brave to-morrow!"

"I will."

"And you will try and remember that life is not all sweetness, child; you must be patient with Walter. I know he loves you."

"Hush, papa, we must not say any more about that!"

"You will never let him—or any one—poison your mind about your father! Promise me."

"What an idea! Who would dare! If Walter tried to do so, I would leave him—I would, indeed. There"—Elva forced a smile on her lips—"that is answer enough. Good night."

"Good-bye, dearest. And now go to bed."

Elva went upstairs with a heavy heart, but with a firm determination to be brave.

"It quite upsets papa if I am sad. I will not think; I must try and sleep, and forget. Amice is right—papa does look ill."

She went to a drawer and unlocked it. It was full of letters. Resolutely she took them out and tore them across, and put them in the grate. When all of them were burnt, she heaved a little sigh.

"If the past could be destroyed as easily," she thought. "If I knew, if—Am I doing right? Ought I to do this thing? I can never love again. But marriage does not always mean that sort of love. No, no, it cannot. That comes but once—but once. Is not filial duty something very great, very precious in God's sight? It has a commandment to itself, 'Honour thy father and thy mother;' and papa's greatest wish is that I should marry Walter. Would he wish something that he knew would be against my happiness? He must judge better than I can—he who has loved so deeply, so devotedly. I will try to make Walter a good wife, only I dread it, I dread it so much, so very much."

Elva fell on her knees, and hid her face in her hands. She tried to pray, and the words would not come. But prayer is far above mere words; and she who needed so much help could only ask dumbly for comfort. The terrible misgiving, which would not, even now at this eleventh

hour, be thrust away, crushed her. Was she doing right? Was self-denial in a case like this a self-denial acceptable to God?

"But girls marry every day for money and position," she said aloud, rising, and pacing her room in deep agitation. "I have loved once, why cannot that love be crushed out utterly? It must be; it shall be. Where does sacrifice end? Is it not the highest work on earth? Does not Amice think so—dear Amice? For her sake, too, I must be quite composed. She does not approve of what I am doing because she cannot understand my love for papa."

Elva shivered a little; it seemed as if she were slowly dying, as if all the fulness of happiness which had once been hers was now only a mockery. It had been a beautiful picture spread out before her in order to make her realize still more her present misery. Even now what she most wished to forget sprang into her mind with the active freshness of new events. She paused before her bookshelf, and her eyes rested on "An Undine of To-day." Now she could see very plainly all its faults. She had had the baptism of suffering, and she remembered Hoel's words about good writing being bought at the price of suffering. Ah! she had suffered now, and Hoel had given it her. Strange that through him she had learnt the power of pain, the power of that mysterious agony in a world which is so very visibly formed for beauty and joy, and which also is unmistakably impressed with pain. We seem compelled to hand round sorrow to our neighbours when they are crying out to us to give them the opposite; but strangest, and most divine mystery, through suffering is taught the highest knowledge, the knowledge of a Divine love.

Elva could not realise all this yet. She could only catch a glimmer of it through the darkness of her great sorrow; but the glimmer was a slight comfort, and soothed her weary brain. It was like ice on a burning temple, like momentary cessation of pain when the sufferer fancies he can bear no more.

Presently Elva remembered that if she did not rest she could never go bravely through the wedding-service of the morrow; and, forcing herself to still her thoughts, she went to bed. There was not anything in her room to remind her of her wedding. She had said she would not have it

crowded with any presents or wedding-clothes. For one more night she would be the girl who had lived a happy life. Poor Elva, she realised strongly that it is the mind alone which makes or mars our happiness; the outward circumstances only so far as they disturb the seat of conscious life.

There was certainly nothing to remind her of her wedding. But, all the same, she slept but little, and the grey dawn found her with but the smallest remains of the courage which had till now sustained her.

Little did she guess, through all this self-torture, that the father for whom she was doing this had never gone to bed at all.

When Elva was gone, and all the household had retired, Mr. Kestell still sat on in his study. He had much to do, apparently, for he wrote on patiently for several hours. His hand trembled now and then from weariness, perhaps, but at other times the bold characters came out strong and clearly on his paper. Once or twice he rose to go to the old bureau, and to take out papers and examine them. Once, too, he started up, and seized his closely-written sheet, and taking it in both hands, nearly tore it across—nearly; not quite. Second thoughts altered his intention, and once more he sat down and continued writing.

It was three o'clock in the morning before he had finished; the lamp still burnt brightly, but the ashy grey look on the old man's face would have moved any one's pity. He was very, very weary, but he would not own it even to himself.

The business he had set before himself was done; the most important part of it was contained in a sealed envelope of the ordinary size, and a large blue cover which spoke of business pure and simple. On the outside of this he wrote in clear characters: "My last will," and the date.

The sealed letter was addressed to

"John J. Pellew, Esq."

"To be read after my death."

This he enclosed in another envelope, on which could be read: "To be given to J. Vicary."

He pushed back the writing-case and the rest of the writing materials as if he were sick to death of them, and then he opened a small secret drawer fixed within one of the smaller drawers of his writing-table, and took out from it an envel-

lope, faded, and tied with old-fashioned ribbon.

These were the secrets the envelope contained :

A small note in a fine Italian hand, signed "Celia Ovenden." A lock of pale, fair hair, somewhat dull of hue, and somewhat faded, too, by age. And, lastly, two smaller locks of hair folded in a white paper, on which was written "Elva and Amice ;" and two dates.

He put this last back in the drawer ; the other, after kissing it reverently, he placed in his waistcoat-pocket ; the note he gazed at a long time before he enclosed it in his pocket-book.

"Celia, my darling," he murmured, "it was for you, all for you, my wife, my wife, my only love."

Then he sat quite motionless for a time, as if the very words were a comfort to him, and lastly he rose, and lighting a candle, he stole upstairs.

Again he noticed the stupid stare of the round-faced nun in the clock ; again he paused, as if angry at the intrusion of this poor, lifeless daub, and quite mechanically he repeated :

"I must have that altered next time I drive into Greystone ; I have always forgotten it."

When he reached the landing he stopped, and listened just as if he were a thief who for a moment was conscience-stricken when about to commit his crime. It was a strange feeling to have in your own house ; but it swept over him strongly, and caused him to tread more softly, and every now and then to pause again and listen.

But all was silent at this hour, not a creature was moving in the house ; a very faint murmur of wind swept along the eaves, and a far-off cock-crow reached his ears.

That was all.

Then Mr. Kestell paused before his wife's door, and listened attentively, putting his head close to it. Was she asleep ? Often Mrs. Kestell would wake very early—this insomnia being caused by a life entirely without exertion—and then towards five or six o'clock she would fall asleep again, and declare in the morning she had had a wretched night.

Mr. Kestell waited to ascertain if this was one of her wakeful hours. How earnestly he listened till the throb of the blood in the arteries could be heard in his ears ; at last his listening was rewarded by the faint sound of a cough.

She was then probably awake—awake and conscious ; what was she thinking of ? Did he find a place in her recollections of the past ? Probably she was meditating about the details of Elva's wedding. Did she from this go on to recall her own marriage ; the devotion which had been hers then and since ; the love which had risen above all, disappointment, and above the rebuffs of a wife who suffered from ennui ; the love which even now partook of the passion of youth, and the intense desire that she above all others should think well and kindly of him !

How he longed to open the door ; how intensely he desired to go up to her and give her one kiss, and pour out the sorrow of his heart, and to tell her that it was for her sake that he had done this thing.

But almost as soon as the wish was formed, it was crushed. Celia would be alarmed at his untimely appearance. She would declare that he had given her palpitations, and disabled her for the fatigues of the next day. Therefore he only listened, and then with a whispered, "Celia, Celia, my darling, good-bye," he raised himself to his full height, and went silently on to his own room.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXII.

FOR nearly a week Lady Joan lay on her bed in a state of semi-consciousness. During that week the little village churchyard, which had already received the poor maimed and scorched collier lads, once more swung back its lych-gate to give its six feet or so of quiet earth to John Gaskell and his father.

And the country-side mourned for the two, just as they had mourned for the collier lads who were their own kith and kin.

Not a man, woman, or child far or near but what, one way or another, paid their tribute of affection and respect. Crowds lined the road along which the funeral cortège passed, and church and churchyard were filled with mourners of every degree.

Herrick's gaze wandered in vain down the aisle for Lois's sweet face in her accustomed place in church. One look from her tender, tearful eyes he felt would say more to him than the volumes of letters of condolence of which he had been the recipient during the week, and which had seemed to go over his heart like an iron harrow as he had read them.

A flash of painful thought brought before him Lois's dependent position in a not too orderly household, a position which compelled her to make her inclinations bow to her duties. Following the thought came the sudden, angry impulse, to end as

quickly as possible so intolerable a condition of things.

And then he pulled himself together sharply, rebuking himself for thoughts which, in the circumstances, seemed a treachery to the newly-dead.

This, in some sort, had been Herrick's frame of mind during the past week—a week in which the most trivial and the most momentous details of life and death had jostled and elbowed each other with hideous and jarring familiarity. Lady Joan's illness had doubled and trebled his anxieties and responsibilities. The colliery disaster and its consequences in ordinary circumstances would have claimed every minute of his time from morning till night. Now, in addition, all sorts of duties, trivial and tiresome, ponderous and sad, pressed upon him hour by hour.

One duty most unwelcome to him at the moment was that of playing host to his uncle and cousin, who arrived from Southmoor two days after his father's death.

Lord Southmoor was not a little discontented at the necessity which had driven him from his ancestral, if dilapidated, home into the mushroom grandeur of Longridge Castle.

"You can absolutely smell the wealth," he said, turning to his daughter, as he entered the wide hall, and throwing a contemptuous glance around at its sumptuous furnishing.

"Yes, I can," she answered, with a little laugh, "as the fox did the grapes—covetously."

"She enters the house of death with a jest," thought Herrick, as he advanced to meet her, reading her manner easily enough, though he was out of ear-shot of her words.

He was not prepared to give these relatives of his a very warm welcome; he needed no telling of the light in which the Earl regarded his father and grandfather. He had not seen any of his mother's people since his early college days, and the impression they had left upon his mind then was renewed now.

"He is an effeminate counterpart of my mother," was his terse summing-up of the Earl—using the adjective advisedly.

And, "She is the most self-assertive young woman I have ever met," was his equally terse summing-up of his cousin; which speech on Herrick's lips meant a great deal, for, of all objectionable types of womanhood, the self-assertive was to him the most objectionable.

There was no gainsaying the fact, however. The Lady Honor's appearance alone justified the epithet.

To begin with, her hair was the brightest red in tint—one seemed to see it before anything else as she entered a room. It was not the "rich, ripe red" which artists love to paint, and poets to sing, but of that very violent hue commonly dubbed "carrots." Her eyes were red-brown, round and prominent, with a fixed look in them; her mouth was large, showing large white teeth; her nose was short, her cheek-bones high. In figure she was plump, and fairly tall, with large hands and feet. Her voice matched her appearance—it was loud and ringing—and her manner was frank and a trifle domineering.

During the first day of her arrival, it seemed to Herrick that it was with great difficulty she subdued herself to a frame of mind suitable to a house of mourning and woe. Yet she did her best to be sympathetic.

"Poor Aunt Jo! No wonder she's cut up!" she said, more than once, when she was told of Lady Joan's illness.

Herrick stared at her.

"Aunt Jo!" "Cut up!"

Was it possible that the girl could be speaking of his mother, lying unconscious on her bed upstairs with her life well nigh beaten out of her with sorrow!

He made no reply, but mentally thanked Heaven that his Lois was not like this abrupt, loud-voiced damsel. He furthermore resolved that, cousin though she might be, he would see as little as possible of her during her stay in the house—a task of no difficulty this with the thousand and one matters that

claimed his attention from morning till night.

Even on the solemn day of the double funeral, five minutes of quiet and seclusion seemed to be begrudged him.

Weary and dispirited, he had gone to his "den" seeking a respite from sad thoughts by penning a few lines to Lois. But his pen could not put into words how he hungered and thirsted for his darling, or with what passionate desire he longed to feel once more the touch of her soft hand on his hair, and to hear her sweet voice saying: "My poor, poor boy! If only I could bear this for you!" So he wisely determined that his words should be few; just as many, in fact, as would tell her that he would be with her on the morrow immediately after breakfast, and bid her, at all costs, secure an uninterrupted half-hour for their talk.

But his words, few as they were, were not to be written in peace. The inevitable rap-rap—which betokened business—came to his door. Into the mists vanished sweet Lois's dimpled face, and in its stead there stood confronting him the round head and clean-shaven face of Mr. McGowan, the representative of the firm which, for over fifty years, had conducted the legal business of the Gaskell family.

With a profusion of apologies Mr. McGowan introduced the purport of his visit: when would Mr. Gaskell be able to give him a morning for the discussion of the arrangement of important business details respecting the valuation of the estate?

"Valuation!" Herrick repeated the words blankly. "I'm afraid I'm all at sea."

"I suppose there is no will," said the lawyer, beginning to fear that young Mr. Gaskell was not half so good a man of business as his father had been before him.

"Will! No, there could be no sense in making one so long as my grandfather lived."

"It's most unfortunate that things should have happened as they have. The absence of a will so greatly complicates matters," said the lawyer. "The valuation of the estate will be a terribly lengthy business."

Herrick drew a long breath.

"Forgive me; I'm beginning to understand. My head is not quite clear for this matter just now. Whenever it has come

into my mind I have always taken it for granted that things would go on the same as before."

He sighed wearily. An endless vista of intricate law business seemed to open before his mind's eye now.

"If Mr. Gaskell could have foreseen such an emergency as this, no doubt he would have made preparation for it. It might be as well to ask Lady Joan if she knows of any document—will it could hardly be called—of her husband's drawing up," said the lawyer.

"My mother insists on getting up, if only for a few hours, to-morrow; but I shall scarcely like, yet awhile, to trouble her on this matter," said Herrick. "Any such document would, I should say, as a matter of course, have been deposited with you."

"I have been close upon twenty years in the firm now," said Mr. McGowan, "and assuredly it has not been deposited with us in my time; but search shall be made in the Gaskell safe in my strong-room. The papers have been accumulating there rapidly of late years."

And with this testimony to the increased and increasing wealth of the Gaskell family, the lawyer departed, leaving Herrick free to conjure up the image of sweet Lois once more.

CHAPTER XXIII.

If, as the poet bids us to do, we counted time "by heart-throbs," some of us would out-live Methuselah in less than a fortnight. Lady Joan stood once more at her boudoir window, asking herself vaguely, dreamily, if creation could be only older by seven days since she had last looked out on that little glade, with its copse of hazel and wild plum. Was it only seven days since she sank back on her pillows, with all sorts of hideous voices ringing in her ears, and all sorts of unknown terrors knocking at her heart? Yet so it was. Seven days had been time and enough to spare to drag this woman through a burning fiery furnace of delirious terror; time enough and to spare to confront her with actual facts, and possible consequences, beside which the fiery furnace of her delirium seemed like a heavenly vision; time enough and to spare for her to learn the terrible lesson that what was past was past, and no power, human or divine, could undo it; time enough to set the iron of those three little words, "no going back," eating into her very soul.

Yet from her own lips no human being would ever hear the story of those seven days. Those about her no doubt would sooner or later remark that "my lady had sadly changed since her illness." Parsons, by-and-by, when she goes for a week's holiday to her married nephew, will, in the sanctity of the little parlour behind the grocer's shop, let fall mysterious hints as to the strange language my lady used when her fever was at its height. "She cursed her soul, dèd my lady," the old body will say, "she declared herself shut out of Heaven, poor dear; but it's my belief one half of it was the choleryform they doctors are so fond of giving now-days." But on Lady Joan's own lips was set a seal of silence, never to be broken in this world.

Herrick, during that seven days' illness, had on the whole seen but little of his mother. For some unaccountable reason his presence in the room had seemed to disturb her, so he had wisely curtailed his visits as much as possible.

On the first day of her sitting up, when he went in to wish her "good morning," he started back, aghast, at the change which a few days of illness had wrought in her.

"This was not my mother a week ago," he thought, with a twinge of pain; "a week ago her hair was as brown as mine, now it is as white as snow! A week ago she—ah! What is it? Wherein is the change?" He abruptly cut short his wonderings, saying to himself that it was the white hair surmounted by the conventional widow's cap, which made her look so unlike herself; for in his heart lurked a coward dread of raising once more the spectre of that hideous suspicion of her wavering reason, which he had done his best to put to rest.

Herrick and his mother were not given to much outward demonstration of affection; but he kissed her this morning with a warmth unusual with him, and said how glad he was to find her better. Then he delivered a message—considerably curtailed from its original prosy stiffness—from Lord Southmoor to the same effect; and a second greeting from Lady Honor—this, a not too literal translation from its original, free-and-easy heartiness.

Lastly, he had something to say on his own account: he was going over to Summerhill that morning, and he asked if she had any message to give him for Lois. This was the manner in which, after due consideration, he chose to convey to her the

intimation that Lois's position as his future wife must henceforward be formally acknowledged.

Lady Joan frowned; her manner grew frigid. Her reply was two words:

"None whatever."

Then she turned her face away from him, and steadily looked out upon the September landscape.

The long drought and subsequent heavy rains had brought autumn upon them early. Damp, rotten leaves lay in bushels under the park trees; the flowers in the parterre, immediately below the windows, looked beaten and draggled. Overhead there was no glorious burning expanse of blue, but an even spread of silver-grey, here and there browned to a tarnished silver by struggling sunshine.

"To everything there is a season," thought Lady Joan. "Now the time to die is coming. This is as it should be. If leaves hang too long upon a tree, driving rain or hurrying winds would sweep them away, or what would become of the spring greenery?"

Herrick stood for a moment looking at her a little sorrowfully, a little wistfully. His heart yearned to comfort her in her great sorrow. Why would she not let him? Why would she insist on building up this wall of ice between them? Why did she not turn her head, and modify, if not retract, her heartless words?

But her eyes, still steadily fixed on the misty park, with its rotting leaves, seemed to betoken that she had almost forgotten his presence.

"Just as it should be," her thoughts ran. "In Nature there is the autumn mist and hurrying wind, which put an end to the things whose course is run; among men there are the strong souls who stand out here and there in a generation and say 'this or that life is useless, and must be blotted out.'"

But Herrick had grown weary of waiting.

"No message did you say, mother?" he asked, a little impatiently.

And Lady Joan, without so much as turning her head, replied in two words as before:

"None whatever."

He would not invite them to be said a third time, so he hastily left the room.

Half-way downstairs, a rush of skirts, a scamper, and a stumble told him that his cousin was behind him, and was coming downstairs, as he had heard her more

than once before, by a succession of small jumps.

"Herrick! Herrick!" she shouted. "Stop a minute. How is Aunt Jo? And what are you going to do with yourself this morning?"

Aunt Jo again! It seemed as apt a designation for Lady Joan as Betsy might have been for Lady Macbeth!

Herrick drew back into a recess, to allow his cousin to pass downstairs before him.

"My mother is better, thank you. I hope in a day or two she will be about again, and able to entertain you."

Lady Honor swooped down the stairs in front of him. On the bottom step she caught her foot in her dress, and fell forward headlong on top of Herrick's big mastiff, who couched there, waiting to accompany his master on the ride which he scented in the air.

There ensued profuse apologies to the mastiff, diversified by frank little speeches addressed to Herrick.

"Did she hurt its little paw then?"—the "little paw" was about the size of a lioness's—"she's in a bad frame of mind, Argus—been kept indoors for days, and doesn't know what to do with herself." Then to Herrick: "Some one must take charge of me to-day, or something dreadful will happen." Then to Argus: "He'd ask me to go out riding with him if he only knew how I long for a scamper." Then to Herrick: "I won't answer for the consequences if I'm again left to my own devices till dinner-time."

Her frank, easy manner almost—not quite—precluded the idea that flirtation was intended. Although Lady Joan had never in so many words expressed her wishes concerning her niece to Herrick, the idea, so to speak, had been "in the air," and he had caught scent of it. Honor, it was just possible, might be of one mind with Lady Joan on this matter. It was not a thought he liked to entertain; but there it was, and he could not help it.

So he said, a little formally, perhaps:

"I'm very sorry, Honor, that I can't ask you to accompany me this morning; some other time I shall be delighted."

"And I'm very sorry, too," said Honor, in the same frank tone as before; "because, as I told you, mischief will come of it if I'm shut in here the whole morning with myself to entertain myself. I shall have to look up Aunt Jo——"

"No, no," interrupted Herrick, "don't do that! I mean my mother is not well enough yet to—to—"

"To stand my noise and chatter, I suppose you mean, only you're too polite to say so. Well, then, since I may not do that, will you be good enough to tell me what I may do by way of diversion while you're enjoying your canter this morning?"

Herrick's face showed his annoyance. Diversion! If she wanted diversion why had she come to a house of mourners? Music, of course, was out of the question, or he would have referred her to the music-room with its variety of instruments. Riding, unless some sober-minded person could be found to ride alongside of her, he did not care to suggest, as well for her own sake as for that of the animal she rode.

"What is your father going to do this morning? He might perhaps like to ride or drive. You have only to give your orders, you know," he said, after a moment's pause.

"That's a delightful phrase! It suggests Aladdin and the genius of the lamp at once! But of course you said it ironically! My father, at the present moment, thinks he is reading in the library. That is to say, he has chosen—no, the butler and two footmen have chosen for him—he has had all three in attendance on him ever since breakfast. Well, these three individuals have selected for him the most comfortable chair in the library, and one of the three has cut all the papers for him, another has placed a table for him, a third has fetched him half-a-dozen books; and at the present moment his legs are crossed, he is leaning back in his chair with a newspaper on his knee, and his eyes half-shut. In that beatific attitude he has requested me to allow him to remain undisturbed."

After this fine flow of words, delivered in as short a space of time as possible, Honor drew a long breath.

Herrick, in spite of himself, felt amused. No, she could not be a flirt! But still, he thanked Heaven Lois was as unlike her as one woman could well be to another.

"Well," resumed Honor, waiting for him to speak, "what are you going to give me to do? I warn you, if you leave me to my own devices, the family name will suffer at my hands. I shall either spend the morning in the stables with the dear horses, or I shall go down into the kitchen and help the scullery-maid, or I shall flirt with one of the footmen——"

"Good Heavens!" interrupted Herrick, more than half in earnest. "You ought to be locked in your own room, and be only allowed out on parole! Have you no letters to write? I thought girls always had any number of 'special correspondents' to whom they indited volumes every morning!"

Honor's cheeks suddenly grew as nearly as possible the colour of her hair. For some unexplained reason she appeared to be unwilling to continue the conversation.

"An idea has suddenly come to me! Adieu! I see you are in a hurry to be off," she said, hurriedly, then kissed her fingers to him, and was gone.

THE MILITARY EXHIBITION.

THERE could be no more happily chosen site for a Military Exhibition, enshrining the traditions and relics of the past, as well as the familiar panoply of the warriors of to-day, than the grounds of old Chelsea Hospital, the refuge of many war-worn veterans who have had a share in many of the scenes depicted in the galleries of the recently-opened show. The old Waterloo men are gone indeed; perhaps the last of them was old John McKay, a sturdy Highlander of the Black Watch, whose portrait is to be seen in the Exhibition, and who died as recently as 1886, more than a hundred years old. And now the Crimean men are well advanced among the grey-beards; and many of those who shared in the battles of the Indian Mutiny, the Chinese War, and Abyssinian Expedition, are in the sere and yellow leaf. There are memorials, too, of old Chelsea Hospital scattered about the Exhibition. Among the exhibits of the college of veterans is a portrait, by Sir Peter Lely, of Nell Gwynne, holding in her hand a model of the cupola of the Hospital; a contemporary bit of testimony to the truth of the account which makes "poor Nell" the virtual foundress of the institution. And we have that famous picture of Wilkie's, too, which represents the enthusiastic reception of news of Waterloo by a jovial group of old pensioners, in the Chelsea cocked hat, and red coats.

But while stray visitors may find their way into the quiet walks about the Hospital, and chat with these relics of the old army, as it existed before the introduction of short service, and drastic reorganisation, yet the greater part of those who visit the

Military Exhibition will hardly recognise that they are actually within the Hospital grounds, so thoroughly changed is the aspect of things from the Chelsea Embankment, where, till lately, everything was so quiet within the tall iron railings, behind which stretched the long façade of Wren's comely, red-brick structure. Flags move and flutter from every point; temporary buildings stretch here and there, and once within the entrance, there are so many taking green vistas opening out on either hand, with shrubs, and flowers, and trees in all their natural freshness and vigour, that the wonder is how such a pleasant pitch could have been found among the somewhat formal enclosures of the old Hospital. And then it is seen that the real nucleus of the whole is Gordon House, with its fine gardens, about which the temporary buildings are aligned.

And Gordon House is so called from a certain Royal equerry of that name, who was lucky enough to obtain, by Royal favour, a slice of four acres of land from the grounds about the Hospital, at a peppercorn rent, just a century ago. And Colonel Gordon built the comfortable, plain, and solid red-brick house, which now forms part of the Exhibition. But even ninety-nine years leases run out; and last year the house and grounds came into the possession of the Hospital, and have been thus agreeably utilised for the purposes of the military show. And here, in the reception-rooms, where, if report be true, some of the wildest orgies of the wild Regency days were enacted, now Sergeant Atkins in mufti—who must no longer be called Tommy—with Mrs. Atkins, in black satin, and their pretty and sensible daughter, may be seen examining the pictures and curios on the walls.

"There's our old regiment going up the Nile. And yonder's our camp in Zululand," the Sergeant explains to his wife; while his daughter examines critically the old military trappings, and the pictures of the long-coated, curled-feather darlings of a past age, whom she pronounces, irreverently, "frights."

All this time the band is playing in the gardens beneath, where a fountain plashes musically, only, unfortunately, the rain plashes, too, in dismal unison; and a piazza all round with seats and shelter, seems to invite the contemplative tobacco—surely a pleasant resort for summer evenings when the climate permits. And when the

music ceases on this side, the strains are taken up on the other. And crossing the gallery we come to another verdant area, with avenues of young trees, and a wide area, to be devoted to military games and assault-at-arms; and over there is the ambulance gallery, which the visitor with weak nerves should take last of all, lest its realistic reproductions of the horrors of war should spoil the appetite for the quieter attractions of the show.

The most attractive part, indeed, of the Exhibition is the happily-named Battle Gallery, with paintings and relics illustrating many of the historic struggles of the British army from the days when its existence first began as a regular army, distinguished from the musters, and arrays, and the feudal levies of earlier periods. To begin with, here are contemporary portraits, authentic enough, if not generally of great artistic merit, of the great Generals and Commanders-in-Chief of earlier days—Monk at the head of the latter, who has the distinction of being number one among the Captains-General of the army. Curious old arms, too, and relics of famous fields are there to illustrate and bring vividly before the eyes the warlike figures of the period; the arms and equipments of pikemen and musketeers; swords that were worn and used in the great civil struggles, from Naseby to Killiecrankie.

Then we have Marlborough and his famous victories, with a curious triple bore gun, a foreshadowing of the machine gun of to-day, a trophy won from the French at Malplaquet; with Malbrook's own pistols, and the jack-boots of some other hero of the period. Here are relics of Dettingen and Fontenoy, where French and English Guards, meeting for the first time, courteously offered each other first fire. Culloden, too, appears, with claymores that were wielded by gallant Highlanders upon that fatal field; and firelocks which may have been flung away when the men from the hills made their last wild charge. And there are specimens of the queer mitre-shaped caps that the Royal troops wore at that time.

Further on is West's well-known picture of the death of Wolfe, from Hampton Court, and below the sash that he wore when he fell—with swords that were wielded in that desperate assault on Quebec, which gave us our Canadian provinces. There is Sackville, too, who

made such a mess of his business at Minden, and Lord Ligonier, who must have had Captain Shandy and Corporal Trim under his command. There is a satisfaction, too, in making acquaintances with the veritable features of the "Markis o' Granby," the original of Mr. Weller's famous sign, and of many others up and down the country, whose popularity is not easily to be accounted for, except from his association with Frederick of Prussia, also popular on sign-boards of the period, in the Seven Years' War.

A good portrait of Cornwallis brings us to the American war, and its epoch of disasters, and somewhere else — in the stand of the Honourable Artillery Company of London, by the way—we shall find relics from Bunker's Hill, and close at hand others from the unfortunate army under General Burgoyne, that surrendered at Saratoga — a brave soldier enough, but perhaps better at a "ballet divertissement" than in the battle field. We must take the rough and the smooth together, and American disasters are redeemed by the splendid defence of Gibraltar by General Elliot.

And now we come upon Tippoo Sahib, relics of whom are plentiful enough, and who brings us by a natural transition to Arthur Wellealey, and the great battles of the Napoleonic wars. The battle of Alexandria and Abercrombie's death begin the list, of which, by the way, Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment is in some way a memorial, for the obelisk was given to the English army by the Egyptian ruler at this particular time. Sir John Moore follows, whose death and burial, thanks, perhaps, to the well-known poem, has so impressed the popular imagination. And here we have the very keys of Corunna, brought away when the English army embarked after the battle. And relics and memorials of the well-fought battles of the Peninsula now follow thickly; Napoleon and Wellington are both in evidence, and Waterloo relics of a genuine, well-authenticated character abound on the walls and in the cases.

There is a long era of comparative peace after the great French war, when India alone furnishes laurels for the army. And then we have the Crimean war, well illustrated both pictorially and by relics; for we have now come to the age of war correspondents, with Russell of "The Times" in the forefront; and of war artists, where Simpson leads the van, and henceforth

all is more or less familiar. But we have interesting relics from the "Mutiny" — Nana Sahib's brick-dust flag, or a fragment of it, and messages written small and enclosed in quills, sent in to the beleaguered garrison of Lucknow.

And then we have wars great and little, for it is only for a year or two now and then that the gates of the temple of Janus can be closed; wars in China, in New Zealand, in Abyssinia, with the Ashantees, with the Afghans, wars in Zululand and the Cape, battles in Egypt, and the Soudan, a mingled texture of victories and reverses, of which perhaps the back volumes of the illustrated papers would give us the best general idea.

There is a collection, too, adjoining, of the musical instruments connected with military music, which promises to be interesting: fifes and flutes that may have headed the Guards on the march to Finchley; drums of Hogarth's time, and others that may have beaten the point of war at Falkirk or Culloden; with silver trumpets of Royal state, and a collection of brazen instruments, illustrating the development of the horn from the twisted cowhorn of ancient days, to the complicated ophicleide or euphonium of modern times. But the most weird kind of horn ever blown is shown somewhere else in the form of an Ashantee war horn, formed out of a human thigh-bone.

At times, too, there is something picturesque, and even pathetic, to be noticed in the visitors who come to this battle gallery to inspect the relics of fields fought long ago, as when some grey-headed old general is led along to inspect some particular curio by his aide-de-camp perhaps, or by a grand-daughter or grand-niece, his eyes brightening for a moment at some half-forgotten incident of the days when he was a young and gallant soldier being once more recalled to his mind. Else the retired militaire is not easy to draw on warlike themes. To shoulder his crutch and show how fields are won is not in his way. He prefers the domestic side of things, and if not a sportsman, he is probably more interested in horticulture than the military art.

The same tendency pervades the lower ranks of the army. Your bronze-bearded sergeant, who has served all over the world, and wears his medals and clasps for battles here and there, employs his leisure, we will say, in embroidering pincushions, in fret-work, or in carving fancy boxes. The younger officers, at all events of the scien-

tific branches, are most of them sketchers, and you may find their water-colour drawings of scenes and incidents at home and abroad adorning the various stands of what is called the Military Industrial Section. Some have a talent for caricature, and scenes of military life, of the barrack-room, the guard-room, and the canteen, appear in evidence.

An agreeable feature in the Exhibition appears in the general support it has received from the British army. Nearly every territorial regiment in the service contributes something, a trifle it may be, but still enough to show good will. The whole gives us a kind of sample of the occupations, tasks, and aptitudes of the steadier portions of the service apart from their military duties. The departments of the army, too, show some interesting exhibits. The ordnance survey shows the full process of zincphotogravure, if that formidable word be the correct term, employed in bringing out their admirable maps, from the sketches and outlines taken from the surveying field books, to the finished plate, as issued to the Government and the public.

A section still more attractive to the general is allotted to a detachment of skilful young women, from the Army Clothing Factory, all in a semi-military uniform of scarlet garibaldiis and blue serge skirts, under whose deft fingers the tunic of the artilleryman or the gay embroidered jacket of the hussar may be seen taking form and substance, and on an adjoining platform the army in general is represented from a clothing point of view in an assemblage of effigies, showing the uniform and equipments of each branch of the service. The khaki uniforms for hot climates are especially rational and suitable, and there is a capital uniform in woollen corde, originally designed for the Bechuanaland expedition, which seems a perfect model of what a soldier's dress should be in temperate climes, or where there are extremes to meet of heat and cold. In contrast with this, poor Private Atkins, in full marching order, with his scarlet tunic and facings, still wanting a good deal of pipe-clay, his heavily-accoutred frame hung all over with straps and buckles, with his pouches, his valise, his knapsack, his mess-tin, his great-coat, his water-bottle, and all the rest, appears in the very worst possible plight for doing anything except standing to be shot at.

It may perhaps be a slight disappoint-

ment to some who visit the Military Exhibition, that the pacific side of military life is more fully represented than the science of destruction, with all its latest and most elaborate apparatus. But we have the Gatling gun and the Nordenfeldt, and a little patience will discover models or illustrations of many of the most recent implements of warfare. But for a realistic view of the ultimate end of the soldiers' training, the shooting, and wounding, and killing, commend us to the ambulance section of the Exhibition, over beyond the arena marked out for military sports.

The scene is excellently mounted. We are in an open kind of jungle, with reeds, bamboos, and waving palms, and a rough kind of ground to the front, where, with puffs of smoke and the rattle of heavy firing, the work of the fighting line is going on apace. Men have fallen here and there, stretched out stark, or sitting with pale, woe-begone faces, writhing in their agony. Red-cross men are at work with stretchers and medical aid, collecting the wounded and carrying them to the rear, but not far to the rear, where the regimental surgeon has set up his tent, and gaping wounds are dressed, and shattered limbs removed—a terrible scene, even with waxwork and stuffed figures, and to which only continued use can steel the heart in actual warfare. But in the field hospital tents, which are still further to the rear, the scene is less harrowing; a dull lethargy has succeeded the tortures of the wounded, and all passes like an evil dream to the sufferer, while doctors and orderlies are busy about their patients. And then the field hospital must be cleared of the least desperate cases, and the wounded slung in-ambulance waggons, or in litters, suspended to such transport as may be available—elephants, camels, horses, or mules, animals which make a picturesque appearance on the route, but whose movements are trying enough to the wounded men. Then, perhaps, the terminus of the temporary railway is reached, and when the line is clear of the reinforcements being hurried up, with artillery and munitions of war, the wounded can be packed in the empty waggons, with all the alleviations that mechanical devices can afford. And thus they reach the chief hospital at the base, with its cool, roomy marquees, and comforts, and good nursing. And here, perhaps, the wounded man rallies, and begins to move about a little after a time; and we may see him sitting in the shade and beginning

to enjoy his pipe again, and looking forward, for he has lost a limb, to his discharge, with something in the way of a pension, and home, and friends, and faithful Bess, looming pleasantly in the distance.

ABOUT BEER.

At what period in English history did beer become the national beverage?

If we are to believe Phillips, the author of the "History of Cultivated Vegetables," it could not have been before the latter half of the sixteenth century, for he says that hops, although indigenous to England, were not used in malt-liquor till about 1524. Yet when Philip the Second came to our shores, he avowed his intention of living "in all points like an Englishman," and forthwith called for some beer, which he drank, but did not greatly relish. Then, in 1589, we find Ruthen writing to the great Burleigh, that "Alehouses are the great fault of this country;" and in 1576, good Queen Bess, on her road to Kenilworth, found the ale at one of these houses so strong, that she was obliged to send a long way for some more to her liking.

It is well to note, however, that by 1672 the fame of English beer was well established, for in the travels of Jorvin de Rochefort, it is recorded that, "The English beer is the best in Europe." This Frenchman further records that, when at Cambridge, he received a visit from the clergyman, "it was necessary to drink two or three pots of beer during our parley, for no kind of business is transacted in England without the intervention of pots of beer."

But if by beer we mean the wine of grain, it is very much older than all this, although the name itself—which Phillips says is derived from the Welsh "bir"—is comparatively modern.

This derivation, however, will hardly do, for we find the word "bier" in use both in Germany, Holland, and Flanders; "bierre" in France; and "birra" in Italy. Now, the Anglo-Saxons had "beor"; the Norsemen "bior"; the Gaels "beoir"; and the Bretons "ber." And Tacitus records that the ancient Britons made a sort of wine from barley, which they called "baer." Thus the name is really very old; but it disappeared, from England at any rate, for a long time, until hops were

introduced. This is what old Gerard, the herbalist, has to say about it:

"The manifold virtues in hops do manifestly argue the wholesomeness of beer above 'ale'; for the hops rather make it physicall drink, to keep the body in health, than an ordinary drink for the quenching of our thirst."

And thus Parkinson, who wrote about 1640: "The ale which our forefathers were accustomed only to drink, being a kind of thicker drink than beere, is now almost quite left off to be made, the use of hoppes to be put therein altering the quality thereof, to be much more healthful, or, rather, physicall, to preserve the body from the repletion of grosse humours which the ale engendereth."

Ale, then, was unhopped beer, and beer was an old name applied to ale when the use of hops was introduced from the Low Countries. From this it has sometimes been supposed that the name itself is of German origin; but, as we have seen, it is really ancient British. There is an old couplet,

Hops, reformation, bays, and beer,
Came into England all in one year,

which has doubtless served to confirm the error. It is curious, though, that while the French and Italians have adopted the word "beer" in modified forms, the Scandinavians, who once had "bier," now have only "öl."

Beer is not only an ancient institution—it is in some sort a Royal one. The existence of our present Sovereign may be said to be in a manner due to it, in this way: The mother of Queen Anne was Lady Ann Hyde, who was the daughter of Lord Clarendon. The mother of Lady Ann Hyde was the widow of a brewer, who had been wont to employ Sir Edward Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, as his lawyer. Now, if beer had not been in existence, there would have been no brewer; and had there been no brewer, Sir Edward Hyde would not have been brought into business relations with one; had he not had business relations with the brewer, he would not have made the acquaintance of the brewer's wife; had he not known and admired the brewer's wife, he would not have married the brewer's widow; had he not married the brewer's widow, there would have been no Ann Hyde; if there was no Ann Hyde, there would have been no Queen Anne; and if there had been no Queen Anne, where should we have been now?

Clearly we owe a great deal more to beer than we are accustomed to think!

It is known that when the Spaniards went to South America, they found beer in use by the Indians. This was "chica," or maize-beer, the origin of which is buried in the most remote antiquity.

When the Romans came to Britain they found beer in use there. Eumenes, in the year 295, said that in Britain there was such abundance of corn, that it served the people not only for bread, but also for a drink like wine. It was such an established product of the land, that we find Ina, King of the West Saxons, in the seventh century, exacting tribute to the extent of twelve ambers of ale from every possessor of ten hides of land.

There is reason to believe that beer was a known and common beverage four hundred years before Christ. Certainly, such a beverage is referred to by Xenophon, 401 B.C.; and Herodotus credits the wife of Osiris with the discovery of the art of making it.

This then gives it an Egyptian origin, and Tacitus says that it was from the Egyptians that the Romans, as well as the Germans, learned how to make a fermented liquor from grain. And to this day the Egyptian fellaheen make a beverage by pouring hot water on ground barley, which they leave to ferment for one day and then drink. The "schekar" mentioned by Moses was doubtless this decoction, and the "strong drink" of St. Luke was probably the same thing.

And here a curious thing may be noted. Dr. Shaw, writing about the Egyptian customs, says: "The most vulgar people among them made a sort of beer, without being malted, and they put something in it to make it intoxicate, and called it 'Bousy.' They make it fermer t; it is thick, and will not keep longer than three or four days." So many strange things come out of Africa, that we need not be surprised that both the habit of "boosing," and our now vernacular word "boosy," should have come thence.

To cite some other ancient authorities in support of the testimony of Herodotus: Diodorus Siculus says that Bacchus taught men to make a strong liquor of barley in places where the grape will not grow, and that the Gauls made such a liquor because their climate would not permit them to make wine. Pliny says that in his time such a drink was in general use throughout

Europe—the Europe of his day was small—and that in Gaul and Spain they had a substance (yeast), made from the froth of this liquor, which made their bread light, and was also used by the ladies as a wash for the complexion. Isidorus describes the very method by which grain was converted into malt—first, they wetted the grain, then they dried it, then they powdered it, and then they drew from it a liquid which they afterwards fermented. Isidorus, however, is referring to the Egyptian, not the European, beer. St. Jerome, again (Eusebius), speaks of both ale, cider and mead, as three liquors used for purposes of intoxication; but says that ale—made from barley—was most commonly used in Europe.

According to another old writer, the Druids were regular makers of beer. They soaked the grain in water and made it germinate, then they dried and ground it, then they infused it in water and fermented the liquid, just as the ancient Egyptians are said to have done.

It is, in fact, impossible to put a date to the beginning of the art of making barley-wine, or what was in England formerly called ale. But the art of hopping, by which was made what is now called beer, seems to be of German origin. The hop plant was well-known to our old herbalists; but, nevertheless, hops for brewing purposes were brought over from the Netherlands in 1524, and by 1552, they had a recognised place in the English Statute Book.

Un-hopped ale, as we have seen, was the common drink in England for centuries before this, and it was also the chief drink at Royal banquets. In the twelfth century an Act was passed by Henry the Third to establish a graduated scale for the price of ale throughout the kingdom; but this Act was repealed by Henry the Eighth. Thereafter, brewers could charge what prices they thought they could get, subject to some control by the Justices of the Peace. There seem to have been ale-houses in the time of King Ina of Wessex, above-mentioned; but there were no regulations about them until seven hundred and twenty-eight. By a statute of Edward the First, 1285, none but freemen were allowed to keep such houses; and thereafter the statute-book is covered with enactments about them. Among others, it is interesting to note one in the reign of James the First, which declares: That one full quart of the best ale, and two quarts

of the second, or "small" ale, must be sold for one penny.

The great brewery on the river-side at London, near St. Catherine's Hospital, is one of the first establishments of the kind mentioned in history. It was subjected to regulations in the reign of Henry the Seventh; and as early as 1492, there is mention of license to export fifty tuns of ale. This is, so far as we know, the first instance on record of the export of English beer.

The external trade grew steadily, so long as it was free, and by Queen Elizabeth's time the foreign demand was so great, that one reads of as much as five hundred tuns being exported at one time. Strong beer was the fashion in that reign, just as pale ale became the fashion in Queen Anne's reign.

By the time of Queen Anne, brewing had become a great national industry, and there were thirteen different kinds of malt liquor then manufactured in England. These were: Reading Beer; Porter; Stout; Twopenny, or Amber Beer, usually drank warm; Windsor Ale, also drank warm; London Pale Ale, the best of all; Welsh Ale, very highly flavoured; Wurtemberg Ale, and Hock, probably something of the character of Lager Beer; Scurvy-grass Ale, used as a blood-purifier; Table Beer, for common family use; and Shipping Beer, a cheap, thin liquor, used in the hayfield and the workhouses.

It may be noted here that while malt liquors are all made from the parched grain of germinated barley, there are several kinds of malt in use. Some are pale, some coloured, some brown, and some black; and it is the black and brown kinds which are used in the brewing of porter and stout.

In the last century the best beer was described as "brewed from the purest white malt of Ware, and the most costly and fragrant pocket of hops which Kent or Surrey produced." Five barrels of the best beer would be yielded by a quarter of malt, and the price of it then was two guineas per barrel of thirty-six gallons.

To go back, however, we find from Stowe that in 1585 there were twenty-six breweries in London and suburbs, half of which were owned by foreigners, producing altogether six hundred and forty-eight thousand nine hundred and sixty barrels of beer per annum. The custom then was for the brewer to send out the beer to his

customers before the process of fermentation was completed.

In 1591, we learn from Mr. Alfred Barnard, who has written the history of all the breweries in the United Kingdom, there were twenty breweries on one side of the Thames alone, which produced twenty-six thousand four hundred barrels, so that the other six on the Southwark side must have each produced more than all these put together. The old brewery of Truman's produced sixty thousand barrels in 1760, and this was thought a great thing.

How the trade developed, however, may be gathered from the fact that this same brewery turned out one hundred and forty-five thousand barrels of porter in 1814, while Barclay and Perkins' brewery turned out two hundred and sixty-two thousand barrels in the same year.

By 1836, the twelve principal brewers in London were turning out no less than two million one hundred and nineteen thousand four hundred and forty-seven barrels of beer, for which they employed five hundred and twenty-six thousand and ninety-two quarters of malt. In 1879 there were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-eight small breweries in the kingdom; but the beer-duty soon began to diminish the number, and in 1887 there were only twelve thousand nine hundred and forty-four licensed brewers. The quantity, however, went on increasing in the large breweries; and, in 1887, the entire production of the kingdom amounted to twenty-nine millions of barrels. It was estimated by Professor Leone Levi, in 1871, that a million and a half people were employed in, or dependent on, the beer trade; but a more recent estimate places the number at about two millions.

Beer is not only a great national industry, as well as the national drink; it is also a large source of national revenue. Perhaps few persons not accustomed to deal with the figures of national finance, know how much beer helps to find the ways and means of the Government of this country. The beer duty was imposed in 1880, and in the first full year thereafter, yielded eight million five hundred and thirty-one thousand pounds. In 1885-6, it yielded eight million five hundred and thirty-nine thousand pounds; in 1886-7, eight million eight hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds; in 1888-9, eight million nine hundred and thirty-eight

thousand four hundred and thirty-eight pounds.

It is not our purpose to discuss here the ethics of the subject; but certainly those who are interested in the moral condition of the people, would prefer to see an increase in the consumption of beer to one in the consumption of spirits. The author of "The Chemistry of Common Life" was one of those who believe that beer may be food as well as drink. A little beef, he said, eaten with it, makes up the deficiency of gluten as compared with milk, "so that beef, bread, and beer, our characteristic English diet, are most philosophically put together, at once to strengthen, to sustain, and to stimulate the bodily powers."

Still, there are many who think otherwise, and who maintain that the six or eight per cent. of alcohol, which good beer contains, neutralises all its other good qualities. This was not the belief of Bishop Still, who, in 1566, wrote the famous verses in praise of beer:

I can eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing a-cold;
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold;
But belly, God send thee good ale
enough,
Whether it be new or old.

English literature is filled with the praise of beer. Even the hard-headed William Cobbett allowed a man three pints a day, and strict Hannah More thought that a labourer should have a pint after his day's work, and his wife half as much. The truth seems to be, that although a man can get on very well without beer, yet it is, in moderation, a distinct addition to the "amenities" of life. It is certainly an important element in the industries of the world, and in the schemes of national financiers.

THE LAST WALK.

WITH feeble, failing, faltering feet she trod
Along the garden's grassy terraces,
Through all the rush of sweet spring harmonies,
Hearing the low, clear summons from her God.

The river sang along its willowed ways,
The thrushes filled the air with wooing trills,
And sweeping down the slope, the daffodils
Flashed back again the noonday's living blaze.

The "scent of violets, hidden in the green,"
Stole round her with the west wind's kisses soft;
The daisies glistened pearl-like on the croft;
The blackthorn buds peeped, cleaving sheaths
between.

The sweet, reviving miracle of spring,
Instinct with life, pervaded earth and sky;
While, "Look on it, and leave it, thou must die,"
Her doom amid it all was whispering.

I think the tears—that, to the patient eyes,
Dimmed all the glory of the April day,
Though still her Saviour whispered, "Come
away"—
Were looked on very gently from the skies.

UNDER WHAT LEADING?

A MYSTERY.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"THE only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

If I begin my short, sad story with this familiar quotation, it is because nowhere else can I find such simple and beautiful words expressing so much; also, because the two of whom I am about to speak—mother and son—are so welded together in my memory that I cannot think of them apart—of the one without the other. She—that widowed mother—had no life apart from his; he, in spite of sin, sorrow, and estrangement, loved her to the last, as he loved no other.

The pathetic and the commonplace jostle each other strangely in this world of ours, and, surely, few would have expected to find material for romance in the unpretentious row of suburban houses where lived Mrs. Ruthven and her son, Malcombe, a slender, dark-eyed boy of twenty, or thereabouts, with clustering locks, whose richness, and ripple, and golden sheen were the admiration of every feminine creature in Radley Crescent.

Yes, we called ourselves a Crescent by virtue of a very slight curve in our centre; and were not a little proud of certain narrow slips of arid land at the back of each house, which we were pleased to call our gardens, and in which the ground had apparently made up its mind to produce nothing but marigolds, no matter what else was set therein. By reason of these garish flowers—varied here and there by the pallid green sprays of the plant called indiscriminately "old man" and "lads' love"—we were, some of us, wont to speak of the Crescent as "quite countrified," though there was a thoroughfare within a stone's throw of us where omnibuses rolled

and rattled all day long, and by-streets, striking off on either hand, the surroundings of which were squalid, the tenements of which were crowded, and which led, by narrow and devious ways, into some of the busiest parts of London.

This juxtaposition, however, suited many of the tenants of the Crescent, for there were more workers than drones in our hive, and transit was easy for those who toiled in divers ways to make both ends meet—a feat that required a good deal of pulling. In my own case, pull as I might, there was sometimes a gap, for the number of my music pupils varied, though rent and other expenses did not. However, I have always looked upon a grumbler as a being who ought to take rank in the lowest scale of creation, and generally managed to keep up my heart when a London fog pressed its dank, grey-green face right up against my windows on a day that a lesson had to be given ever so far away, for could any nectar be so delicious as the cup of tea partaken of on returning from that misty journey; any beacon brighter than the glint of the fire that sister Janet always coaxed into a blaze to greet my return?

I do not mind, in the least, saying that sister Janet and myself were what may be called "old maids"; nor is this the place to speak of hopes that once blossomed in our lives and now lay withered like dead flowers pressed within those closed books—our memories. I am concerning myself with the lives of others—not of ourselves.

The passion and the tragedy of the tale I have to tell is over me as I write. Sister Janet has not been well all day, and has gone to bed early, so I am all alone and the better able to apply myself to my task. The wind blows outside, driving down the shallow bend of the Crescent like a thing with a living will and a longing to rend and tear. Outside, in the bitter cold, some one is singing—a woman with a thin, worn voice, that yet holds something of pathos and sweetness. Little mouths at home have to be filled, though the rain drift never so pitilessly and the cruel wind cuts like a knife; but, oh, sing any song but that! It brings such terrible memories with the swing of its plaintive refrain:

Some are gone from us for ever,
Longer here they might not stay;
They have reached a fairer region
Far away—far away.

Things have gone rather well with me this week: ends have met and lapped over.

That weary singer shall be sent home rejoicing. That song shall be sung no more, else will my thoughts become a tangle and run riot in spite of me, so that no thread of narrative shall be spun to-night. I take a shilling, bright and new, out of my purse, huddle a shawl over my head, and, so accoutred, present myself at the open door. The singer is through the gate and up the steps in a moment. I see an eager, hungry face, an outstretched hand, a sudden gleam in the sunken eyes, a clutch at the shilling, and then she is gone; both she and her song are shut out into the night, and I can work in peace. But that sad refrain has taken possession of me. It runs in my head—now like the strains of a distant band, now like the sigh and sigh of the wind. Well, let it on; and I will tell my tale to its sad rhythm.

It was well on in the summer—indeed the marigolds were in full bloom—when new tenants came to the next house. Little lives have little interests, and the little interests fill the little lives. Sister Janet and myself were full of the new-comers—remarkable people to look at in their way—and, as I have mentioned before, consisting of a mother and her son.

When first she came to Radley Crescent, Mrs. Ruthven wore her widow's veil over her face; we could, therefore, in the short glimpses we got of her between the gate and the door, form small idea what manner of woman she was, that is, in face. Her figure and walk, however, were unmistakable: both bore every sign of distinction. Her son—the bright-haired boy of whom I have already spoken—was sometimes with her; sometimes she was alone. But here, all variety of circumstances ceased. Neither at first, nor at any other time, did we ever see any one—man, woman, or child—with these two. No visitor ever rang the bell; very seldom did even the postman mount the steep, narrow steps that led to the door. There was an old servant, with a face like a hatchet and apparently stone deaf, and that was all.

Sister Janet became so devoured with curiosity that she asked the postman what was the name of our next-door neighbour, and he told her it was Ruthven—Mrs. Ruthven—that was all he knew. There was a young gentleman, too, a fine young fellow, with a pleasant tongue in his head, "Ay, wonderfully nice spoken, sure-ly," and again that was all.

Sister Janet was very much ashamed of

this adventure, and always had an uncomfortable feeling that the postman might tell Mrs. Ruthven what she had done. But I do not think she had any cause to fear. Men have generally chivalry enough to keep them from petty tattle about anything a woman says to them; and this sort of chivalry is quite as prevalent in the working man as in the Prince; it is an attribute of sex. I felt sure sister Janet's postman was safe and trustworthy, and I comforted her when she had qualms.

Meanwhile, it was ever so much more convenient to speak of our neighbour as Mrs. Ruthven than as "the lady next door." I considered sister Janet had scored. It must not be thought that we kept a vulgar watch upon our neighbours. We had been too well brought up for that. It was no idle curiosity that gave us an interest in Mrs. Ruthven. Our sympathies were called out towards her because of her loneliness. We were somewhat alone in the world ourselves, sister Janet and I, and our sympathies were like some pent-up stream that now and again overflows its banks, so deep and strong is its current. We had not many to love, so we went out of our way to find channels for love to flow in; and it came about that in a week or two the unknown woman in the simple black veil and smood-like bonnet, became the one deep interest of our lives. Not but what the bright-haired boy had something to do with all this.

Oh, yes! we were quite elderly. I dare say some people thought us really old; but we loved to look upon what was young and fair to see. We delighted in the sight of the boy's slight, graceful figure swinging out of the little iron garden gate, and were thoroughly familiar with the wave of the hand to the mother watching at the window, and the glimpse of the short, clustering locks of golden brown vouchsafed by the doffing of his hat as he turned down the Crescent.

"The marigolds are making a good show this summer," said sister Janet one morning, when we had watched the boy out of sight. "I should like him to notice them."

We named no names; there was no need to do so. The pronoun answered perfectly. There was no other "he" in the world just then, as far as we were concerned; and sister Janet gave herself a crick in the back by digging weeds out of the marigold beds with an old kitchen knife, and had to have what our small workhouse servant saw fit to call "hot

lamentations" on at bed-time. All to please the boy we had neither of us, as yet, ever spoken a word to in our lives! So true it is, that what is young, and fresh, and fair, has a strange, sweet attraction for the way-worn traveller, dusty and faded with having borne the burden and heat of the day.

"I fancy that boy works very late at night," said sister Janet to me one day, with an anxious face, one that it might almost have befitted the lad's own mother to wear. "It can't be good for him; for any one can see he hasn't done growing yet. It is really cruel, sister Anne"—I am Anne—"the way in which young people have to slave nowadays to get a living——"

"And old people, too," thought I, calling to mind eight music lessons given that day, during all of which the fingering of certain passages, on the part of my pupils, had been execrable, and the time worse. But to return to young Ruthven. Sister Janet was looking at me very gravely over her spectacles, and had laid her knitting on the table. She was speaking very earnestly and gravely, too.

"It was near one o'clock this morning before he got home. You know my room is on that side, and I can hear both steps and voices. I was quite frightened. I really was, for I thought I heard a cry——"

"A cry?"

"Yes; a strange, low, sort of wail. I tell you what it is, sister Anne—that boy is a journalist. I mean, that he works in a journalist's office, and has to sit up all night and write things for rich, idle people to read at their breakfast-tables; and the poor mother is breaking her heart seeing her darling—he must be that, you know, for who could look upon him and not love him?—slaving himself to death to earn a living. We are living next door to one of the thousand tragedies hidden away in these crowded London streets."

Surely sister Janet was right. We were cheek by jowl with a tragedy; but not such a one as she thought—not such a one as she thought.

We had only, so far, heard the first notes of the overture. The curtain had not gone up yet. The passion, and the pathos, and the pain were yet to come.

But, in happy ignorance of the day that was coming, she and I together—two lonely old women—chatted over our frugal tea; for now the knitting was laid

aside and the spectacles were folded in their case.

"That boy," said sister Janet—how thoroughly the expression seemed to suit him, there being, as it were, no other boy to speak of in London city, or any other!—"is just the sort of fellow who ought to have a fine estate and five thousand a year to keep it up with."

"I have no manner of doubt he would thoroughly agree with you there, my dear."

"Very natural that he should, I'm sure." Then she added, meditatively: "How he would delight in dressing that dear mother of his in silks and satins, and driving her about in ever so fine carriages."

"Ye—s," I replied to this, lamely, and without enthusiasm, trying hard to prevent my voice rising slightly at the end of the word of assent, and giving it a faintly interrogative air.

Sister Janet slowly and deliberately put down the tea-cup just raised to her lips.

"Do you mean——" she began.

To which I hastily, and in some confusion, answered:

"Oh, nothing much; only from various little things I have heard, I should say the—ahem—boot is rather on the other leg, as the saying goes."

"Sister Anne, you have been gossiping with servants. I remember now I saw that grim creature next door talking across the palings to our Amelia."

"Well, she did say, and so did Mr. Cheeseman——"

"Gossiping with tradesmen, too!" said sister Janet, raising hands and eyes.

I was too generous to remind her of the postman, you may be sure; and in a few moments she was eagerly listening to what I had gleaned from various sources as to the position next door.

"Very natural, very natural," she said, as my narration ended. "Mothers are like that, so they say."

This last with a sigh that I echoed. Few women, perhaps, can reflect contentedly on their own childless state; can look back smilingly upon a barren and loveless life.

"No doubt they are," I said, replying to sister Janet's description of mothers in general, "but whether it is—eh?"

"Good for the boys!" put in sister Janet; "well, maybe not. Still, I don't wonder at Mr. Cheeseman saying she would feed the boy off gold if she could. Any one, to look at him, would—eh, sister Anne?"

And sister Anne, looking sadly out of window, replied:

"Quite so."

We were sailing in quiet waters in those days, the current of our lives pleasantly freshened by our interest in our new neighbours. It seemed strange, in the days still then to come, to look back upon such calm, unruffled times, when Mr. Cheeseman's opinion was a topic of interest, and Amelia, chattering across the palings, an event to be commented upon.

I was the first to touch the edge of the storm—to feel the stirring of those after events that shook our quiet lives to the centre, and for ever afterwards seemed the pivots upon which all other things turned, even making all things else seem petty and small.

One evening in the early autumn—at a season when the marigolds had made a brilliant show, and then paled their amber fires and drooped their golden heads; a time when the afternoons shrank up perceptibly, and the dusk crept on earlier and earlier day by day—I was at a house some distance off, giving a music lesson, when a case of sudden illness occurred in the family. Now, I have always held the maxim that possible help withheld is something stolen; and it had so come about that I possessed some knowledge in such cases. I stayed. All was fear and confusion, and I could be useful, so sister Janet having to wait for her tea, and being beset with fears as to my having been run over by a van or crushed by a traction-engine, were, therefore, considerations that ought not to weigh for a moment. It was late—for me, very late—before I set out upon the journey home, and I made various short cuts down somewhat undesirable streets to reach the route of an omnibus that would set me down close to the Crescent. Pardon the egoism of the definite article. To us, there was but one Crescent in London.

At a place where two roads meet, I came upon an unpleasant group of noisy roysterers, gathered about one centre figure, the whole group in close proximity to a glaring and flaring gin-palace—a kind of place I generally carefully avoided, but had drifted on unawares to-night.

Huddled in my shawl, and with my head bent, I was hurrying by, leaving the pavement to the revellers, when something in a voice, something in the glint of sunny locks upon a bare,

bright head, something in the attitude of the one that formed the centre of the crew, brought me up short and sharp. I might have been the statue of Lot's wife, for all the life or stir that was left in me. Was I mad—dreaming? Had I become all at once a doddering old woman, full of strange, impossible fancies? Were my eyes and ears playing me false? He who was the holdest, wildest, maddest of that most unholy gathering, could not be—oh, surely could not be, the widow's son; could not be "our boy," who, having smiled upon our show of marigolds, made them fairer in our eyes than any flowers that ever blossomed? No, it could not be! I was possessed; a very poor creature, easily hoodwinked; a ready prey to the silliest of fancies.

By this time the doors of that garish hell had opened and closed upon the noisy group. How silent the street seemed as I hurried on, stumbling now and then in my eagerness to fly from the place, and reach sister Janet and our little parlour once again! Battling with my own thoughts, striving to beat down the fancies and the fears that seemed like living things to gibber at me from this side and from that, I was jolted over stony roads, and finally landed within a few yards of the Crescent. I wished I had not to pass by Mrs. Ruthven's house. If it had not been so late, I might have gone round, and come down by the opposite end. As it was, there was nothing for it but to put a bold face on matters, and the fact of it being quite dark by now made this easier than it would have been otherwise.

Once opposite the widow's house, I was quickly conscious that the sitting-room blinds were still undrawn. The interior of the room showed itself to me like a picture. The firelight glinted upon the tea-things, all set round in array upon the small round table. I could see the brass kettle on the hob; the lamp prettily shaded; all the little preparations for a cosy meal, when some one who was being waited for should come.

And she, the poor, lonely woman, was waiting, standing close to the windows, her widow's cap with its long weepers, showing ghastly white against her black gown, her face hardly less white, her hand resting on the window-bar, her whole attitude one so plainly telling of weary, yet patient waiting; of that quiet, self-disciplined endurance that nothing, save constant pain, can teach.

I don't know how I got past; no one could have felt more guilty, no one more miserable. If mine had been the hand to lead that wretched wanderer of the night astray, I could hardly have felt worse. Sister Janet was peeping from under the blind, and had the door open in a trice.

"I've been so frightened," she cried out, shrilly. "I thought you'd been run over; but bless us all! you needn't fly up the steps, and stumble like that; there's no one after you, is there?" Once in, I sank breathless on a chair. I might have run miles and miles.

"I—hurried—so—I was so afraid you would be anxious. There was some one ill, and I had to stay."

I had a long story to tell, and I told it at some length. But not a word did I say about what I had seen, or fancied I had seen, where the two roads met. Not a word did I utter of the weary, white-faced watcher next door; at all costs I was determined to keep my suspicions—I would not allow them to be more than suspicions—to myself. I comforted myself with calling to mind how strange were accidental likenesses sometimes.

But events were destined to crowd quickly now one on the heels of the other. We had only skirted the storm that was soon to beat pitilessly upon us and around us.

Ignorant of what was to come, yet oppressed with a strange sense of coming misfortune, long I sat in my room that night, trying to recall in detail the adventures of the evening, keeping vigil with the watcher near at hand, though she knew it not. But I grew weary, for I had had a long day of it; and to-morrow's duties had to be thought of.

When I pulled aside the blind, just before getting into bed, and looked out into the misty night, the patch of light from Mrs. Ruthven's window still lay across the little lawn and the gravel path. When it ceased to shine—or, if at all, before the day-dawn put it out with its own clearer radiance—I know not, for I fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

THE SEA.

Do you live on the coast, or so far away from it that, even when the wind is strong upon the land, you cannot taste the salt in the air?

Your estimate of the sea differs accordingly.

It is also affected in a multitude of other ways.

You may be rich enough to keep a yacht, in which case the sea is your playground, the source of the chief charm of your life. Or your money may have come from a worthy sire who acquired his riches by foreign trading. You may be a fisherman, whose lot it is to have a master abroad every whit as variable of mood and temper as the wife of his bosom at home. Perhaps your eldest son, or your brother, is in the navy or the merchant service. You may have lost a dear relative, an engineer, who gave his life to further a submarine enterprise. Or you may be asthmatical, with a particularly strong distaste for the salt-laden, damp sea-breezes, which your friends in the full possession of health think is the specific for all known diseases of body or mind.

The standpoint is everything, or nearly so, here, as in other matters.

Then, too, much depends upon whether you are a boy or a man, a woman or a girl.

It may be taken for granted, if you are a mere child, that you loathe the sea, as you loathe few things. That old bathing woman, for instance, is the most detestable dragon that even your fertile young imagination has given birth to. Her lures of, "Come along, my little darling!" are as odious as the advances of the cobra upon the bird it seeks to devour; and about as irresistible.

If, however, you are a boy, the odds are that you swear by the sea. You love building sand-palaces, pelting the waves, paddling among the shrimps and crabblings in the rock-pools, and putting your naked little foot, with its five destructive toes, plump upon this or that luckless red sea-anemone, who was so vainly spreading forth the snare of his pretty tentacles for eatable things smaller and weaker than himself. Of course, too, you like bathing—without machines, though; getting up early, when no one is about, running down to the beach in shirt and drawers—nothing else, and breasting the white foam of the curling waves ere the golden streak of the early sun upon the water has spread itself out and become commonplace daylight. And it is capital fun going out to catch fish with Gin Joe or Coppery Mac—that brace of mendacious, red-nosed, old mariners, who, when they are not engaged

in telling lies, tipping, or smiling in a merry, maudlin manner, spend their time in lolling against the granite stanchions on the beach, in blue jerseys, with a scarlet anchor on the breast, their great, coarse, fishy hands in their pockets, and a cutty pipe between their irregular, discoloured teeth.

There's not a doubt that to most boys, whether they be of the coast or of the interior, the sea is a sort of fairy land, or rather fairy water. And what if it does now and again snatch the life of one or other of them. That only proves how it loves those who adore it. It carries them away in its spacious bosom, toys with them, and anon tenderly deposits them on shore again, having absorbed their young souls into its own.

To the adult man the sea is quite another matter. As a rule, he doesn't care an oyster-shell for bathing, and of course his paddling and castle-building days are over. But he does appreciate the good things of the dinner-table, which the great deep bestows upon him. Fancy what life would be without oysters and codfish, not to descend to the plebeian shrimp, as choice a dainty, though a humble one, as any of its big brothers. It would be like taking away one of the colours of the rainbow.

There is another very attractive feature of the sea which the mature man craves; to wit, the pretty girls who are sent to the coast from town to pick up the complexions they have lost in ball rooms, or smoky streets. He likes, too, the broad, if rather dull and vulgar, life of the place. It is impossible for him not to breathe a little more freely, with the sea line for a horizon. He may have been in difficulties in the City, or annoyed in one or other of the hundred ways by which civilisation plagues the man who lives to the top of his bent. Yet he is no sooner on the beach, than his heart begins to disburden itself of its cares, one by one. He inhales philosophy. He unlooses himself from the grasp of anxiety, and briskly throws mistress "Atra Cura" off her perch on the horse behind him. It may even be that he grows gracefully reflective. How pigmy a creature is man, contrasted with the vast fabric of the world, and especially the sea! And how absurd that so infinitesimal an atom should vex himself because he owes more bits of yellow metal, or white, flimsy paper, than he has it in his power to pay! What, after all, is money? A mere

arbitrary thing, good neither to eat nor drink, to put on as clothes, nor to sleep in as a house. And to think that he should have been ready to blow out his valuable brains because he has lost a certain amount of such conventional trash! He is amply justified in forgetting all about his liabilities—for the time, if not for eternity. He may whistle merrily with the wind itself, smile in the face of the sun, take heed to miss not one fair maiden glance upon the esplanade, and, when evening comes, eat a delightful dinner to the music of a German band, and smoke his cigar in defiance of his creditors. Of all tonics for the man, ruined, blasé, or despairing, there is none like life by the ocean wave. If you doubt this, go to Brighton, or Boulogne, look about you, and judge for yourself.

Women and girls are almost on a parallel footing with this rippling, sunny, storming, raving thing; almost, but not quite. For whereas men and boys each have a fondness for the sea, though for different reasons, I venture to think that the average woman does not like it half as much as the average girl.

It is all very well for the girls. Everything and every one conspires to make them happy, because all the world loves them. Their long, untrammelled hair is just what the sea-breeze delights most of all to fondle; and little they care if the caress is sometimes a trifle rough. Their straw hats, too, are made for the wind. It flutters the blue ribbons, and holds them taut at right-angles. It blows through their light muslin dresses against their fair bodies, and makes them tingle with health and mysterious, but very genuine, rapture in every pore. And what beauty it sets on their smooth, kissworthy cheeks, and in their ardent, young eyes! What matter, too, if it does play unseemly tricks round their slim ankles! They have no shame in the size of their feet, nor have they yet grown to that sad, tiresome age when, like the great ladies of Spain, they are not supposed to admit that they are possessed of legs. All this to the flashing of the sun from an azure sky inlaid with speeding white drifts of cloud; and to the hubbub of the sea, whose waves, as they rush upon the shingle, and recede, seem to chant time after time: "What a sweet, pretty creature you are—you are—you are—you are—you are—" and so on, ad infinitum.

On the other hand, the matrons, and

those of a grey age unblessed with husbands, frown at these hearty, hoydenish seaside moods of the weather. It is one thing for a girl to be carried along by the wind before the eyes of the world; but quite another for an old-established woman of fashion, weighing an unmentionable number of stones, to be treated in the like unceremonious manner. I have seen one of these latter boil into a charming rage with the rough element that has got her in its arms. She tries to turn against it, with a furious "How dare you, sir!" in her face. But it is of no avail. The gladsome sprites of the air do but change the mode of their jests. Instead of pushing, and kicking, and thumping her behind, and howling rude things in her solemn old ears, they then screech in her face, and either blow her bonnet off without parley, or, at least, shoot it round, so that it hangs at the back of her head—an indignity fit to bring salt tears into the eyes of any well-bred woman of fashion, who relies for her appearance upon her "make-up," and who knows that some two-score of her acquaintances are looking at her and enjoying her confusion.

After such a frolic as this, the mother is volleyed homewards, convinced at the heart that the world is a bad, wicked place, and that the symmetry of her precious bonnet is entirely wrecked; but the daughter re-enters the house, light and happy of heart as a sea bird riding on a zephyr. The one has been buffeted, the other caressed; and the result is what one would expect it to be. Mamma hurries to her dressing-room in a rage to gloat over the miserable figure she is sure that she has presented to the world thus dishevelled. And the girl looks in the dining-room mirror, laughs gaily at the sight of her own cheeks and beauty, and rejoices in her heart that she has chanced to meet her dear Fred Love on that morning of all mornings.

As a test of character and constitution, there is nothing so infallible as the sea. If you have any latent good in you, it will bring it forth. You may, for instance, have been indifferent hitherto in religious matters, whether from apathy or doubt. That prosy old man, your vicar in the midlands village of your nativity—hid in a hollow between hills, and three parts interred under the shade of big oaks and elms—never gave your soul a chance. You lived there in a close atmosphere of

strong-smelling cant. It was as much as your reputation—that is, your life—was worth, to be natural; and you cannot hope to appreciate the good things of religion, until you have first tried the ways of nature, and found them wanting in that felicity which you desire. And so there was no help for you, and you consented—perhaps with a sigh, and perhaps with a still worse sneer—to be as unreal, and as much like a wooden marionette as your neighbour.

But the sea suddenly changes all that. Your whole nature expands under its influences; and you realise, maybe for the first time, that you have the making of a man in you, and of what kind of a man. You possess the constituent qualities. Some one has said that the plant man grows more robust in Italy than elsewhere. The same may be said of the sea. As a specimen of natural development, give me a man, or a woman, born and bred by the sea. The interior of the country is richer in conventional and artificial human beings—men, too, who would rather cheat you than let you cheat them.

Further, speaking as an evangelist, I should suppose that the man who lives by the sea has twice as much chance of salvation as his country cousin. The feelings and thoughts that are controlled, or, at least, influenced by religion, are stirred here as they cannot be elsewhere. The great horizon of shining or glowering water is an epitome of eternity. The dead body which the waves now and again roll from their midst upon the sands, is a stern reminder of one's own latter end, and of "the changes and chances of this mortal life." A storm arises. The sea roars and swells loftily. We on the land cower before the wind. A ship is seen off the shore, and in deadly peril. There is a cry for help. The privileged helpers put out to sea at the risk of their own lives. Hope and fear, doubt, despair—all those sentiments which mark us as imperfect creatures, not strong enough at all times to support ourselves, and, therefore, craving the support of some one stronger than ourselves—these quickly jostle each other in us, and try us to prove if we be scantily or richly endowed with the best qualities of the soul: if we be heroic or craven. If a man's God is—as it may well be said to be—the measure of his experience and his intellect in conjunction, the God of the dweller by the sea will have nobler and more sublime attributes than the God of the countryman.

The whisper of the wind in the trees is a kindred sound to the song of the waves upon the land; but in times of agitation the voice of the sea is more eloquent than the voice of the trees.

The dweller by the sea who is not conscious of moments of devotion of the most intense and elevating kind, has no religion in him. I dare say the same man, were he resident in an inland village, would attend church every Sunday, for the sake of appearances.

It is also a test of constitution. You may think yourself tolerably robust so long as you live in the interior, with trees, and houses, and hedges on all sides of you to break the force of the storms. Wait, however, until you have passed your examination at the hands, or rather the lungs, of a winter's gale on the coast, with the waves hurling themselves, one on the head of another, in chase of your footsteps. It will either invigorate or wither you. If the former, you are fit for an Arctic rescue expedition, or a pedestrian tour across Greenland, like Nansen's. Otherwise, you may as well at once plead your weakness, and henceforward coquet with the seaside, just as a flirt coquets with mankind. In other words, you must only show yourself when you are sure of appearing at your best, and when you have every reason to think that the day will not be too rough for you.

Then there is that horrible malady, peculiar to the sea. The travelling oriental, who wrote letters home to his eastern friends about his experiences, described his sickness on the ocean as due to an extraordinary local trick, by which his liver was turned upside down, to his inexpressible agony. However wrong as diagnosis, this is fairly true as a portrayal of sensation. Out of question, sea-sickness is one of the vilest of the many sufferings by which we poor mortals are baited on our way to Heaven. It has no redeeming feature—let those who prate about it as a whet to appetite, and a stimulant to the system, say what they please in plausible opposition. The tale is told of a pair of hopeful and confiding young innocents, a man and a maid, who were married at noon one day, and who afterwards betook themselves to a yacht—an experience as novel to them as matrimony itself—and who, in the evening, after an infernal, though short honeymoon, agreed to part for ever, and wend their way separately to the peace of the tomb. I put no faith in

this story. Yet it is built upon truth. The pangs of sea-sickness are, in short, so odious and tormenting, that they suffice to make a fiend of a saint, and to transform the milk and cordiality of ordinary human kindness to vinegar and snappishness.

One turn more. Ask the wives, and sisters, and mothers of those who get their livelihood on the sea, what they think of it. Their judgement will be stern, and a thought partial. They will not flatter it, like the happy schoolgirl with the wind in her hair, to whom it is a heaven-sent blessing, like her pony, her bosom-friend, her parents, and her first love; nor say petulant words about it, like the girl's mamma who has just had her stock of false hair carried away by its winds; nor avow that it is jolly, like the boy who bathes or catches shrimps in it, and regards it as a holiday institution specially created for the entertainment of such urchins as he; nor even allow that it is very well as a "dernier ressort," like the out-at-elbows financier, who comes to find courage and inspiration in its ozone.

Upon the walls of the best parlours of these cleanly whitewashed houses by the cliffs, you will see the portraits of divers stiff-looking men, evidently taken in their Sunday clothes, and with conspicuous hands. The women of the house shake their heads, sigh, and perhaps shed a tear or two when you ask about this man or that of them. They are some of the victims of the sea. This fine, hearty, bright, laughing thing, the sea, has snapped them up as an alligator takes a fly on its tongue—snapped them up with all their hopes and aspirations, and thought nothing more about them or their bones. If you go into the village churchyard, on the top of the cliff, you may step from one white tombstone to another, all much weathered by the salt winds, with the words "drowned at sea," under the name. The youth of eighteen, and the veteran of three-score and ten, have thus gone to doom together. It is all one to the sea: of whatever sex, age, temperament, or ability. It sups on one as well as another, and finds a mail-clad hero of a hundred fights as easy of digestion as a tender maiden in her teens.

Ah, my merry, madcap summer sea, though you look so divinely fair and winsome, you are very human, after all. You have virtues and vices much akin to ours; and you can match the slyest of us in the

way you hide the consequences of your passions deep down in your heart.

According to the old fable, the goddess of love was born out of your lithe, restless body. It is a pity in these days you cannot help wrecking that love in the hearts of so many of us poor human folk.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

*Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vallacot,"
"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER LII. A TRIUMPHAL ARCH.

THERE is a paralysis of emotion, just as there is a paralysis of the limbs or the body. Men and women have gone through horrible events, have made fatal vows, and stood before the judges receiving their awful sentences without moving a muscle of their faces and without showing any outward emotion whatsoever. There is a certain courage of despair which has never yet been explained, and which seems to be associated with a vein of recklessness, shown most in mankind when in a state of under or over-civilisation. If the problem were not quite mysterious, one might declare this strange callousness of self and self-interest to be an inability, or a temporary inability, to balance cause and effect. This courage is entirely opposed to true fortitude, which is perfectly clear-sighted and able to balance the relative importance of actions, and then to accept calmly that course which wisdom dictates.

Every day the world witnesses this strange phenomenon in human beings; and those whose minds are turned towards the hope of ultimate perfection in their own marvellous race, pin their faith on this or that panacea, which, in the future, shall give wisdom to mankind. Till this is found—and, perhaps, the world will be somewhat of a dull place when every one is perfect—there will be noble women who "throw themselves away," as the phrase goes, upon worthless men; and men who "might be anything," yet are crushed by the incubus of a shallow wife, or by one who, as if with octopus feelers, destroys all high aspirations at their very birth.

George Guthrie was not a moralist in the accepted sense of the word; but this lovely bright May morning his usual spirits rather failed him as he busied himself with

the Heatons and with several of Miss Heaton's slipper-working young ladies—who were intensely flattered at being allowed to be useful to their betters—in preparing the little church for the wedding.

George addressed Miss Heaton in his mock heroic tone :

"Have you drilled your school-children, Miss Heaton, in the art of throwing choice flowers for a bride to tread on? They must, of course, take especial care really to do nothing of the sort. The bride must carefully avoid crushing the lovely petals; and the pink-printed innocents must swoop down upon the flowers when she has passed, pick them up, and have them ready again for the same ceremony when she walks down the avenue as the Honourable Mrs. Walter Akister."

The young ladies giggled, and Herbert Heaton, who was helping George Guthrie to wreath the triumphal arch at the entrance of the churchyard, suggested that it would be almost more dignified if the children kept the choice flowers in their baskets till the bride came out of church.

George, however, was ready with his answer.

"We moderns do not think much about dignity when we have to compare it with utility. Mrs. Eagle Bennison will be, I feel sure, most disappointed if her flowers are not scattered as the bride comes up to the church. I think she said this morning that it was an emblem; I forget what of exactly. But if you take the advice of an old bachelor, don't make an emblem out of matrimony, for, beyond the true-lovers' knot, it becomes a knotty question."

"What nonsense you do talk, Mr. Guthrie. I'm sure this wedding is very suitable in every way," said Miss Heaton, severely.

"I should be a bold man if I disagreed with you, Miss Heaton. Look how tastefully Miss Smith has intermingled the W and E; and the pretty conceit of letting it represent 'We.' Could anything be more poetical, and more like the marriages that are made in heaven! That reminds me, Mrs. Joyce told me this morning that on the Beacon one had very 'embracing air.' Now, I call this occupation very embracing, don't you?"

Miss Heaton felt this was no place for her two young lady-helpers, and said, gravely :

"You and Herbert can easily finish this arch; I think we ladies will put the last

touches in church; after that, Herbert, I shall go and see that the school-children's baskets are all tied with white ribbon. Mrs. Kestell was very anxious that it should be of the best, as I told her it would do afterwards to trim their summer hats."

The ladies retired, and George Guthrie knew that he was in disgrace.

"I declare, Heaton, I must have gone and said something wrong! Don't deny it, I saw it on your sister's face. It's this horrid 'W. E.' which made me forget that the ladies might take my little bracing remarks personally. It's terrible to be under a cloud when we are expected to be making merry. But—no, save the mark, this affair seems ghastly to me. You have read the banns three times, so you feel legal over it. I've read no banns; really last Sunday I nearly stood up and forbade them. What would you have said, Heaton?"

"That it is a great mistake fancying we can order the lives of our fellow-creatures. Miss Kestell is able to judge for herself. She is by no means weak. Have you heard anything more of that—that poor man, Hoel Fenner? Is he really in these parts?"

"I don't know; his apparition was ghostly. I have positively not dared to ask further; though, upon my word, I have a great curiosity to meet him face to face, and to ask him point-blank why he behaved in that dastardly manner!"

"A woman is at the bottom of everything. An Indian judge put it tersely by saying at once, 'Who is she?' Why not think he may have had an excuse, and that Miss Kestell was partly answerable?"

George Guthrie shook his head.

"An old fallacy; I can take my oath that it was not Elva."

"And yet she is marrying some other suitor."

"Under a false idea of something or other! Well, here's the arch triumphant, and all the rest of it, and 'W.E.'s' enough make the bridal pair vow to be divorced in a week. Suppose Hoel Fenner were to come? Gallus once more seeking out his *Lycoris*."

"That's impossible. Now, Guthrie, I must leave you to finish this whilst I go and settle with the archdeacon."

George Guthrie was restless, however; to him the air seemed oppressively hot, and in the distance he saw the packed thunder-clouds rising slowly, and gradually

hardening their outline. He settled he would have nothing more to do with the decorations; and, seeing Mr. Kestell's gardener emerging from the church, bade him put the finishing touches to the arch.

"It's a very 'propriate day, sir," said the man, touching his cap. "There's many of the Squire's men has have got a half day to come and see the wedding; and all our folk have a holiday of course."

"There's marriages and marriages, Culver. Do you know the woman's answer to the good clergyman who was reproving her for the unseemly quarrels she indulged in with her husband? 'My good woman,' said he, 'remember you are one.' 'Lor, sir,' says she, 'if you was to go by sometimes you'd think we was twenty.' I expect our friends of Rushbrook village are coming to see how they are to be made one again."

"Well, sir," said Culver, grinning broadly, "it's for better, for worse; and one has to take one's chance of that, rich and poor alike, and Miss Kestell is such a handsome young woman that she was sure to be singled out. My wife she said, this morning, 'Miss Kestell's done right by marrying a gentleman she has summered and wintered; it's better than men who belong to the migrating class, sir; just come and look at you, and then are off without so much as wishing you good morning.' This arch is a handsome thing in its way, sir; and, when we've done, I think Mr. Kestell will think it very tasteful. He's always wanting Miss Kestell to have everything of the very best. The poor gentleman will miss her sorely."

George Guthrie got off at this point, without finding anything more original to say than:

"It's a pity that there are some things not to be purchased with money. So the men on both estates are to have a dinner to-night! That is a real British idea, isn't it, Culver? Well, good morning till two o'clock. If you see Mr. Heaton, tell him I've gone to put on my white ribbon."

George Guthrie was popular with everybody on account of his treating rich and poor alike. His sympathy was more prized than the money of the rich inhabitants of Rushbrook, because it was given as a gift of an equal, and not as a dole, even though they all recognised Mr. Guthrie was a gentleman born and bred, and as good as any of the other grand gentlefolk who

spoke so condescendingly to those below them.

George Guthrie walked slowly away across the common, taking a short cut to Court Garden.

The weather was certainly oppressive; it was that which was making him feel so unlike himself—that, and his whole sense of repulsion at Elva's wedding, so he thought. He had hardly seen her since those few private words he had had with her; she had kept herself entirely out of sight, under plea of being busy. And it was impossible to do anything else than congratulate Walter, Mr. Kestell, and Lord Cartmel.

"Of course, I did congratulate them; but I fancied the words I said would stick in my throat. May Heaven forgive me for the lies I've had to tell. Her father gives her away, and Walter Akister has got a young lord to act as his best man. What a faree it all is! Hang it! Elva will have no bridesmaid except her sister. As well have an incarcerated nun as Amice. That girl is on the high road to a lunatic asylum. If it wasn't that Amice told us that Elva especially hoped we should all come, I would out the whole affair. What a sky! But the storm is rising, I'm sure.

"This won't do; I must reform, and be a good boy, and make a button-hole for the Squire. I wonder he is not painfully reminded of the first day of his thralldom. I would rather be tied up with honest rope than silken threads that get so round a fellow there's no bursting the bonds."

He opened a little wicket-gate that led to a park through a fir plantation for a short distance, and then issued out upon one of the delicious green lawns of Court Garden.

Like a beautiful early butterfly, Mrs. Eagle Beanson was flitting this morning among her flower-beds. The smile and the pearly teeth were at once visible.

"Oh, George, I was wanting you. Come and help me, there's a good fellow. Our servants are all going to the wedding, and they must have each a little nosegay. These forget-me-nots are going off, so we can pick them; the white and blue mixed will be quite sweet, won't it? You know, Peterson and the boy have gone to help at the church. Dear Elva and Walter! It quite seems like marrying one's own children, doesn't it? How glad I am that horrid Hoel Fenner disappeared. So like

a wicked literary man. One never knows about people of that sort, does one?"

"He was handsomer than Walter Akister," said George, stooping down at once, and beginning his labours of Hercules over the minute forget-me-nots, and wishing they were Guelder-roses, so that one each would have amply sufficed for the servants.

"I do so distrust handsome men; the naughty creatures are so apt to be deceitful and to take one in. When I—I mean before I married John, I was quite besieged with handsome men; but I said no; I will have worth."

"Worth how much?" innocently asked George, feeling sure the handsome men had all been poorer than Squire John.

"That of course had nothing to do with it. And I have never regretted my choice."

"I should think not; I declare, sweet coz, that it would be difficult to find even a crumpled leaf in your bed of roses."

"What a sweet simile; but, of course, life has its trials. I think, George, I'll go in and rest. I know you'll see there are ten little nosegays made up ready for the servants. They must start early. You'll drive down with us, won't you?"

"No, thank you. I'll run down quicker on my own legs, and take my own time. I had better see the start of the ten pieces of silver—the servants, I mean."

"Oh, thank you; yes, that will be kind. Here is the white ribbon to tie up the posies."

Mrs. Eagle Bennison flitted away to have a little nap before early luncheon, leaving George Guthrie happily at work in the broiling sun.

"Forget-me-not," he murmured pathetically. "Forget-me-not—I'm not likely to if I get a sunstroke, or begin to peel during the ceremony."

But being a good fellow, he got interested in his task, taking pride in making each nosegay different. As the housemaid, Sarah, had a special interest in his eyes, because her lover lived in the village, and was a "first-rate fellow," he took much trouble in arranging her nosegay as a true-lover's knot, the white forget-me-nots outlining the knot.

"How Sally—no, Sarah—will giggle. I would rather stake my hat on her happiness than on that of Elva. By the way, outside the plantation there's some spincelosa. I'll go and get it, and let the servants take it down with them."

Off he rushed presently after depositing

the nosegays in the servants' hall, and not waiting for the thanks which were showered on him by the busy servants.

"One gets a great many thanks for being an idle man," he thought, as he came down the drive towards the Pools, and soon plunged down into a great, empty, dank hollow which lay between two pools, and which once had been filled with water. Here, in the soft, boggy bank, George Guthrie had discovered a patch of exquisite ferns, and thinking only of the admiration they would call forth, he let himself down by now and then catching hold of a slight stem. All at once he paused in utter amazement, for sitting in this sunless and melancholy spot was Jesse Vicary, with folded arms, leaning against the stem of a great fir-tree which rose high above the more coppice-like growth of the hollow.

Jesse was as much surprised as George Guthrie at the unexpected meeting.

"Good Heavens!" said the latter. "Why, my dear good fellow, you'll damp off for a certainty if you meditate here! It's enough to give you ague, intermittent fever, and typhoid all at once. I didn't know that— Oh, you've come to see Miss Kestell married."

Jesse would have given anything to have escaped notice. As it was, he tried to dissemble.

"I've come to get a little change, Mr. Guthrie. I'm going back to-night by the mail; but I'm not much in the mood for weddings."

"Ah!" George was puzzled. Jesse had altered so much, the grand, hopeful expression had left his face. George felt all this, though he was not much able to argue out his feelings.

"Mood for weddings! Nonsense! Neither am I in a mood for this wedding; but we have to make the best of the inevitable. Come along with me, Vicary; I'll give you some luncheon, and act courier. If you have had a little misunderstanding with Mr. Kestell, now's the time to make it up. He's kind-hearted at the bottom."

Jesse stood up, and leant against the great red trunk. He looked really ill; his face was hollow and haggard, his eyes were blood-shot from want of sleep.

"I am only waiting at Rushbrook for a last interview with Mr. Kestell," he said, in a low voice, for in George Guthrie's presence it was difficult to lose self-control, so much influence have all true-hearted

natures. "I am here only for that explanation, not for weddings."

The reason and point of this answer was, of course, entirely a mystery to Mr. Guthrie; but, judging only from the outside man, he could see well enough that something had gone very wrong with Jesse Vicary. Poor fellow! He had heard that he was out of work; perhaps he was in real need.

Quite silently he slipped his hand into his pocket. But, no; how could he offer money? For a moment George thought whether, if he tried, he could slip some gold pieces into Jesse's pocket unawares; but the experiment was too dangerous. He had not enough legerdemain talent for that.

"I'll tell you what, Vicary, you look very far from well. What makes you look at everything through black spectacles? Why, man, for your sister's sake, you ought to cheer up. Do me a favour; we are old friends, you know—come to the

wedding with me, and then this evening we will go to Folkestone. I've got to spend a week there to recruit my own health. The very idea of a wedding quite disturbs my equilibrium for a month. And Symee shall come, too; and she can find a friend to accompany her." (Yes, these spare guineas would cover expenses for a week.) "You are sure to find work when you go back as sunburnt as a plough-boy. Why, now I don't wonder no one will have you near them."

George Guthrie had spoken very quickly, partly to hide his own confusion and distress, and partly to give Jesse time to recover. It was impossible not to be touched by the warm feeling that prompted all this lively sketch; and Jesse felt it deeply. But he would not trust himself to say more than:

"Thank you, Mr. Guthrie, it's impossible—quite impossible."

Then, turning away, he was gone before George could follow him.

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A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE poet who wrote that "Coming events cast their shadows before," gets a flat denial given him at every turn of life's path. This was how Herrick rode forth to Summerhill that morning: depressed, it is true, by mournful memories, solemn with the sense of the responsibilities suddenly laid upon his shoulders, yet withal daring to be joyful in spirit whenever his thoughts turned to Lois and her great love for him.

And this was how he rode back to the Castle, after a brief ten minutes' interview with Mrs. Leyton: sadness and seriousness gone together with his joyfulness, his brain one whirling chaos of anger and gloomy forebodings, the future as much a blank to him as for the nonce the past had become.

His interview with Mrs. Leyton had been as stormy as it had been brief. He had had to wait close upon half an hour before the lady made her appearance, and then she had received him in her robe-de-chambre in her boudoir.

He had lost no time in preliminaries. "The butler tells me Miss White is not here! How is this, Mrs. Leyton? Please explain," he had said as he shook hands.

Whereupon, the little lady had drawn herself up haughtily, and had said: "It is to me, not you, I think that explanations are due."

"I don't understand! Am I dreaming?" Herrick had exclaimed. "Miss

White returned here from the Castle, did she not, early on Friday morning last week?"

"Yes," Mrs. Leyton had replied, "and early on Friday morning last week, Miss White thought fit to pack her box, desire one of my grooms to take it to the Wrexford station, and depart, leaving with one of my maids the exceedingly polite message, that 'circumstances compelled her immediate departure,' nothing more."

"Why in Heaven's name, Mrs. Leyton, did you not send round to me?" Herrick had exclaimed, hotly.

"Why in Heaven's name should I have taken the trouble to do such a thing?" the lady had replied, tartly. "I concluded that it was at your instigation that the young lady was behaving in such an extraordinary fashion. You had spoken to me about your wish for her to stay with certain friends of yours till your marriage. I took it for granted that neither you nor she considered farther explanation to me necessary. I said to my husband, 'This is the polite fashion in which things are generally done at Longridge Castle.'"

The slightly sarcastic tone in which the last words had been spoken, had showed that Mrs. Leyton had neither forgotten nor forgiven the one or two snubs which Lady Joan had dealt her.

Herrick had grown more and more bewildered and distracted. He put a hundred wild and disconnected questions to Mrs. Leyton, which her first words had already sufficiently answered. Had she enquired at Wrexford station, as to Miss White's destination, had she cross-questioned her groom, the maid-servants, also, rigorously?

To all which Mrs. Leyton had replied,

sarcastically still, that in the circumstance she had not thought it necessary to do so, but that if he had any wish to cross-question either the men-servants, or the maids, he was at perfect liberty to do so. And furthermore, in order to avoid embarrassment of any sort to questioned or questioner, she had forthwith wished him "good morning," and had left the room.

As a parting word, the lady had expressed her conviction that to her way of thinking Mr. Gaskell need be under no apprehensions respecting Miss White's safety or comfort. She herself had paid her her half-yearly salary only the week before, and there was every likelihood, she opined, that the young lady had, for the present, at any rate, taken refuge in the big orphanage, whence she had recently emerged—St. Margaret's—in the environs of Croydon.

The opportunity of bringing Lady Joan's pride into the dust gone, the lady showed an evident disposition to wash her hands of the Gaskell family, whence so many affronts to her social standing had emanated.

Herrick's cross-questioning of Mrs. Leyton's servants threw little or no further light on the matter. None of the maids had seen Miss White on the morning in question, except the nurse; she stated that at about six o'clock, or half-past, Miss White had come into the nursery with her hat and veil on, and had kissed the children as they lay asleep in their beds. Her impression was, that Miss White was returning to the Castle to stay, and this impression was confirmed by the sound of tears in the young lady's voice, which in the circumstances seemed natural enough.

The groom had even less to tell. He merely stated that Miss White had come to him and asked him at once to take her box to Wrexford station in the luggage-cart, and he had done so. On arriving at the station, he had deposited the box in the cloak-room according to his orders, but the young lady was nowhere to be seen. This was all that Herrick could elicit from the servants.

On leaving the house, however, just as he was bringing his horse to a trot through the Park, the sound of hurried footsteps and his name called made him draw rein and look round.

A young girl, the under nurse as he supposed, came up breathlessly with a letter in her hand. "For you, sir," she said, "Miss White left it in my hands

when she went away. 'I can trust you, Rhoda,' she said, 'it is to be given into Mr. Gaskell's own hand—no one else—when he comes to the house, but not before.'"

Herrick snatched the letter from the girl, in his eagerness forgetting the fee with which she no doubt expected to be recompensed for her fidelity.

The note, written in a hasty, scrambling hand, was very brief, and ran thus:

"Only a few lines to say good-bye to you. I have felt from the very first that our engagement was a mistake; I am thoroughly convinced now that a marriage between us could bring no happiness. Do not be uneasy as to my future; I am going at once to friends who will protect and advise me. I beg, I implore you make no effort to follow me and find out my hiding-place. Let me, I entreat you, at once and for ever pass out of your life. Believe me, it will be as much for my good as for yours that I should do so. Heaven bless you. "LOIS."

The letter needed no second reading; its straightforward plainness made it easy enough to understand. The fears and misgivings which he had argued away—scolded away—kissed away—had once more taken possession of her; and, yielding completely to them, she had taken sudden flight. But whither? Who were these friends of whom she spoke so confidently? He knew, or thought he knew, every friend she had ever had. They could be counted on the fingers of one hand—a girl at the big orphanage, a young teacher there who had been kind to her, a cousin of her father's in America, who at one time used to send her Christmas-boxes, and all were told. Who then were these newly-found friends in whom she placed such implicit confidence?

A great wave of jealousy for a moment swept over him that his Lois should flee for refuge to other guardianship than his; it faded, giving place to a darker thought, an ugly suspicion lest this sudden impulsive flight might have been suggested by an older and wiser brain than hers. His mother from the first had opposed his choice of a wife; what if she had found opportunity to work on the girl's unselfish misgivings, and had not only suggested this sudden flight of hers, but had supplied her with means to make it, and had found for her a hiding-place at the end of it!

He touched his horse with his whip. Well, thank Heaven that doubt at least

could be decided at once by a question and answer. All his pity, all his respect for his mother for one brief moment seemed engulfed and gone. "She has had her own choice, she has made her own life, why in Heaven's name does she seek to mar mine for me?" was his thought as he sped swiftly along under the Summerhill beeches, which dropped now and again a rough little coffin of a nut into his horse's glossy mane, now and again a damp, blurred leaf.

Only once did he turn his head on his way through the Park. That was to give a rueful glance to the spot where, with light heart and lighter words, he had helped Lois to make her miniature Adonis-garden. A few limp, battered flower-stalks, a handful of mud-spattered petals, was all that was left of it now.

CHAPTER XXV.

"MOTHER, do you know anything of this?" asked Herrick, standing, white and wrathful, before Lady Joan, with Lois's scrap of a letter in his hand.

Lady Joan had quitted her chair beside the window, and was seated now at her writing-table addressing an envelope. Before she looked up in response to Herrick's question, she carefully reversed her envelope on her blotting-pad.

Lady Joan's troubles were to come now all together it seemed. Not a quarter of an hour ago a momentous piece of intelligence had been communicated to her, and here was Herrick confronting her with such a question as this!

The momentous piece of news had been told her by Parsons in response to her order for Lucy Harwood's immediate attendance, and was to the effect that, nearly a week ago, Lucy had been fetched away by her brother, who evidently considered that she had received her dismissal. Upon hearing this, Lady Joan had at once taken pen in hand, and had written a note to Lucy's brother, requesting him to come and see her immediately.

It was the envelope of this letter that she was addressing when Herrick entered the room.

He had to repeat his question.

Then Lady Joan looked up, and said slowly, as if doing her best to gather together her forces to meet a new difficulty or danger:

"What is 'this'? I do not understand! What is it I am supposed to know?"

For answer, Herrick spread Lois's letter before her, and bade her read it.

And though he stood there closely watching her face as she did so, never so much as change of colour showed her surprise and sense of relief that the young girl had so literally fulfilled the few short and somewhat indefinite instructions she had given her.

She took long to read the few simple lines. He grew impatient.

"Have I to thank you for this?" he asked, hotly, forgetting all his former kindly thought for her, forgetting everything, in fact, in his eager haste to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Lady Joan looked up at him. A slight flush passed over her pale face.

"Directly, no," she answered, with great deliberation; "indirectly, perhaps, yes. I have made no secret to her, to you, to any one of my disapproval of your choice of a wife."

He made a gesture of impatience.

"You can throw no light whatever on this hurried, ill-advised step of hers?" he asked in a restrained voice, desirous to bring her back to the main point.

"None whatever."

Still he was not satisfied.

"It was not in the first instance suggested to her by you?" he questioned, recollecting the two opportunities Lady Joan had had of private conversation with Lois.

Now, surely it could not have been from any refinement of the moral sense that Lady Joan hesitated to speak the glib lie that would have set this matter at rest, but rather through habit of obedience to the maxim, "noblesse oblige," which figured to her in guise of moral code.

She rose with great dignity from her chair, and stood facing him, with her head thrown back, her nostrils dilating.

"Am I to sit here and be cross-questioned by you as if I were a school-girl coining fibs to meet an emergency?" she asked, haughtily. "I have told you already that, if you please, you may connect me indirectly with this young lady's extraordinary conduct. I shall reply to no more questions on the matter."

It was possible that if Lady Joan's mind had not been already greatly disturbed by what to her was a matter of greater moment, she would have adopted a more conciliatory attitude. As it was in default of settled plan, she merely followed the dictates of inclination and instinct.

Herrick was cut off from the possibility of a reply by the door suddenly opening, and Lady Honor entering the room.

She had in her hand a plate with a magnificent bunch of grapes upon it. She had not, since her arrival at the Castle, seen or spoken with Lady Joan, and assuredly could scarcely have selected a more inopportune moment for paying her first visit to her aunt's room; she looked from Herrick to Lady Joan, from Lady Joan to Herrick.

"They told me you had come down," she said, addressing her aunt. "And though Herrick told me not to go near you to-day, I didn't see why I should not. I've been through the grape-houses and picked out the finest bunch I could find for you. Now, you'll devour every one of them, won't you, Aunt Jo—an!"

The last syllable of Lady Joan's name was evidently added as an after-thought. The young lady made this speech somewhat in the manner in which she generally chose to come downstairs—in successive jumps.

Before she was half-way through it, Herrick, with an exclamation of annoyance at the interruption, had left the room.

Yet if he stayed for an hour questioning and cross-questioning his mother, he said to himself after a moment's thought, he did not see what he would gain by it. Lady Joan's manner carried conviction to his mind that she was utterly in ignorance of Lois's movements, and as unprepared as he was for her sudden flight. One thing seemed clear to him; he must go at once without a moment's delay to the big orphanage in the vicinity of Croydon, where, as Mrs. Leyton had suggested, tidings of Lois, if not she herself, might be found.

It was easy for him to say "without a moment's delay," it was not so easy for him to put his intention into execution.

First, there came a telegram from Mr. McGowan, asking when he could see him on an urgent and important matter.

Herrick's reply to this was the somewhat vague one: "When I return from London."

Following this, came a request from Mr. Champneys, the manager of the Wrexford mines, that he might see Mr. Gaakell on matters of business. Now an interview with Mr. Champneys "on matters of business" meant at least an hour's work, at most an afternoon's.

Herrick thought awhile; then he looked at his watch. With the utmost despatch there was no saving a train from Wrexford for London before five in the afternoon.

So then, with a terrible misgiving as to what might be the consequences of this enforced delay, the young man beat down his burning impatience to be off—going—doing something somewhere—and forced himself to sit still for an hour and a half without a break, listening to the driest business details, and giving in return the most methodical of instructions.

As he crossed the hall on his way out of the house a sheet of paper lying on the floor caught his eye; it had evidently fluttered from a small portfolio which lay on a table, and which he recognised as his cousin's.

Mechanically he picked up the paper, intending to replace it; as he did so the pencil-sketch on it caught his eye. It was done with a bold, free touch, and represented the interior of a boudoir—his mother's was it? Yes; there was the old Earl's portrait over the mantelpiece, and the two full-length figures which faced each other, one either side of a table, were—good Heavens! who were they? That young man with his head thrown back and his fingers clenched into the palm of his hand was evidently meant for him, but it had his mother's face, crowned with its widow's cap, given to it! And that tall, stately lady, with her head thrown back and hand outstretched, was endowed with his own moustached visage, and hair cut "à la militaire." The words beneath the sketch, in Honor's big writing, "Which is which?" made it plain that the young lady possessed the gifts, doubly dangerous when conjoined, of caricaturist and satirist.

Herrick laid down the sketch, ashamed of himself for the feeling of annoyance which so trivial a matter had raised in his mind.

And had he been forced to speak out all his thoughts, he would have confessed that the real sting of the thing lay, not alone in the fact that a moment so tragic to him had been made material for a jest, but also in the vividness of the likeness between his mother and himself, which, with an artist's eye, the girl had seized and emphasized.

Why or wherefore, however, this should be a cause of annoyance to him, he might have found it hard to say.

ON IDLENESS.

THE copy-books tell us, in inimitable characters, that "Industry is the mother of all good things"; and that, on the

other hand, "Idleness is the prolific parent of sin."

Like the rest of my race, I revered the copy-book in my infancy, and scoff at it in the days of strength and wisdom after experience. Not that its laudable maxims troubled me much as a boy. One does not at that epoch of life engrave things of this kind upon the heart. I admired the elegant style in which they were written at the top of the page, and despaired of rivalling it. The fine coat of the maxim was what fascinated my affections. Translated into my own handwriting, there was nothing alluring about the phrase, be it what it might. What if the style was unattainable? The caligraphy of the copy-book is, in truth, to us in childhood what the ideal is to us as men. We may, or may not keep our eyes fixed upon the copper-plate writing while we urge our childish, inky fingers on their wild, erratic courses. We may, or may not seriously try to model our life's conduct on that—whether fanciful, or matter of history—of the ideal man who dwells within us, dimly or distinctly, in the summer-time of existence.

There is industry that profiteth not, and is, therefore, idle; even as there is idleness that does more for the body and mind of man than the best-directed and most untiring industry.

A good many of us are like rogues on the treadmill. We go round and round in our daily task—eat, drink, sleep, and name the new baby; and at the end of the year are pretty much where we were at the beginning. We are three hundred and sixty-five days older; that is about all. For the rest, our precious industry, although it has been unintermittent, has not done a great deal for us, beyond adding a few pounds to our savings, and digging another horizontal wrinkle in our forehead. We have developed like the caterpillar and the slug: not a whit better. At this rate, when we die we ought to be accomplished candidates for Nirvana, although we have done nothing but work, work all through the years.

There was once, we are told, a certain diminutive French Abbé, who, falling ill, was bidden by the doctor to drink a quart of barley-water every hour.

"Well," said the doctor, when he called to ascertain how the patient was thriving on this prescription, "what is the result?"

"There is none," replied the small Abbé.

"Have you taken it all?" enquired the doctor.

"I could not," was the pathetic answer.

Whereupon the doctor did not hide his displeasure. Indeed, the neglect seemed to him almost an insult.

"But, my friend," interposed the little Abbé, pleadingly, "how could you bid me swallow a quart an hour, when I hold but a pint?"

This little story will bear being applied to the subject of my paper. It were monstrous to expect the same measure of idleness and industry to serve all constitutions with equal benefit.

Some men work because they love work and hate play. They do not shine in society; they have no conversation; the fair sex are not passing fair to their distorted vision; the whitewashed ceiling of their office and its shabby fittings are more attractive to them than landscapes or Italian skies; and they are under the agreeable thrall of no diverting hobbies.

In Heaven's name, let such men work all through the day, if they like it. They accumulate immense fortunes; and even though they may be miserly in their lifetime, when they die some one benefits by their millions.

A man of this kind, on an enforced holiday, is a very compassionate object.

I remember one such, who, while driving through some of the most entrancing scenery of our land, on a fair summer day, hid his face behind a journal of the money market all the time. His doctor had told him he would kill himself if he did not take a change. He obeyed the letter of the injunction; but not the spirit. And he did really die a little while after of paralysis of the brain, or something of the kind, due to excessive industry.

Then there are the human butterflies of life, whose wings would lose their beauty, and who would be likely to retrograde back to worms, if they were condemned to give up their airy caperings in the sunlight, and to spend many hours of the day in the society of a ledger and a stool. Why should we part with these picturesque features of existence? What is it to you or me if they gain nothing by the sweat of their brows? They are like the plush curtains and gilded cornices of your room. You could do without them; but life would have less colour in losing them.

Let them, therefore, strut and sun themselves, twirl their young moustaches, play the tailor's dummy and the ladies' darling to their heart's content, and give them nothing of the world's work harder to do

than the carving of chickens' breasts. It is safe to affirm that, as a general rule, a man gravitates towards that for which he is best fitted. If these dainty moths are incapable of great things, is that a humane reason why they should be denied the right to coruscate in the sunbeams to the best of their ability?

I suppose the natural, undisciplined inclination of a man would impel him to be active and idle spasmodically: a vigorous spell of work being followed by a lengthy spell of coma. That was the fashion of the times when the noble savage had the forests and the plains to himself. He would hunt for twenty-four hours or more if his prey contrived to elude him; but he would make up for it by eating so much meat that he was afterwards obliged to keep to his bed, in a state of gorged repletion, for a corresponding number of hours. He was no better than an anaconda that has swallowed a panther, the digestion of which lies heavy upon it.

I very much doubt if one can recommend this course of action, or inaction, to the man of mind. To be sure, some say, when you have worked at book-writing or leading articles for two or three months, you ought, for your brain's sake, to take a month's holiday. It is a charming recipe for a literary man. He would, I warrant, like nothing better than to act upon it, were he not deterred by scruples. Of these scruples, not the least is the expensiveness of such a life. And, to my mind, one of the greatest is the hardships he would thereby put upon himself, in the series of reawakenings—as it were—of his talents, after each period of repose. There would be many a cruel yawn before his wits would run in harness as of yore, and many a revolt.

The literary life is an unnatural life. I do not mean that it is therefore intolerable. Oh dear, no; for we by no means live in a state of nature in A.D. 1890. But I do infer that it is always impolitic to suspend the working of functions which may be called artificial, unless it be an absolute necessity. A man writes better the more often he writes; or, at least, if he does not, he will speedily be disgraced. A certain literary character, I forget whom, being asked about the ratio of his work to the time spent upon it, said, that in the first hour of his day he wrote perhaps five lines; in the second, fifty; in the third, a hundred; the fourth, a hundred and fifty; and from

the fourth hour onwards, until he was obliged, reluctantly, to break the spell, he wrote as fast as his pen would go; and the longer he wrote, the faster ran his ideas. The beginning of our work is never pleasant; is often tormenting; and is sometimes diabolically hard. And so we prefer to keep pen, ink, paper, and brain in close alliance, month after month, working always—though, now more, and now less—instead of verifying that sweet tradition of perfect idleness, which so often comes insidiously to tempt us.

As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as absolute idleness. You cannot call a stone idle because it does not walk about. The laziest of men is never perfectly idle. That were death; and death is not idleness.

You might suppose that the torpor of the opium-eater was ideal idleness. But look, if you can, into the brain of Kin Can Poo, yonder Chinese reprobate on a shelf, who has drifted into a world of his own under the influence of the baneful drug. You will see activity enough there with a vengeance. His body is, to all intents and purposes, dead. But his soul is intensely alive.

Are the flowers in the garden-patch outside your window idle because they do not join stems and start a round dance, or form a company, and begin to spin or criticise the soil in which they have been planted? About as much as the little grey mist of gnats which, ever and anon, drifts by the window-pane, each gyrating round the other like a universe of solar systems.

If only we could sharpen our faculties sufficiently, it is at least possible that we should be much entertained by the vivacity of what we agree to call the members of the inanimate world. It would not surprise me to know that we should then hear a most humiliating echo, on all sides of us, of that ancient jeer: "Oh, what fools these mortals be!"

Some years ago—a good many, I am sorry to say—I underwent an examination at the hands of the Civil Service Commissioners, in company with ten or twelve youths, my contemporaries. Among other tiresome things, we were called upon to write an essay upon "Genius and Industry." My thesis in those days was that Industry was boy to the man Genius; in other words, that a man could become a genius by being industrious. I have changed my opinion since then. This, by the way, however, I refer to the ex-

perience because I was then particularly appalled by the brisk way in which a certain one of the candidates tackled his essay. He had not sat face to face with his subject for one minute ere his pen was galloping over the paper. Heaven preserve us! thought I: what a mind the fellow must have! And on he went, covering page after page, ere I, for one, had conceived anything that, even upon the excuse of parental partiality, I judged fit to be called an idea. Yet when the results came out, I found that I was credited with one hundred and eighty marks out of a possible two hundred, as compared with this industrious youth's eighty-five. I was idle, or seemed so, for twenty minutes; he was from the outset industrious as an ant.

My judgement upon this occasion was just like that of the world. If men see you bustling about, they think well of you. "Such a one," they say, "is a smart fellow. He will do well." Whereas poor Peter Meditation, who is plagued to death by the fervour and multitude of the fancies which struggle in his head like gladiators in an arena, and who lounges about with his hands in his pockets, looking at something a mile or two away, has his reputation blasted to a certainty.

It may be that such a one does do well; in which case the world is, of course, eager to declare that it prophesied the event. But its surprise is quite prodigious if Peter, while loafing around, has the luck to hit upon a new invention whereby some one — not Peter — either saves or gains a great deal of money. Who would have thought it, asks the world, from an idle oaf like Peter?

School-rooms see strange sights, and hear many unaccountable pieces of information. I would not again be a school-master for anything, unless I were assured ten times as much perception, intelligence, and patience as I happen to possess. For a short time I did, one year, play the pedagogue in a preparatory school. I will give you a definition of a preparatory school under modern auspices. It is an institution in which a certain number of select little boys, at a hundred or a hundred and fifty guineas each per annum, are fattened upon meat three times a day. The dear little fellows' pampered primeval passions thrive amazingly upon this treatment, and at the end of each term they go home with large stomachs, an inordinate amount of self-esteem, and a precocity in

naughtiness and the ways of the world that must sometimes astonish even their parents.

But it is because of the unparalleled responsibility of discernment that it asks of a man, that I would not again, unless under exceptional circumstances, take charge of the minds of little boys. How are you to know when you rebuke that lumpish, lymphatic lad, Porlockson, for his apparent inertia, that you are thereby pinching sensibility at the quick, nipping genius in the bud? He looks so very soft, and all the other boys do but laugh at him for a muff. And, on the other hand, is it not natural that you should be wheedled by that engaging boy, Sharp major, who always appears so intelligently attentive to your lectures? Anon, however, when they both enter the robust life of public school, Porlockson develops a most remarkable passion for chemistry, that makes him a wonder of the place; while Sharp major, having been convicted upon divers occasions of fraud, in the form of cribs and so forth, has at length to be expelled for a most flagrant breach of the eighth commandment.

Reflection upon all this would make me very chary of boxing boys' ears for dulness and stupidity, even if I were a village dominie in no dread of magisterial interference.

Was there not, once upon a time, a nation of savages who were wont to punish what they called idleness in any young man of the tribe, by chopping off his arms at the elbow? I believe I have read something of the kind. If such a nation ever existed, one might wonder why it has not climbed to the top of the tree in the race for pre-eminence among the peoples of the earth. But I, for my part, should be surprised if it had. Good Heavens! what an unpleasant society to be born into, willy nilly! Of course, however, one does not know in what their standard of idleness consisted. Did it include everything less energetic than violent exercise? Then the race, no doubt, became extinct from internal combustion in the course of half-a-dozen generations after the establishment of such a custom; and a good thing too. But, if otherwise, who drew the line between idleness and activity? Could not a comely lad, in the spring-time of life, saunter into the banana groves with his arm round the portly waist of a dusky maid except at the peril of his limbs from

the elbow downwards! Such tyrannous decrees were the death of love. It is, therefore, probable that the race wasted away as effectively as if all its members were devoted admirers of Schopenhauer and his opinion, that the world is so bad a sphere, that you really ought on no account to marry, and bring new-born little innocents into the midst of its trials and afflictions.

To my mind, there is no real idleness among us except misdirected effort. Of that there is, to be sure, any quantity. But it cannot be helped. It is as inevitable a prelude to successful effort as pain is to pleasure, or pleasure to pain. To eliminate it were like depriving the soul of that debased encumbrance, the body. It must be with us always; nor need it be censured inordinately, or vilified. Indeed, it gives much interest to life, the lack of which we should miss sadly. It may be a culpable confession; but I must admit that I work the better for seeing a knot of unoccupied men, or boys, or gossiping wives grouped on the village green in front of my house. It is the stimulant of contrast. On the other hand, my brain is paralysed in the midst of a great city like London or New York. The activity there is so bewildering, absorbing, and loud, that I cannot persuade myself that there is any need for me to join in the general energy. I prefer to thrust my hands into my pockets and wander aimlessly among all these busy-bodies, with a mind as dead within me as if I had leased my soul to some one else for a while.

This, I fancy, is the true estimate of idleness. It cannot be a reproach, because it is the necessary complement of activity.

NEW WIMBLEDON.

THE rifleman who forms the resolution of visiting New Wimbledon, will have the melancholy satisfaction of a glimpse of old Wimbledon on his way. Yonder rises the hill, coming into sight just after the train has steamed past the velvet lawns, where past or present masters and mistresses of the pleasant mysteries of lawn-tennis, are practising with ball and racquet. There is the hill, fringed with villas and gardens; and, in the distance, is still to be made out the tall flagstaff, about which once gathered all the pleasant sociability of camp and rifle range. Farewell,

old Wimbledon, where no more the white tents shall give hospitable welcome to all the world.

The train whirls on, through a pleasant country, with fields in the fresh green of the coming crops, hedgerows and plantations getting on their summer livery, and groups of houses, which, like pools on the level sands, announce the approaching tide of great London's increase. Then the wooded slopes of Esher and Claremont come into sight, with Sandown, pleasantest of race-courses, spread out in full view, its stands and balconies all empty now, and the grassy turf, smooth as a bowling green, stretched out below. On the other side, the silent Mole worms its course through lush meadows towards the Thames. At Weybridge, we come to sandy heaths, and pine barrens, and the line is cut through great banks of the whitest and finest of drifted sands; and then we are presently at Woking station, where the once Dramatic College is replaced by what looks like a London suburb. Beyond, rise the gloomy towers of the great prison—now the silent abode of hundreds of unhappy women, but soon, we are told, to be converted into a military barracks. Nor is the tall ventilating shaft of the County Asylum, a little further on, a vastly cheerful sight.

Brookwood comes next, where the white tombs of the city of the dead are scattered among shrubberies and grassy lawns; and a silent train sweeps gloomily towards us, bearing back its load of mourners, leaving their dead to their last, long sleep.

And Brookwood, for the present, is the station for New Wimbledon, though the navvies are busy upon the little branch line, which is presently to take everybody to the heart of the Volunteer camp. There is no need to ask the way. The white tents gleam on yonder hill, and here is the good old Basingtoke Canal, its banks all frilled and fringed with luxuriant growth, and the track of its towpath almost lost in verdure. It has borne us company, indeed, for some little distance along the railway, and just now we passed a pleasant wood, the fresh, green canopy of which was reflected in the still waters—a wood which, great boards informed us, was practicable for building purposes, and which bears the suggestive names of the Hermitage Wood, and Folk's Orchard. The original hermit was a brother from Guildford Friary, who founded here a house of

retreat — and this Hermitage still exists in the form of a pleasant country mansion, of which the days of seclusion are rapidly drawing to a close.

A pretty, high-arched bridge carries one fork of the road over the canal, where there is a lock, cool and tranquil, the water plashing freely through the black and weathered sluices; while, beyond, an old barge seems to have taken root there, and grown to its moorings. Yet its days of rest are numbered, for the railway men are at work a little further on, and trucks and railway waggons are rumbling over the new bridge.

The high railway embankment, which runs the length of the valley, seems to divide the country into two different regions. On this side the dark and heath-covered hills rise gently towards the new camp. On the other side one does not know what there is; but the sweet jingle of church bells falls melodiously on the ear, as if inviting to a brighter, softer country beyond. And a tall brick viaduct opens the way beneath the railway bank, upon which trains are bustling along to or from Farnham and Aldershot. And that way all the traffic goes, the one-horse shay, the briskly-driven tradesmen's carts, the hansom cab, that intrepid pioneer of civilisation, and the family carriage, with the fat, sleek horses.

Well, the country beyond the arch is still heath and common, but the well-frequented road leads to a scattered village, Pirbright by name, while at some distance apart, stands the church, from the tower of which the bells are sounding their pleasant chimes. A breezy, furzy country stretches out in the direction of Guildford, and there is Worplesdon on the way, with handsome church and roadside inn, and village green, all retired from the world, in pleasant, country quietude.

But our way is quite in another direction. Over the quaint little canal bridge, and by a path that strikes across the heather, with plashy little patches here and there, where the dark waters of some tiny rill filter through moss and lichen, in many a treacherous little swamp. The scene is wild and a little forbidding; but on reaching the brow of the first rise, the union jack fluttering from its staff, and the white tents of the Red Cross knights below, give a little life to the scene. And over in the valley yonder rise more white tents, a good-sized camp, indeed, where seven hundred or more of the regulars from

Aldershot are lying under canvas. And there targets are set up against the hill-side, and the rattle of a pretty constant fire of rifles comes echoing up the hills, mingled with bugle calls, and marked at intervals by the gruff bark of a big gun, somewhere among the distant heaths.

And here, close at hand, under the Red Cross, is the field-hospital of the force, where, happily, casualties are as yet unknown. But New Wimbledon is further still, up by the Engineers' camp, which crowns the more distant ridge. Yes, it is a wild waste country this, with black and moorish wastes stretching into the distance, yet with green patches here and there, and gradually in course of reclamation, with hedgerows and green fields invading the borders of the waste. And a wild, windy place it must be in winter!

"You may well say that," remarks a red-coated Engineer, who is making tracks across the heath. "And we ought to know, for we've been camped here all the winter. And of all the queer pitches give me Biale Common. Salisbury Plain isn't a patch upon it, nor yet Dartmoor."

But coming to the Engineers' camp, the result of all their plans and measurements is evident in the great earthworks that stretch across the black, heathy plain. A wide plateau, almost level, extends in front of these butts; and in winter it is spongy enough, no doubt; but the ground is fast drying up, and where the heath comes to be worn away, there will be a little dust, perhaps. But it is a capital range, after all, with plenty of room for expansion; and there does not seem to be any prospect of the march of building speculations driving the Association from its quarters, as the Red Man is driven from his to seek fresh hunting-grounds in wilder regions.

From the level of the dark plain, which is terminated by the butts, rises a knoll of greener hue, and surrounded by a belt of land, which has been partly reclaimed from the wilderness; and on the summit of the knoll stands the building, it seems to be the identical building, formerly at old Wimbledon, which forms the headquarters of the Volunteer camp. From this knoll there is a noble view all round the horizon. The Chobham ridges close the view towards Aldershot and Farnham; and then the Hog's Back carries on the line, its regular outline giving the curious

chalk-ridge the appearance of some gigantic artificial earthwork. The ridge breaks away, showing where the river Wey cuts through the hilly barrier at Guildford, and then we see the heights that are crowned by Saint Martha's lonely chapel; and so on to the imposing crest of Boxhill, and the rolling downs above Leatherhead and Epsom. There is a haze over the Thames valley, and on that side nothing is distinctly to be made out; but the wide horizon is continued all round the compass, till we return to our Ohobham Ridges, and the muttons that feed thereon.

The air, too, corresponds with the freedom of the prospect, fresh, pure, and invigorating. Nor is the scene any longer dark and lowering, for the sun shines out, and the cloud masses are piled in snowy heights in the bright blue sky; grass, and moss, and freshly-springing heather also catch the radiance, and the underlying blackness is hidden from view. It is a picture of peace and war. Yonder are the clustered tents of the soldiers, and the rattle of musketry and the boom of cannon are in the air, with the sounds of military music. But here the larks are warbling, the peewits drive past with shrill cries, and all round the cuckoo repeats his note—*as, indeed, is to be expected.* For,

In May, he sings all day.

A little below, the big pavilion of the refreshment contractors takes its stand, with fragmentary announcements here and there of refreshing drinks, not, alas, as yet available; and scattered about are the portable properties of the old Wimbledon camp, the tram waggons that rolled from point to point, and that will, no doubt, perform the same duties here, with wooden huts and a crowd of miscellaneous objects, all redolent of old Wimbledon. Close to headquarters, the platform of the future New Wimbledon station is already completed, and the line, still all in the rough, can be traced sweeping down, with a cutting here and there, into the valley below.

As to Bisleigh itself, which gives its name to heath and common herabouts, it lies some mile and a half further away. No, there is nothing remarkable at Bisleigh, which consists of a few scattered houses, and an ancient church, near which is a mineral spring, which once had a reputation, and is known as St. John's Well. No very remarkable people seem to have lived there, or to have died there, and had monuments erected to their memory. It

belonged to the Zouche family once, who obtained important grants from the Crown of manors and lands in this neighbourhood, at the time of the Reformation. Yet the place had a narrow escape of being the retreat of a once celebrated, if not illustrious, character. Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, received the grant of the reversion of the manor, which the Zouches held only by a life tenancy, at the hands of her Royal lover. This was in 1671, when Barbara was in the heyday of her charms and favour. But her Royal lover died; his line was driven from the house. Other monarchs came who knew not Barbara; but still she held on to her chance of Bisleigh, and got it at last, when she was old, and fat, and neglected. That was in 1708, and she only lived to the next year; and if she ever came to Bisleigh she did not stay there long.

Beyond lies Ohobham, as quiet and secluded a village as can be imagined, where there is an interesting church, with some quaint features. The Gordon Boys' Home is not far distant, in the neighbourhood of which are traces still to be found of that camp at Ohobham—almost prehistoric now—which was the precursor of our modern camps of instruction, and about which John Leech and the wits of "Punch" poked good-natured fun, in the early Mark Lemon era, before the Crimean War. And that was when "Brown Bess" was the chosen arm of the British troops, percussion locks a quite modern innovation, and when the recruits' front teeth were specially examined with reference to their use in biting off the ends of cartridges. Further in that direction is Bagshot, with its heath, once famed for highwaymen; and Frimley and Sandhurst are not far to seek on the other side of those formidable Chobham ridges.

While we have been gazing the workmen have knocked off for dinner, and the quietude of the military quarters indicates that a similar occupation is there in progress. And this is a fitting opportunity to visit the butts themselves, involving a lonely walk across the wild and blasted heath, where a gibbet would be an appropriate ornament, or which might be a fit rendezvous for the witches in "Macbeth." The great earthbank looms high and formidable now, with a lower bank in front, behind which are screened the brick huts of the markers, all solid and well constructed. And over there, leaning against the bright red wall of a

store, or magazine, are the targets of the future, enjoying a fresh coat of white paint—targets which will decide the fate of many a gallant struggle, and whose bulls and magpies will be the totems of the successful competitor for the Queen's guineas, and the rifle championship of the year.

It is curious to note, too, that although we seem to have climbed a good many hills, we have reached a not much higher level than the top of the railway embankment, for turning that way a train can be seen, apparently skimming along the edge of the heath, although a good mile and a half away.

But the tents of the Volunteer camp will lie rather higher than this, about the central knoll of headquarters, where the fields have a gentle slope towards the zone of the rifle ranges, and presently the scene will be busy and gay enough, with, let us hope, much of the gaiety and charm of old Wimbledon. There is plenty of scope for ornamental gardening here; but amateurs must be prepared to bring their own mould with them, unless they are able to break up and remove an intractable crust of hard-bake, on which nothing will grow but heaths and mosses. But beneath this is a light, but excellent sandy soil, in which shrubs and flowers flourish famously.

Perhaps some—who are quartered in the Camp, and whose eyes may grow a little tired of the wild and shaggy country of heath and ridge—may pay a flying visit to the rich meadow-land and shaded tortuous lanes that lie about the banks of the old river Wey. The best introduction to this country is from Woking station. Woking, itself, is a dull, featureless village, although the church has some good points about it. But, from Woking station, the road leads pretty directly southwards, to a long, winding lane, called, appropriately enough, White Rose Lane.

Whether the name is as ancient as those early Plantagenets, or later Tudors, to whose ancient home it leads, it would be difficult to say; but it would be vain now to ask for the Palace. The Royal mansion has long since disappeared, and its materials have been utilised in a handsome, substantial, old house known as Park Farm, the way to which lies across Hoe Bridge; but the moats and foundations of the old Royal residence can still be traced, and its memory is preserved in Old Hall Barn and Old Hall Copse, which are close to the modern farm buildings. It is a pleasant, secluded spot, enfolded by the softly-flowing stream.

In the time of Edward the Third, this moated manor house was occupied by Edward of Woodstock, the King's sixth son, one branch of whose line of descendants, ever marked by persistent misfortune, was extinguished by Henry the Eighth in the person of that great Duke who speaks to us through Shakespeare:

When I came hither I was Lord High Constable
And Duke of Buckingham; now, poor Edward
Bohun.

Again, we find Woking Manor in the possession of Margaret Beaufort, who had espoused, in second nuptials, a younger brother of the house. And Margaret, the mother of the Tudors and the founder of their high fortunes, transmitted Woking, with other vast possessions, to her grandson, Henry the Eighth, who was a frequent visitor here in the early part of his reign. He was here in 1515 with the Archbishop of York; and here was brought a missive from the Court of the Roman Pontiff, announcing that the Archbishop had been chosen Cardinal. And henceforth he was to be known as Cardinal Wolsey.

It was a rich manor, too, in those earlier days, and among the dues that were paid to its Plantagenet lord, were seventy cocks and hens at Christmas, valued at three halfpence each, and one pound of pepper, valued at one shilling. The pepper tribute is singular and original, and excites speculation. What connection had Woking with the Spice Islands, and how could such a service have originated? Was it some Crusader who brought home a supply from the East of the useful condiment, or some palmer from the Holy Land who set up a grocery store in his native village?

A little lower down this—which is the old course of the Wey—we come upon Newark Abbey and the ruins of the old Abbey church, lying among streams and water-courses, with effects of water and foliage such as artists delight in. But in wet weather there is sometimes too much water, and the lanes may be found submerged knee-deep. Out of the maze of lanes and water-courses, Pirford Church shows here and there as a guiding mark; and an interesting old church it will prove to the antiquarian. And Ripley is the Rome of the district, whither all the sign-posts point—Ripley, pleasantest of English villages, whose extensive green is believed to head the record of village greens, and where, as everybody knows who has ever been a cyclist, there is good accommodation for man and beast.

UNDER WHAT LEADING ?

A MYSTERY.

CHAPTER II.

COUNTRY people are very apt to suppose that neither spring nor summer is of much account in London. There could not be a greater mistake. Why, the flower-vendors' carts are a spring in themselves, and rival any massed, bedded-out blossoms in any gentleman's garden, however well tended. Like gorgeously-coloured butterflies, awakened from their winter sleep, they glide about the streets, nodding their plumed heads and dazzling blossoms in the balmy breeze.

Oh yes! it is balmy enough, even in the Crescent, and as to the row of young linden trees that stand, each in a little sentry-box of its own, all round our curve of pathway and road, they put on their spring dress of tender green, with tiny tufts by way of tassels, just as jauntily as your country trees, every bit.

There are other changes, too, that mark the spring-time for sister Janet and myself. We take out the velvet linings of our Leghorn bonnets, remove the bows to match upon the crowns, and substitute silk or satin instead. Once these changes are made, we always feel that the winter is past, and any little renewal of sleet or frost is a sort of accident. The marigolds keep pace with us, and begin to put forth tiny, round, hard buttons here and there among their fluffy leaves, to show that orange-coloured flowers are on the way; while the tawny wall flowers follow suit.

In the year of which I am writing we had what is called an "early spring." By notes in our respective diaries for the former years, we found that fully a fortnight, if not more, difference lay between the changing of our bonnet-trimmings in the two consecutive years.

I had just remarked upon this fact, and Janet had retorted that certainly the biting east wind of that particular afternoon made our proceedings seem rather ironical. The kettle was singing on the hob; the light was fading. It had chanced to be an "off" afternoon of mine, and we had had a busy time of it stitching and unpicking.

"The winter is past and gone, and the flowers are come again upon the earth," said I, with a glance at the two bonnets that now reposed upon a side table; not in

the least applying the text in question to them, but still feeling that they made a very tolerable show.

"Yes," said sister Janet, giving the kettle a touch, since it seemed rather inclined to tilt upon its nose; "the years run by very quickly in quiet lives like ours. I suppose each one is so like the others that it is hard to distinguish them."

"This has seemed somehow different," I hazarded, a certain shy feeling coming over me as I spoke.

"Ah, yea," said sister Janet, "they have been here nearly a year now," and she waved her knitting pin towards Mrs. Ruthven's side of the Crescent.

"Eight months and a fortnight," I put in, laconically.

"What an accurate mind you have, sister Annie," replied my companion, "I could not have told the exact time."

A certain guilty feeling came upon me. Sister Janet was not of a jealous disposition, but if she only knew how all my heart seemed drawn out of me towards that lonely woman next door; if she only knew the passion of sympathy that had grown up within me, stirring my life to its depths as the angel troubled the pool in the olden time; if she only knew the wonderment, the dreamings, the forebodings that filled my waking hours, the way in which, with all my soul in my ears, I used to strain and listen for sounds in the next house, in the room that was only divided from mine by a shallow wall, and yet might as well have been a hundred miles away for all that I could read of the secrets it buried—what then would sister Janet have said?

If ever you feel drawn to some one who is a stranger to you in this irresistible manner, be sure it is Heaven's way of telling you that you are wanted to do something for them; that some hour is coming in which your hand is destined to clasp theirs, your arm to uphold and strengthen, your sympathy to console and sustain them. I know this now; I did not know it then. I felt the influence about me and around me, but I did not know the why or the wherefore of it. I was led blindly towards I knew not what. My whole life, in some strange sort, seemed changed and renewed. Its passionless calm was stirred. A passing glance at the fair-haired boy, a sight of the pale, stately mother at the window—such trifles as these marked a day as with a white stone; sent me thrilling and trembling on my way;

kept me waking and wondering in the silent hours of the night. Thus had it been with me through the long winter. But the days that were so short, and the nights that were so long, had brought me no new knowledge. Sometimes the boy would disappear for days together. Then the window was seldom without a watcher, or we would see Mrs. Ruthven set out in the morning, and only return as the dusk was falling, like a grey veil over the Crescent; a grey veil pierced here and there by the shimmer of a star showing bright in the frosty air.

"There is a great crush of business on just now," would sister Janet say, at such times; then perk her head, and pucker up her mouth. "They are killing that young fellow, whoever they are," she would say, indignantly.

Something was evidently wearing him out strangely; for, when we did see him, he would look wan and worn, his eyes deeper and darker than ever, his cheek pale, his temples hollow.

"Life in these days is a perfect Juggernaut!" sister Janet would say, still full of righteous indignation.

I used to say nothing.

Queer fancies would come over me—wicked fancies, maybe; and the echo of a footstep that oftentimes paced the floor until the church behind the Crescent chimed the small hours of the morning, seemed to trample on my heart, crushing it.

But all this was in the winter. And was I not writing of balmy spring? Had we not been putting spring linings in our bonnets? And was not Amelia about to bring in the tea? I say "about," because I am not sure that tea was ever brought in at all.

Sister Janet had moved to the window, and was about to pull down the striped chintz blind, when she gave a sharp sort of cry that brought me to her side in a moment. There, out in the grey dusk, was the tall, dark figure of Mrs. Ruthven. She was standing by—no, clinging to—the gate at the end of the narrow, flagged pathway that led from the road to the porch.

"Go to her! Go to her!" cried sister Janet, wringing her hands one in the other.

But I seemed rooted to the spot. It was as if something I had long expected had, at last, come to pass. Then, while I hesitated, benumbed, as it were, by the intensity of my own feelings, we saw her

move slowly and painfully up the pathway, reach the bottom step, and then sink down, a dark heap, against the white stones.

It seemed but a moment before I was by her side, had rung a frantic peal at the house-bell, had raised the fallen head upon my lap, and was sobbing over the death-pale face that was nigh as white as the widow's cap that clipt it round. A strange way, truly, to be going on about a complete stranger to me; and yet a way over which I had no control. That wondrous feeling we are all conscious of at times—the conviction that the thing that moves us has all happened before—was powerfully impressed upon me. I felt no astonishment when a gaunt woman, with a face like a hatchet, bent over the two of us, lifted Mrs. Ruthven as easily as though she had been a child, and muttering to herself, "It's the old story, the old story, all the time," half led, half carried the poor lady into the house, and, in the twinkling of an eye, had her laid on a shabby lounge that stood behind the parlour door; had her bonnet off, the neck and bosom of her dress unfastened; jerked herself out of the room, and jerked herself in again with some water and a sponge, and began to moisten the marble brow and pallid cheek of her mistress.

A prompt and unsentimental person, certainly, and one more given to deeds than words.

So at last I was within the walls of the house upon which I had cast so many longing glances. With one look round, I took every detail in—books, books, books, in rows one above another; the shelves of plainest deal, their freight evidently a precious one. By the window—so placed that the light fell full upon it—was a small table, holding a tin case of water-colours, a stand of brushes, a large magnifying-glass, and a high pile of cabinet photographs.

"That is how it is I see her sitting in the window so often; she is trying to eke out their small income in any way she can."

A mist came over my eyes at this, blurring the white face upon the pillow to my sight. I held the hand that lay in mine closer. I had fancied, wondered, wearied. Now I was to know, at least, something of the life that had grown so dear to me, yet had been as some beautiful veiled statue to my eyes.

With a deep sigh, as of one obliged to

return to life, yet wearied of its burden, Mrs. Ruthven opened her eyes. They rested on me long and questioningly, entirely without wonder at my presence, and not at all as though she looked upon a stranger.

"How kind and good you look!" she said, at last. Then she added: "I have often thought so. I am glad you have come, very glad."

"So am I glad to be here."

I tried to speak quietly and restrainedly; but my lips quivered, and the tears rose in spite of me.

"Do not be so sorry for me," she answered, with a pitiful little smile. "There is nothing very much the matter, after all. Long walks always take it out of me, and I went quite too far to-day, didn't I, Hannah?"

Hannah growled out something within herself, of which I could only catch the last words: "Miles and miles too far."

A faint blush rose to Mrs. Ruthven's cheek.

"I am much better now," she said, rising from the couch, and standing, tall and pale, before me. "A-h! My locket!"

It had fallen at her feet, and flown open with the force of the fall. Little women have some advantages in life; one is that they can stoop quickly and easily. I raised the locket in an instant, and there it lay open on the palm of my hand, showing me the face of an angel—a child of some five years, with the most pathetic eyes, the bonniest curls, the sweetest, smiling mouth.

"It is—your son?" I said, timidly, as she took it from me.

"Yes," she said, "my boy Malcombe—many years ago. He is now quite a young man, as you have seen, I doubt not. Most people notice Malcombe"—this with a fitful smile—"but he is not much at home just now; his time is not his own. Young men have to work very hard in these days, if they mean to make their way."

She had turned away from me, and was slightly moving the photographs on the table by the window; while, to my extreme consternation, the hatchet-faced one was making wonderful grimaces and gestures at me from the open door. Unfortunately for her, there was a small mirror in an angle of the window, and with one glance at its surface, Mrs. Ruthven took in the state of affairs.

"It was so kind of you to come—but, I must not keep you now. I am nearly well again—"

The "dribbling sorrow" of poor old Lear seemed ready to choke me. Had I only gained the coveted citadel to be expelled! Was this to be my first and last visit to Mrs. Ruthven? Were weeks and months of watching and waiting to count for nothing?

I felt myself dismissed—and yet it was so hard to go.

I felt that the eye of hatchet-face was upon me, and an encouraging eagerness in its glitter.

"I may come again, may I not?" I began bravely enough; then, as Mrs. Ruthven looked me gravely and silently in the face, I stammered, lamely enough, "just to ask for you, just to let my sister,—who is so anxious about you—know how you are—"

A sudden sweet smile stirred the pale, beautiful lips. Mrs. Ruthven laid her hand a moment on my shoulder: "Yes," she said, "come and see me again, come some morning; I'm sure we like the same books—we can talk them over—" A pretty gesture of the alim, white hand dismissed me; and I turned to go—but I was beckoned back. "You have been so good to me, she said, "so good and kind— Thank you—my dear—"

I seemed to be in a kind of maze all the rest of that day. I found myself turning an almost deaf ear to sister Janet's comments upon the fact that, in her alarm, she had come out into the garden without putting on her cross-over; and her fears as to the ultimate results. Each time this subject was touched upon, Amelia ejaculated—"Lor, m'em!" lifting hands and eyes; but all enthusiasm seemed dead in me, all earnestness absorbed in the house next door. Every echo of sound I could catch set my nerves a-quake. I seemed part and parcel of a pale-faced, weary-eyed woman's life and sorrows. What was the secret of the mother's sorrow? Why, oh, why! was the dark-eyed, golden-haired boy so seldom seen? Why was the tea so temptingly set out; the room made to look its poor best—and all in vain? Why did I hear such heavy, lagging footsteps, making faltering way up the steep stairs, at hours when all the world was sleeping? Was it fancy, or did I hear, and that more than once, a low, wailing cry, a lamentation, bitter and prolonged?

The Crescent was a common-place neighbourhood enough; yet, within the walls of one of its unpretending houses, a tragedy was being enacted, a pitiful drama, dragging its weary length—a human heart, passionate, loving, faithful, was slowly breaking.

It will be seen by all this that I shrank from again visiting Mrs. Ruthven, unasked. It would be difficult to say why, unless it was that the remembrance of some fancied reserve of manner on her part held me back. Almost daily I saw her sitting in the window, bending over her painting. Many times and oft I saw her watching for "golden locks," as sister Janet used to call the boy. Many nights I noticed the patch of light upon the narrow, sloping lawn; often I had put my own gas out, and the patch of light, that told me she kept vigil, was skimming still. But the longing to see her nearer, and to hold speech with her, was burning within me; and I have great faith in lencing bringing forth opportunity.

One morning, as I passed, she beckoned to me. For a moment I thought I might be mistaken, but the gesture was repeated, and a moment later she had opened the door herself, and stood waiting me. I hardly know how the time passed. Mrs. Ruthven was one of those people, one meets with sometimes, whose companionship has a charm that sets time at defiance. We talked of books, of work, of art—of anything in fact, except her boy. We neared the subject once or twice, but she glanced off from it. Yet I am very sure that he was present in both our thoughts. Many times I saw her finger the locket that hung upon her breast, and I knew—I knew—

I could not help expressing my astonishment at the amount and variety of her reading. "Yes," she said, feverishly, "I am never unoccupied, I am always busy. I like books that claim one's whole thought and attention, that must be thought about, if they are to be understood. Then there is my painting. Oh! I could not bear to be idle, I should go mad; constant occupation, that is the only thing—"

Then she stopped suddenly.

Shortly after this, I left her—but only to return the next day, and the next, and the next after that. In spite of the sorrow that I always felt underlay everything, I can look back upon it now, and say it was a happy time. The companionship of

a rarely beautiful and highly cultured mind must always be that.

Then there came a terrible episode.

Going over to see Mrs. Ruthven one day about noon, I found the house-door unlatched, and—an indiscretion perhaps on my part—pushed it gently open and went in. I knew that my friend had grown to be glad of my coming. I loved to see the quick, sweet smile of welcome that was ever her greeting to me. I went along the lobby, and reached the threshold of the parlour door, which stood half open. There my feet seemed to become rooted to the floor; I longed to retreat the way that I had come, yet felt powerless to move.

Mrs. Ruthven was seated in a low chair, by the fireplace. On his knees beside her, thrown in all the abandonment of sorrow on her breast, her arms encircling him, her tears streaming down upon his upturned face, was the boy Malcombe. Bright have I called him—beautiful to look upon? Ah, whither had brightness and beauty fled now! His eyes were sunken and dull, his cheeks haggard and colourless; even the curly locks that lay against his mother's shoulder seemed to have lost their gloss.

His arms were round her neck; he sobbed as he spoke.

"You are the only one who never fails me—the only one—the only one!"

"My darling—my darling," she answered, and oh, the anguish in her voice! "I could never change to you; you are always the same to me, so dear—so dear! A mother's love is like Heaven's love, it knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning; only come back to me, only think of the father who was so proud of you."

What business had I listening to the outpourings of a love like this?

With a vague idea of the hatchet-faced one making extraordinary gestures at the top of the kitchen stairs, I passed rapidly out into the sunshine, blinded to its brightness by the tears that flooded my eyes.

I spent a restless, miserable day, a restless, dreamful night. The memory of that night, now long ago, when I saw the fair face of Malcombe Ruthven all flushed and reckless, the lovely eyes wild and blood-shot, kept coming up before me like a vision. Yes; I knew now that it was the widow's son, the dearly-loved boy of whom the father had been once "so proud," who was the centre of that crew gathered about the glittering palace of sin, where the four roads met. I longed to see Mrs.

Ruthven again, yet shrank from the ordeal. At last I summoned up courage to venture.

I found her calm, happy, smiling, in most complete ignorance, evidently, of my having been an unwilling witness of her anguish on the previous morning.

"Fancy," she said, "Malcombe is coming home early to-night. He and I are going to have one of those cosy teas he is so fond of, with all sorts of good things that Hannah knows how to make. Business is slacker just now, and the boy can get away. It makes me very jealous, sometimes, that they keep him from me so much; but young men must work hard in these days, and one ought not to grumble."

Her hands trembled as she arranged some roses and a few delicate sprays of grasses in a tall glass, to be the central object of her little festival. Her face was all aglow, the lips tremulous, and a dewy brightness in the full, dark eyes. No girl, expectant of her lover's coming, was ever half so gay or glad.

It was a piteous sight. I could hardly keep myself in hand; but Hannah, coming in and out, had a stony face that betrayed nothing.

We heard the boy come home, sister Janet and I. We heard his sweet, ringing laugh through the window that was set open, because the autumn evening was as one dropped by summer, and left carelessly behind. The air was soft as velvet. Sister Janet had tea without her cross-over, and we only burned the very smallest fire imaginable—a very baby of a fire. We could catch the ring of voices from next door; jests and merriment were evidently the order of the day. Then came a song, a pretty, simple melody, in which the boy's tenor, and the mother's soft contralto, mingled lovingly. What a happy time it was. How sweet, and, ah me, how short-lived!

After this the old life set in as before. Long, lonely evenings—Mrs. Ruthven never asked me to be with her in the evenings, those were consecrated to Malcombe, or to watching for him, or to walks that lasted for hours, and from which my neighbour came in weary and worn, and over which Hannah shook her head.

"They are keeping that young fellow hard at it, again; they will kill him," sister Janet would say, indignantly.

I made no answer.

Deep down in my heart was dark and

dire foreboding. If it is true, as they say, that a chill shudder tells you some one walks across your grave, then must my destined tomb have lain across a turnpike road.

My outward, daily life went on in the same commonplace way as before. "One, two, three, and four" had to be counted over and over again, as clumsy fingers tumbled over one another, and tripped one another up on the keys; and yet how changed was I in all that lay beneath the surface.

I was conscious, more and more vividly conscious, of being in a state of waiting and of expectation; conscious of all life's pulses beating haltingly and heavily, because of something that was coming, though I knew not what.

It was later than usual, it was darker than usual, and I was returning homewards hurriedly, fearing that sister Janet might be getting anxious.

All at once, at the turn of a street, I stood still, uttered a low cry which it was fortunate no one heard, and hastened forward to meet—Mrs. Ruthven.

"You here?" I said, as we came face to face, and I held out my hand. She passed me by, not rudely, but as though she were unconscious of my presence.

"It has come," I thought to myself.

I cannot tell you why I thought this. Indeed, I did not think it. I knew.

The tall figure, with the simple black dress, and long black veil, passed on. I noticed more than one step aside to let her pass; more than one turn and gaze after her.

What wonder? The death-white face, the great, dark eyes, misty, and unseeing, fixed as those of a sleep-walker—all this I had seen as she passed me.

I followed, overtook her, pressed to her side, took her hand and held it with gentle force. We were just beneath a lamp, and the light shone full upon my face.

For a moment hers changed. A faint smile touched her lips, her eyes looked as if they saw.

"Ah!" she said; "it is you. You are always good and kind. You are coming with me? But we are losing time; we must not do that."

She paced rapidly on, I with her, my arm close in hers. I soon realised that it was only when I spoke to her that she seemed conscious of my nearness. Some-

thing in the set, white agony of her face held me silent.

How long, how long did we pace those unfamiliar streets! How far did we wander I knew not whither! Yet in my companion seemed no indecision, no hesitation, no wavering.

As if led by some unseen hand, she went on, on with relentless purpose, apparently blind to the wondering looks bestowed upon us by those around us.

"Where are we going to, dear?" I ventured to say at last.

She ignored my question; answering to her own thoughts, not to my words.

"I am so glad to have you with me; you are always good to me. I have felt your sympathy near me and around me—even in the dead of night. I knew something was helping me, and making me strong, long before I knew what it was. God is very good."

She could say this—and her life what it was—one long heart-break, one long, weary watching.

On we paced, the streets we traversed growing narrower and more squalid. Here and there we passed groups of men and women, drunken and dissolute; the men blear-eyed and sodden-looking, the women painted and haggard. Yet somehow they hushed their laughter, and the ribald jest was silenced as we passed.

In the midst of this labyrinth of streets, full of gaslight and noise, we crossed the mouth of a little "cul-de-sac," and here, gathered about a street singer, was a better kind of crowd. The woman had a child in her arms, and her voice was thin and wiry, yet not without pathos. What she sang was this:

Some are gone from us for ever,
Longer here they might not stay;
They have reached a fairer region
Far away—far away.

I saw a change pass over Mrs. Ruthven's face. Her lips quivered, and she passed her hand across her brow. That sad refrain seemed to pursue us, "Far away—far away!" Long after we could no longer hear the words of the rest, that cry rose above the stir of many feet, and the distant murmur of the great city, "Far away—far away." Suddenly Mrs. Ruthven gripped my arm close, and turned towards me.

"I have made an idol of my boy—an idol; do you hear! But do not be hard upon me. I have never—had—anything else."

When I come to look back upon this strange episode in my life, I recognise that this was the one only hint I ever had of what had been the life of the woman whom I loved with a passionate tenderness, and knew for so short a time. As I listened to her words, as I met the sad, pathetic, far-off gaze of her dear eyes, my own grew dim, while the lamps all became blurred and dazzled, like so many watery moons. Yet no fear that I should stumble. My companion led me on too firmly for that. It was a long, long while since I had walked so far, or so fast; yet my limbs knew no weariness. I was as one under a spell, lifted out of common life by an experience beyond all precedent.

When and where would this journey of ours end? What was our ultimate destination? Under what leading was this strange companion of mine acting in so strange a manner? That she was under some exceptional and imperative influence I could not doubt. But here my inventive faculty failed me. I could but grope blindly.

"Have you ever been this way before?" I ventured, timidly.

She turned upon me with a gentle sort of pity.

"Only in a dream," she said, and I felt a shudder shake her whole frame, "only in a dream."

By this time we had got into a neighbourhood in which I instinctively felt no lady had any business to be at all. Each moment I feared some open insult would be offered to us. Once, as three half-tipsy fellows reeled round a corner, singing and shouting, my heart gave a heavy thud of fear; but, strange to say, they swung aside to let us pass, one standing, or rather awaying, in the roadway, to stare after my companion with a sort of maudlin awe and wonder.

On, still on, the same white-stricken face by my side; the same misty, unseeing-looking eyes gazing straight ahead; the same untiring footsteps hurrying to I knew not what goal—what ghastly tryst—what terrible bourne—

Suddenly her hand grasped mine with a painful pressure—she drew her breath heavily—and, thus linked together, we turned down a side street; a street dotted here and there with groups of shabby, flaunting women, and shabby, dissipated men; a street which at any other time, I should have shrunk with every nerve in my body from entering, but which now

seemed as but a natural part and phase of a dream.

Half-way down this street Mrs. Ruthven stood a moment irresolute; then rapidly broke away from me, crossing to where, round about a doorway, a crowd talked and gesticulated, and at which a policeman stood on guard.

Again, I was conscious of the strange influence possessed by my companion. This way and that, the eager and excited people fall back to let her pass, I following on her heels.

"You can't pass in, m'arm," said the policeman, as she reached his side; "there's been an accident in this here house—a bad 'un too—a young fellow's been and shot himself dead—"

"It is my son!" she answered, with an indescribable gesture of dignity and anguish, while a confused murmur of pity and horror rose from the crowd behind.

It appeared to me that the man let her pass, in spite of himself—I following closely. Then he turned to face the excited people, who shoved and crushed, and tried to look over his shoulders and under his arms, after the manner of a London crowd.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Ruthven mounted a narrow stairway. From above several people craned their necks to stare at her. From below some looked up. On the landing stood a tall, handsome young fellow, whose dress betrayed him to belong to what are called the "better classes." He shrank back against the corner of the wall, turning his face aside, and making as though he would go down when we had passed.

But Mrs. Ruthven had her hand upon his arm in a trice.

"So you are here," she said, speaking in a dead, even voice that made one shudder to hear. "You are here to look upon your work, for it is yours, as you know. I am glad that you are here—I am glad to meet you. There is something that I want to say to you. You have triumphed, you have taken him from me. All my life I shall go mourning for him. All my life will be empty for lack of him. There can be no sadder creature than I shall be—none—on the face of all God's world; but I would rather stand here to-day, as I do now, a broken-hearted, lonely woman, than be you, Stanley Dennison, with the mark of Cain upon your brow—"

Placing her hand against his breast, she had pressed him

backwards, so that he could but face her. Her eyes glowed like burning coals; her voice rang through the silent house. She was terrible in her intensity. Those from below had come up; those from above had come down. The two figures were the centre of an eager, silent crowd. Bad women and bad men were there; yet even they seemed to recoil from the shrinking, pallid man in the corner—he who had led the widow's son through devious and crooked ways, even unto death itself.

"You have murdered him! Murdered him! Murdered him!" cried the mad-dened woman. "You have taken him from me, left me desolate. I went down upon my knees to you once; he would have come back to me then, if you would have let him alone—but you would not, you would not—"

Her voice fell to a hoarse whisper, her head sank upon her breast. The remembrance of the ordeal still to be faced came upon her.

"Where is he?" she said. "Will some one take me to him?"

They led her in—these bad people who were so much more tender and good than better people might have been—and there, in a poor and narrow chamber, with the blind pinned askew across the window, lay all that was left to her of her son.

A white cloth, blood-bedabbled at the lower edge, lay upon the face. The long, slender outline of the figure was well defined beneath a flimsy sheet.

Mrs. Ruthven knelt by the bed, and, in spite of more than one detaining hand, pulled the face-cloth from the ghastly thing it covered. I say ghastly because the lower part of the jaw was shot away, the little, silky, golden moustache stiff with blood.

"My dear, my dear," I said, trembling, and scarce knowing what I did. "Come away, oh, come away, my dear!"

She looked up at me, and then I saw that the noble mind wandered, the brain was reeling from a shock too heavy to be borne.

"Come away!" she said, and smiled. "Come away and leave the boy when I have just found him! He is tired. He wants rest—sleep—quiet. I will hold him, as I always do, as I have done so often."

Some pitiful hand had drawn the kerchief over the shattered mouth. Only the calm, beautiful brow, the golden locks, the half-closed eyes beneath their long lashes were visible. She gathered the still form in her arms, drew the golden head to her

breast, and bowed her face upon that of the dead.

"It is mother," she crooned, "it is mother's arms that are round you. Try to sleep—my boy—my boy."

The women in the room broke out sobbing; the men turned aside.

Oh, pitiful and awful sight; the poor, dazed mother holding the dead boy in her arms, the boy dead by his own hand!

While I stood there bewildered, my hand upon that dark, kneeling figure, from whose prone head the black veil fell to the ground, there was a stir, and new, strange voices on the stairs, in the passage, in the room.

"It is the police inspectors," said some one near; and a man in uniform, with two others following, stepped up to the bedside.

"Clear the room," said the first comer, in an authoritative manner. "Stay, what is this?"

He touched the long veil. I stretched my arms over her.

"She is his mother," I said, and could say no more for tears.

"It don't matter who she is; she must go."

A great horror was upon me. Something in the drooping attitude of the kneeling figure by the bed sent a chill shudder through my veins. My arms fell heavily to my sides.

"None of this," said the man, harshly, unheeding of the murmurs that began to be heard among those around. "I tell you, whoever she is, she must go."

I lifted the head that lay beside that of the dead boy. The face was ashen, the lips livid, the eyes— Ah, Heaven! they would never look on me again.

"She has gone!" I said, speaking in what voice I know not, surely not my own. "She has gone; but at a higher call than yours."

There, I have told you my story; and now you know why I could not bear to hear the woman singing out in the shadowy night:

Some are gone from us for ever,
Longer here they could not stay;
They have reached a fairer region
Far away—far away.

I have often asked myself Under what Leading Mrs. Ruthven took that strange journey to her dead son. But I have found no answer.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "*Muriel's Marriage*," "*Joan Vellacot*,"
"*A Faire Damsell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LIII.

WILT THOU HAVE THIS MAN?

ST. JOHN'S church only boasted of one bell; and, true to the rules of more elaborate music, it was the length of the interval which settled the grave or gay of the occasion.

The rope being pulled vigorously, the wedding-bell, therefore, always sounded as if it were in a great hurry, and wished the bride and bridegroom not to keep it too long waiting and ringing.

But use is part of our second nature; and it was only the irreverent stranger who spoke slightingly of the little tinkle.

On this occasion Miss Clara Heaton was very much fussed; it was difficult to be here, there, and everywhere, and more difficult still to keep an eye on Herbert. The crowd had gathered early, and swarmed into the church, packing itself considerably like a herring-barrel, and making the best of having to wait a long time by various whispered remarks on the floral decorations, and small pieces of information about the bride and bridegroom.

Mrs. Smith, senior, who was fanning herself vigorously with her pocket-handkerchief, as she held Tommy up to see his elders' heads and bonnets, remarked, in a loud whisper, to Mrs. Tubbs, that she hadn't had time to cook the dinner, and had hurried away, only just eating a dry crust, which was, in her opinion, "a poor substitute for the stomach." 'Liza's mother, who was not well versed in long words, accepted this statement without questioning, and added that she had had a bit before starting, because mother didn't like waiting; but she knew Mrs. Black had only warmed up a potato-pie, for Miss Heaton had told her there would be no getting into the church if they were late.

"There, now," whispered Mrs. Smith, beginning to wipe Tommy's face anyhow, without regard to the bearings of his features, thereby making him whimper, "I declare Miss Heaton has put off the mothers' meeting this afternoon on account of the wedding; but Mrs. Eagle Bennison wished us to come to Court Garden to-

morrow to have a tea and a bit of talking to."

"Mrs. Eagle Bennison," retorted Mrs. Black, "is wonderful with her tongue; she can expound Scripture a deal better than Miss Heaton, who always stops every minute as if she were trying to swallow cherry-stones; but Mrs. Eagle Bennison, she is never at a loss, like, and can explain every word in the Bible, so as to draw tears from the eyes. That she can."

"Well, now, does she really?" said Mrs. Smith, who was not given to going to meetings, and was not very partial to the mistress of Court Garden. "She asked me to come to join some society about the 'training of the 'dustrial poor;' but my husband says I'm not to go trapesing about to meetings; 'taint respectable, he thinks. But, lor', every one does it now, I tell him. He's behindhand, that he is."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Black, "there's Mr. Heaton coming to tidy up the bits of flowers. No, it ain't—it's young Johns; his long skirt is fine, and quite new."

"That's his hassock," corrected Mrs. Tubbs. "But maybe they're coming."

"Look, Tommy, your sister is outside smattering flowers for the lady to walk on, isn't she, darling?"

The excitement was great within the church, and a slight disappointment was felt by the congregation that they could not eat their cake and have it as well; in other words, the crowd within envied the crowd without. One seat on each side next to the entrance had been reserved for the few privileged persons who were to witness both the arrival of the bride and the ceremony in church. These were the servants of Rushbrook House, as of course they would come late on account of the press of work at the bride's home. The little girls who lined the path on each side looked like pink-tipped petals of daisies, and made a very pretty border to the churchyard with their pink frocks, and white hats, and their white baskets filled with white flowers. As the carriages began driving up, a little flutter of excitement thrilled through the daisies, and was communicated to the compact mass behind them. It was a real pleasure to the country folk to see such lovely garments, and to witness the certain bustle and excitement in the various groups that gathered at the gate awaiting the bride's arrival.

Walter Akister had been only too willing to accede to Elva's wish of a quiet wedding. He hated any kind of fuss or publicity, and was anxious enough to have the whole thing over; so no strangers were to be present, for Elva had positively rejected even the offer of her Fitzgerald cousins to see her married. She pleaded her mother's health, and the impossibility of getting any number of people into St. John's. Betta Akister was to be a sort of bridesmaid, and was to walk with Amice behind the bride. Mrs. Eagle Bennison had wondered that a rich man like Mr. Kestell was content with such a simple little affair; but then Elva was so spoilt, and her father humoured her shockingly.

The Squire and his wife came driving up just at the right time, and were received by Lord Cartmel, who was dreamily answering Miss Heaton's remarks about the sudden heat. He had been brought here by Betta, who stood arrayed in white, which colour contrasted painfully with her freckled, fair face.

Mrs. Eagle Bennison was quite equal to the occasion, and at once made everybody feel more cheerful by the constant display of her pearly teeth.

"Now really isn't this sweet and rural, Lord Cartmel? So like the simple wishes of our young pair! The little cottage girls are quite models of propriety; I see how delightful one's flowers look in those picturesque baskets! Our tiny church is quite charmingly decorated, I hear from George Guthrie; by the way, he ought to be here, naughty fellow, he will be late."

"He helped us with this arch," said Miss Heaton; "he has so much time on his hands that one does not mind asking him to do things. Now I think I shall go into church; one's presence prevents the people behaving irreverently."

"Yes, yes, just so. When I thought out the rules of the T.A.P.S., I also wished to inculcate reverence to all that is above. The poor are so apt to forget it. Now, really, I think I shall go in, too. And here are some more ladies. We had better go in together."

At last the Rushbrook carriage was seen driving slowly up the steep road. The two policemen began to clear a way in the outside crowd, who were not allowed to enter the churchyard, though they, of course, offered no interference to a gentleman who suddenly hurried in, hardly noticed in the general excitement, and who resolutely forced himself into a place near

to the church door, within the angle formed by a buttress. He could see here perfectly. Evidently he was not a wedding guest, for he had no favour, and no notice was taken of him.

Hoel did not wish to be seen; but he would come here unnoticed, if possible, to look once more at the woman whom he loved now above all worldly consideration. He must see her once more; he fancied he could tell if she were happy, if, indeed, his cruel desertion had killed her love, and she had been able to find comfort in Walter's unchanging affection. This was the mad wish that seized him—the wish that made him disregard all else. He saw, but took no heed of the crowd, of the pink school children; he heard remarks, but they did not reach his brain. He saw people he knew, but he did not apparently recognise them; and those few minutes of waiting were prolonged in his mind to a long age of intense suffering. There was Walter Akister and his best man stationed close beside him at the church door, but with their backs to him.

The last time he had seen Walter was when the cold, black water was closing over him. It was a very painful thought that he owed his life to him. In his delirium Sister Marie had told him that he had gone over the scene again and again. Should he in after years go over this scene? Should he always have that awful feeling of despair, of mute agony, that seemed to weigh him down physically as well as mentally? Was he really the light-hearted Hoel who had first seen this beautiful landscape. He felt he was a very different being, a man who had no interests, who would, after to-day, retire into the outside life of ordinary routine with no soul in it. For in the long run the study of self becomes very uninteresting, even if that self is out of the common order.

All this came dully before his mind; and then he wondered why he were here, and why he had come to add another torture to his already racked sensations; and meanwhile he looked with hungry eyes toward the triumphal arch under which Elva would walk.

All at once he saw her, and all the strength he had fancied he possessed forsook him, for it was not the old Elva he gazed at, but a pale reflex of the woman whose face he had traced again and again in his mental vision. Through the thin veil he saw her plainly; and even when

she first issued from under the flowery bower, he gazed and gazed again. She was leaning on the arm of her father. They were walking very slowly, for the little girls in shy delight began scattering their flowers before her feet. Elva had known nothing of this arrangement, and for a moment it seemed to pain her; she even paused an instant, and then—was it the strong attractive power of the electricity of love, or why should she have raised her head and suddenly turned her eyes straight towards Hoel? Their eyes met; in Elva's look there was mingled the deep reproach of injured love; in Hoel the saddest and humblest craving for forgiveness that human eyes can express.

Walter Akister had been waiting for the arrival of the bride at the arch to go into the church, and he was just about to do this—having given a glance down the path—when he, too, was arrested by Elva's pause. He turned towards her again, and took a few steps in her direction; but nobody noticed him, for all eyes were fixed on the bride.

Her white face suddenly flushed; her whole frame trembled, and so terribly overcome was she that she paused a moment, and leant more heavily on her father's arm. This unexpected stoppage caused Betta to tread on part of the long train which Amice loosely held, and for a second Walter fancied this was the reason of the whole episode. Then he, too, was made conscious of that electric force, that thought-wave of which we know so little, but which exists; and, turning sharply round in the direction of the bride's eyes, he, too, saw what had unnerved her—the presence of Hoel Fenner.

"Papa, papa," whispered Elva to her father, "he is there! Do you see him? He has come back. I cannot, I cannot go on. You said he never would——"

Mr. Kestell did not pause to analyse any feelings; he felt like a man who has seen in the near distance the tidal wave rushing towards him ready to engulf him; he forcibly drew on his child.

"Elva, dearest, recollect yourself; think of the many eyes on you. For Heaven's sake come on, you cannot stop now. Look! Walter is awaiting you."

The procession began to move on again; the little girls were not even conscious of a hitch, their individual efforts engrossing them. Even the closely-packed on-lookers behind them barely realised more than that the Honourable Miss Akister

had trodden on the white gown, and that Miss Amice looked scared, and dropped the train so that it swept over the white blossoms, collecting them into ungraceful heaps.

Walter by rights should now have been in church; but he cared nothing about appearances, and heeded not the almost audible whisper of his best man to come on.

His brows knitted, and his eyes gleamed with an unnatural look, as he glanced from the bride to Hoel Fenner; the veins started in his forehead, and the blood rushed to his cheeks, so that Elva and her father were close to him before he recollected that he was in public, and that many eyes, even if they were rustic eyes, would now be fixed on him.

"Go in, Walter," murmured Mr. Kestell; his lips were ashy pale.

"Yes, yes; but what business has that fellow here? I will have him turned out. I——"

"It's all right, Akister," again murmured Mr. Kestell. "Go in. You are stopping the way."

"And I will, too, till he is off."

Passion had got the better of him; and Elva, once more pale, gazed in horror at the face of the man she was about to marry.

Even this had happened so quickly, that it was difficult for the onlookers to make anything of it. But impatience to follow the bride now caused the cordon of pink girls close to the church door to be broken, and the bridal party were by this means forced forward in confusion.

In vain Mr. Kestell waved his disengaged arm, and cried, "Keep off!" He was not regarded; and in another second he and Elva, followed by the bridesmaids, found themselves, with little ceremony, walking up the aisle towards the chancel steps, where Mr. Heaton and the archdeacon were waiting to perform the marriage ceremony.

Among the first to force his way in, in spite of opposition, was Hoel; only just in time, however, for the policemen, seeing a commotion, now forcibly cleared the entrance, and managed to bar the way across the open door.

But no policeman could have stopped Hoel from entering. He had been utterly unconscious of Walter's look of hatred, unconscious of everything but of Elva's reproach, a reproach which humbled him to the dust.

"Thou art the man," ran through his ears—"thou, Hoel Fenner; the irreproachable in thine own sight—thou hast done this thing; thou hast ruined a woman's life, her faith, her belief. Why complain that thy punishment is heavy?"

And this punishment was not a small thing to him—it was a living death. He could not blame any one but himself, and he could but repeat again and again:

"Elva, if you had waited; if—— But why should you have waited?"

The marriage service had begun. The wedding guests were ranged in the front seats, and were conspicuous from their fine clothes. George Guthrie had stepped in, as he thought, rather late, through the vestry door, but taking the end seat in the Squire's pew, he waited in some anxiety the appearance of Walter. It surprised him at last when bride and bridegroom seemed suddenly to present themselves at once; and as he turned round he noticed the disturbance at the door.

George, who could see the bride's profile, remarked her pale face, and, nearer to him, the black look and knitted brows of Walter. He could not see Mr. Kestell's face, but evidently the chief actors in the wedding were in a very unusual state of mind.

"Eh, well. What is in the wind now?" thought George, turning over the leaves of his Prayer-book in such an absent-minded way, that Mrs. Eagle Bennison handed him hers, with the right place found, and a look, meaning:

"Oh, George, don't you know? It's because you are a bachelor."

George Guthrie glanced at "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here;" then, without paying much more attention to the words, again fixed his eyes on the small semicircle round Mr. Heaton. "Thirdly, it was ordained," said Herbert Heaton's clear voice, "for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other both in prosperity and in adversity——"

"By Jove, Elva's going to make a fool of herself!" thought George, and placed his hands behind him, as if to do away with the sight of the obnoxious service book. "If there's one thing I hate more than another it's the marriage service under these circumstances."

He would have thought this much more had he known of Hoel's presence at the end of the church.

"Let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace."

George Guthrie actually opened his lips ; but there are many men who wish to say something that is on their minds, but for ever hold their peace.

" Good gracious, I nearly made a scene," he thought, with a sigh of intense relief that his better judgement had prevailed.

Of the people most concerned, only Elva heard every word of the service now proceeding. Walter felt that Mr. Heaton was confoundedly slow, and that he might, for all their sakes, hurry on through this uninteresting service ; but each word fell like the sound of a knell on Elva's ears. It was wonderful she could remain so still, so outwardly immovable ; wonderful that she did not do more than clasp her hands very firmly together. She did not believe Hoel was in church ; but he had been close beside her, he had come back. They—her father, Amice, and Walter—had all said he would never come here again ; they had promised she should never, never see him any more, and yet here he was.

She heard, through all her thoughts, that slow knell of words distinctly. Had she no friend here, no one to help her ? Was she left quite, quite alone ? She suddenly raised her eyes to Herbert Heaton's face, and it seemed to her as if it were the face of an angel : so pure, so good did he look, and so earnest was his tone. She heard, with a new hearing, as he slowly repeated :

" I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it. For, be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful."

Herbert Heaton meant every word he said ; and, as if to impress this more on her mind, Elva fancied that, for an instant, he looked at her searchingly. The secrets of all hearts must one day be disclosed, and in her heart there was a lie. She did not love this man, but another. Unworthy, cruel, he might be ; but she had loved him, and with her to love once was to love always. How could she have consented to do this ? and now, now, it was too late. Before Heaven, she was going to utter a lie. How could she ? But then, how avoid it ? She became suddenly conscious of the hundreds of eyes fixed on her—cruel, pitiless eyes

they seemed to her. She was certain they were looking to see her tell this lie. She saw their impatience and the eagerness in which their owners stretched forward. Was this purgatory ? Were they all fiends, ready with their shout of derision ? Was she going mad ? She clasped her hands tighter. She must steady her thoughts. Herbert Heaton was listening to hear if she would sell her soul for her father's sake. But he, too, had deceived her. Everybody had deceived her, for Hoel had come back.

The pause ended ; and how many thoughts can be flashed through a human brain in a short pause. Herbert Heaton turned towards Walter.

" Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony ? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live ? "

" I will," answered Walter Akister in a clear, impatient, fierce voice.

Yes ; now it was her turn. The judge was calling upon her for the truth. No, it was Herbert Heaton—Herbert, who, like Amice, had always done his duty ; who had nothing to hide, nothing he was ashamed of in his heart.

" As you will answer at the dreadful day of judgement——"

Was Herbert Heaton saying this ? No, no ; not that ; but very slowly and solemnly he was asking :

" Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health——"

Could she—could she do this—this ? Could she tell this lie ; she, who prided herself on truth, even for her father's sake ? No—no, not for his sake ; because his name was unswayed, was honourable. She would not.

" So long as you both shall live."

There was an awful silence in the church. The congregation all strained their necks and their ears to catch the bride's last words, for that was part of the entertainment provided for them. You might have heard a pin drop ; but the figure in white, with the thin veil falling about her in softest folds, never stirred ; only the hands were clasped tightly and the lips firmly closed.

Herbert Heaton bent a little towards her, and, fancying she was nervous, whispered :

"Say, 'I will.'"

Walter, too, turned towards her—love seemed strangely akin to hate—as he, too, whispered :

"Elva, speak ; do you understand !"

Her lips moved. She felt as if she were turning to stone, petrified by the countless eyes that were upon her. She heard the rustle of Mrs. Eagle Bennison's mauve silk dress. She felt Amice come close up to her and whisper her name. She saw her father make a step towards her, with speechless terror written on his face ; and then again the words rang out clearly :

"As you will answer at the dreadful day of judgement."

No one word had ever before so electrified the congregation of St. John's on the Moor as Elva's "No !" which, if low, was startlingly clearly enunciated.

"What nonsense !" muttered Walter. "Heaton, go on, I tell you ; go on."

He made as if he would forcibly take one of her clasped hands ; but only Herbert Heaton saw this. He placed himself gently between them.

"Do you mean this 'No' ?" he whispered, trying even now to shield her if she had made a mistake. "Are you sure ? Do you remember what you are doing ?"

But the strain had been too great. The eyes appeared to her to dart out of their sockets like a hundred flashes of cruel lightning ; the crowd of grinning demons seemed to close her in. She wanted to repeat the words, "before God ;" but she felt tongue-tied, and, without a sound, she fell fainting upon Amice.

The scene of confusion that followed can scarcely be described. Every person started as if to get out of their seat and come to the rescue ; but George Guthrie was ready at once with his command :

"Keep back, keep back, please. The bride has only fainted. She will recover in a few moments."

He was by her side and lifted her in his strong arms before any one had quite recovered from the shock of surprise, and, with the help of Mr. Heaton, they carried her quickly to the vestry ; Amice following, and several other ladies also. Mr. Kestell looked for a moment quite bewildered, as if he did not the least understand what had taken place, till the shy Betta, suddenly seized with compassion, whispered :

"They are looking after her, Mr. Kestell.

It will be all right ; she will be soon better. Won't you sit down ; or——"

Mr. Kestell looked up at her, then round at the excited crowd that was standing up, and covered his face with his hands.

"Is this shame ?" he said in a hoarse whisper ; "public shame ! Oh, it is dreadful."

"No, no," said Betta, not understanding what he could mean. "Elva will come out again, and the service will be finished."

Mr. Kestell shook his head, cast another glance at the people, and hurried suddenly away through the choir and on towards the vestry.

The poor people whispered ; men spoke audibly, much to Miss Heaton's distress. She rose up, and, turning towards the crowd, shook her head vigorously and held up her finger ; but the catastrophe was altogether too great to be received mutely. Suddenly, George Guthrie came quickly out of the vestry, and, facing the people, he said, in his kind voice :

"My friends, go home quietly. Miss Kestell is not well. The wedding will not take place to-day."

Then, going down to Miss Heaton, he said :

"We are taking her to the Vicarage. Will you go and help Amice ?"

The congregation clattered out as if the church were on fire. The truth was, they themselves were burning to tell somebody. In a few minutes the building was empty of all except one man, who was crouching against the wall in the last seat.

"Oh, God," he said, kneeling down and hiding his face, "I shall have to go through the agony again. A man can die more than once, even here."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HERRICK was away two days in London ; he might just as well have stayed at home for all the news he brought back with him. The principal of the big orphanage at which Lois had been educated heard with amazement of her disappearance. She immediately cross-questioned the teachers and pupils of the establishment, with whom Lois was in the habit of corresponding, but with no result. Herrick was sent on a wild-goose chase to the other side of London, by one of the teachers, to the house of an ex-pupil with whom she thought Lois was on intimate terms. Thence he was sent down into Hertfordshire by the ex-pupil to another ex-pupil, married and settled down as a Vicar's wife. But always with the same result. One and all averred that Lois's letters had been infrequent of late, and were absolutely destitute of details respecting herself and her doings. The only scrap of information likely to be of the smallest use which Herrick brought back with him, was the name of the distant cousin, who had from time to time sent Lois a present of a five-pound note as a Christmas-box. But even this sadly lacked individuality. "John White" is not a very distinctive appellation. The address matched the name in vagueness, and ran simply thus :

"TACOMA,
U.S.A."

And these three words and three initials

were all that Herrick had to show for his two days of harass and hard work.

A cablegram to so indefinite a personality as John White of Tacoma was not to be thought of—there might be a score of John Whites in Tacoma, for aught Herrick knew to the contrary. Only one thing remained now to be done, he said to himself, as with a white face with an ugly frown on it he locked himself in his "den," and pushed helter-skelter the accumulated letters of two days into a drawer, and that was to set off for America at once ; find out John White, of Tacoma ; and see if he had received any intimation of Lois's intention of making her home with him ! "Stand on one side now, mother, home, friends, responsibilities great and small, till I get my darling back again," was the thought of his heart.

During the two days of Herrick's absence Lady Joan had shaken off her convalescence, and had gone about the house as of old. Yet not altogether as of old ; her duties, which formerly she had discharged in light, indifferent fashion, were now emphasized and made much of. Indeed, to speak exactly, occupation of some sort or another appeared to be a necessity to her, and she seemed now to shun leisure as at one time she had seemed to court it,

Even Lord Southmoor, feeble of observation though he was, had his attention attracted by what he considered a remarkable trait in her character.

"It makes my head whirl to look at you, Joan, you seem to be always seeing people or writing letters," he said in a tone of feeble remonstrance, as if he feared the family dignity was about to suffer injury at her hands.

Lord Southmoor as a rule was not apt

or aphoristic in his remarks. In conversation he generally sat staring hard and frowning heavily, as if all absorbed in listening. And then he would open his lips and make a little speech, or ask a question altogether wide of the subject in hand.

His remonstrance to his sister had been called forth by the fact that on the second day of Herrick's absence from home, Lady Joan had been closeted the whole morning with an entire stranger; leaving the Earl and his daughter to entertain each other.

That stranger was Ralph Harwood, who responded with as much despatch as possible to Lady Joan's summons.

Ralph had not the refined appearance to which his sister owned. Lady Joan quickly enough took his measure as that of a young farmer of the old school; that is to say, a man lifted above the farm-labourer class by a better education, but willing at any moment to let himself down to the level of the farm labourer, and do farm-labourer's work, if by so doing his land would be better tilled, and his live stock better cared for.

In type he was florid and Saxon, tall and sturdy, with hair of a darker tint than Lucy's, and eyes that had an anxious, worried look in them. He looked miserable and ill at ease as Lady Joan laid stress upon what she called his extraordinary conduct in taking his sister away in so hurried a fashion. "Where is she now," she asked; "what is she doing? She can come back to me here if she is so disposed."

"Not possible, my lady," answered Ralph, "she has been ill in bed ever since she has been at home. It's my belief——" Here he broke off abruptly, then added, a little bitterly: "What with one thing what with another I scarcely know which way to turn."

Lady Joan looked at him steadily for a moment. No, it was not the beggar's whine for charity, but the real outcry of a harassed man.

She tried to lead him on to speak of his own and Lucy's early days. She began by recounting the story of the two occasions on which the girl had walked in her sleep while at Longridge.

"The first occasion she seemed to remember perfectly, and could give a clear account of," the lady went on to say, "but the second appeared to have entirely faded from her memory."

"It has been so before, my lady," said Ralph; "more than once she has got out of bed and walked about the house, and I have guided her back to her room and helped her into bed, and when the morning has come she has known nothing of what she has done. It is a terrible affliction, this habit of hers."

"In what way terrible?" asked Lady Joan, eyeing the man keenly.

A shade of embarrassment passed over his face, his manner grew less frank. "Well, my lady, she will not be able to get her own living for one thing. No lady would engage her as maid if she knew she had this habit."

"No," said Lady Joan, "that goes without saying. No lady would engage a girl with such an undesirable habit; but I should have thought good medical advice might do something for it, that is unless," here she bent a scrutinising glance on Ralph, "it runs in the family."

He flushed crimson, but said never a word. His embarrassed silence seemed to admit the fact.

"Pardon my enquiries," pursued Lady Joan, in a kindly, condescending manner, which she rarely adopted, but which, when assumed, never failed to make an impression on her listener. "Believe me, I am most desirous to be of service to you and to your sister, in whom already I feel deeply interested."

And then, little by little, in response to delicately-put questions and kindly expressions of sympathy, Ralph told the sorrowful story of his early years, and of his father's married life.

It was, in fact, the untold half of the tale which Lucy had already related in outline to Lady Joan.

The wife whom John Harwood, whilom butler to the Vicar of Southmoor, had married, had, after the birth of her second child, Lucy, developed symptoms of insanity. On more than one occasion she had attempted suicide, and after ineffectual endeavours to keep her safe at home, her husband had been compelled to place her in the county lunatic asylum. Here she had remained for over fifteen years, at the end of which period she had been discharged as cured. The greater part of the time spent by her in the asylum was of necessity a blank to her, and she had returned home expecting to find her children much as she had left them. Her husband, who from time to time had visited her during her confinement in the asylum, she had

recognised; but her children she had denounced as aliens and impostors, who had taken the place of the small boy and girl she had kissed and said good-bye to long ago. It had been thought advisable from the first to keep from Lucy the knowledge of her mother's insanity, lest it might have a bad effect upon her. She was a delicate child; in physique the living picture of her mother, and in temperament her very double. The child came back from an aunt in London who had brought her up, prepared to lavish her love upon a mother who, in her fancy, figured as her ideal of everything a mother should be. The mother not only failed utterly to recognise her daughter, but in the dead of the night was detected in an attempt on the girl's life. This attempt was concealed from Lucy, who was immediately sent back to her aunt. Other symptoms of lunacy soon showed in the poor woman, and she was sent for a time to the house of a doctor in the neighbourhood, a connection of her husband's through marriage. Shortly afterwards this doctor had removed to Ireland, taking his patient with him. From time to time there had come reports of her improved state of health, and then had come the news that she had eluded his vigilance and escaped from his care. From that day forward she had never been heard of.

Her one desire and aim from morning till night had been to re-discover the tiny daughter she remembered so perfectly, and whose likeness she wore night and day in a locket round her neck. It was thought possible that she had started on this quest, and either had been overtaken by some accident, or else had committed suicide. Mr. Harwood's enquiries on the matter, Ralph admitted, had been neither searching nor prolonged, and nothing had since transpired to confirm either surmise.

The death of Lucy's aunt at this juncture had rendered it necessary for Mr. Harwood to provide another home for his daughter. Beset by the dread lest his wife might find her way back to her home and make another attempt on Lucy's life, and possibly also anxious to escape from a place of sad memories, he sold his farm in Devon, and purchased one near Wrexford. Then pecuniary difficulties had begun. The Devon farm had been sold at a loss; the Wrexford farm had had too high a price paid for it. The worthy farmer found himself crippled at every turn by want of capital. His spirits sank, his

health gave way, and he died, leaving to his son an unprofitable investment, and the care of his fragile sister. Ralph had no easy life before him; do what he would, the farm did not pay its expenses; and Lucy's daily increasing likeness to her mother caused him daily increasing anxiety. The girl had been told that her mother was dead; this, the conversation of some farm-labourers overheard by her proved to be false; and henceforward every statement made to her on the matter she disbelieved. She drifted into a morbid condition of mind, and little by little developed the symptoms which her mother had developed before insanity had set in. One idea took possession of her brain—to find the ideal mother of her childhood's love. She settled to no occupation; she wandered listlessly about the country all day, slept badly at nights, and eat next to nothing. In this extremity Ralph bethought him of his father's early friends, and wrote an imploring letter to Mr. Vaughan Elliot.

Lady Joan raised her eyebrows.

"Mr. Vaughan Elliot!" she repeated. The name, unheard for so many years, fell strangely on her ear in this connection.

"Yes, my lady, Father Elliot that is," said Ralph. "He had just been appointed, so I had heard, to St. Elizabeth's church, at Longridge——"

"St. Elizabeth's! Here within two miles of the Castle!" interrupted Lady Joan, her surprise increasing on her.

"Yes, my lady."

"Go on with your story," said the lady. But though she said "Go on," it was easy to see that her thoughts had been set wandering.

Ralph went on:

"I wrote to him, begging him, on his way to his church, to spend a few days at our farm. He was kind enough to do so, and in three days he did Lucy more good than anybody else had ever done in as many years. He made her promise to give up her wanderings about the country in search of she knew not what, and advised that she should at once take a situation where constant occupation would be given her——" He broke off for a moment, and then added, bitterly: "And this is how it has all ended!"

Lady Joan had listened with a keener ear to Ralph's story than she had to the other half of it as told her by Lucy.

It seemed to her that a very straightforward course lay before her now.

"It is a sad tale," she said. "It has greatly interested me. I think, however, you ought not to lose heart, as you have done on your sister's account. She is very young, and, as I said before, medical treatment ought to do something for her. Now, what do you say to sending her for a time to stay at a doctor's house—to a doctor, of course, who understands such cases—say, to the man to whom your father confided your mother?"

Once get the girl treated as the semi-lunatic she undoubtedly was, and who would believe any wild story she might tell as to what had gone on in a certain sick-room on a certain night?

Ralph shook his head.

"I haven't the money, my lady——" he began.

"Leave that to me. What is the name of this doctor? Where is he living now?"

"His name is Gallagher, and he lives at Ballinacrae in Cork, my lady. Just now, however, he is in Liverpool, trying to arrange a troublesome lawsuit with which he is threatened."

"Ah, no doubt he would be glad to increase his income by a lucrative patient. Is he competent, do you think, to treat such cases as your mother's and sister's?"

Ralph did not seem to notice the way in which she bracketed Lucy with her mother. He answered readily enough:

"Oh, thoroughly competent, my lady. He was at one time head-keeper in one of the big county asylums. Then he married my father's cousin, who was an attendant there, and took it into his head that he knew so much about lunatics that it would pay him to enter the profession, and set up as a doctor to the insane. That was in our prosperous days, and my father, off and on, helped him a good deal with his college expenses."

"I should like to see this man," said Lady Joan, "and talk to him about your sister."

Ralph had an objection to raise which she did not expect.

"Before anything is done, my lady, I must see Father Elliot and consult him on the matter. I can do nothing without his consent."

Lady Joan frowned. Father Elliot again! Thirty years ago she had said to herself: "This man shall go at once and for ever out of my life." And, lo, here was he confronting her at a crisis!

"I think," she said, with not a little

asperity, "you are unwise not to avail yourself at once of my offer. It is the advice of a doctor, not that of a priest, which you are needing for your sister."

Whatever Ralph might desire for his sister, assuredly advice from a priest was not what Lady Joan desired for her. Priests had the uncomfortable habit of counselling confession, and so of getting at a variety of matters which did not concern them.

"Give me a little time to think it over, my lady," said Ralph, humbly. "I am going straight to the Father's from here; and, if you will allow me, I will call in again on my way back in the afternoon."

And with so much of concession Lady Joan was obliged to be content, and to allow the man to depart.

THE HANSA.

AS you near Antwerp, after steaming up the long, ugly Scheldt, you notice three things—that "lace-work" spire which is not all fair, honest masonry, but which is very beautiful, nevertheless; the little castle ("Steen"), just restored, and looking more like a toy shelter for promenaders on the quay-terrace than the place where the horrors of the Inquisition had full swing; the third thing that strikes you is a grim, square fortress, close to the first basin, looking just like what it is—a great bonded warehouse, of the days when warehouses had to be also fortresses. This is the house of the Hansa, or Hanseatic League. In London they had a similar place. Till 1851, you might see, close to Cosin's Lane, Dowgate, some remains of "the German's Guildhall," which dated from the time when Dowgate was the only City gate opening on the water. This gave the "Easterlings" an immense advantage over their English brethren; and they improved it, getting grant after grant from our Kings, till they were practically independent, and keeping the Chief of the Customs in good humour by a yearly gift worth about twenty pounds. The alderman, too, who was told off to settle disputes between Easterlings and Londoners, got, every New Year's day, fifteen gold nobles, considerably wrapped in a pair of new gloves.

The Plantagenet Kings were the humble servants of the Hansa. They were always in want of ready money. Edward the Third had to send his crown and the State

jewels to Cologne in pledge for "value received." The Easterlings, therefore, were allowed to fortify their settlement—a needless precaution, when the London mob was as ready to attack them as it was to plunder the Jews, and with better reason, for the privileges that the Kings sold them must have been extremely galling to the natives. When, in Wat Tyler's time, the foreigners were even torn from sanctuary, every one being knocked on the head who could not say "bread and cheese," they were suffering as monopolists must suffer when at last the proverbial worm turns. King after King had exempted the Hansa merchants from tax after tax. Lion-hearted Richard stopped at Cologne on his way back from his Austrian prison, and while he heard mass in the cathedral, the merchants made up so heavy a purse to help pay his ransom, that when he got home he freed "his beloved burghers of Cologne" from all dues, and fixed the rent of their London Guildhall at two shillings. Even in Edward the Sixth's reign, when English murmuring had taken shape, and Gresham was preparing the blow wherewith, under Elizabeth, he crippled the Hansa, they exported in one year thirty-six thousand pieces of cloth, against only one thousand one hundred exported by the English, paying only threepence per piece, the ordinary duty being five shillings and ninepence; and having, to boot, the privilege of shipping it in their own bottoms, thereby saving custom-dues, so that the cloth stood them in a pound per piece less than its price in the Antwerp market.

How the English could have submitted to the Treaty of Utrecht, which, under Edward the Fourth, confirmed all the Hansa's old privileges, and took from our merchants the right of trading in the Baltic, and (which they were most eager for) with Russia, it is hard to understand. The Hansa, leagued with the Danes, had all through the Wars of the Roses harassed our commerce, even landing and ravaging our seaboards, forcing us to call in Charles the Bold as umpire.

One good came of it. Our seamen were driven to maritime discovery. Just as the Greeks, growing strong in the Ægean, forced the Phœnicians to pass the Pillars of Hercules and explore the Atlantic coasts of Spain and Africa, so the Baltic, being a German lake, drove Willoughby and others northward, and the White Sea was discovered, and our trade centred at Archangel.

But it was not all war. In their fortified settlement of the Steelyard, the Hansa-town merchants made good cheer, and shared it with the Londoners. Celibates they all were, as strict as the Teutonic Knights in Prussia during their ten years' sojourn. No woman was allowed inside the precincts. But in the garden, between kitchen and great hall, there were shady arbours, and tables, and seats, and good Rhenish was on sale at threepence a bottle.

"Let us go to the Stilliard and drink Rhenish," says "Pierce Penniless." And some one in a play of Webster's asks: "Will you steal forth to the Stillyard and taste of a Dutch brew and a keg of sturgeon?" The "Boar's Head" was not far off; and Prince Hal's town-house was in Coldharbour Lane. The "Steelyard," with a bunch of grapes above it, was, till yesterday, the sign of a tavern close by.

Strangely enough, the London Hansamen had no church of their own, frequenting All-hallows the Greater; and, as all their fines were paid in Polish wax, no doubt the church was kept well lighted. Polish wax was worth money in those days. Two quintals of it went yearly to the Lord Mayor, in addition to a cask of caviare and a barrel of choice herrings. This kept his worship in good humour. And in civic processions the Hansa took a notable share. Lydgate tells how, at the triumphal entry of Henry the Sixth,

Came Easterlings, though they were strangers,
Estably horsed, after the Mayor riding.

When Queen Mary came to the City the day before her coronation, the "Easterlings" built a hillock by Gracechurch, whence a fountain poured forth wine, while four children, daintily dressed, stood thereon and greeted the Queen. They also set two tuns of wine in front of the Steelyard, whence all passers-by were free to drink. The entry in their books shows that day's festivity cost them a thousand pounds; a vast sum considering the then value of money.

So long as people are strong, prudent men don't meddle with them. The native merchants kept grumbling at the favour shown to aliens; but Henry the Seventh, ready enough to put on the screw where he could do so safely, left the Hansa merchants their old privileges. So did Henry the Eighth; but the opening up of new trade roads, and the weakening of the Hansa League in its old stronghold, Flanders, gave hopes to the English.

Gresham and his merchant-adventurers appealed to the Virgin Queen, using the strange plea that "the Hansa merchants, being all bachelors, could give more leisure to trading than could the English, who were married." Burleigh heartily upheld Gresham. The German Emperor, whom the Hansa called in as their suzerain, wrote a letter, but declined to help otherwise. Whereupon Burleigh became rough-tongued after the Cecil fashion, "insulting a Hansa ambassador with rude, indecent speech."

"You and my own people shall be on the same footing," said Elizabeth.

"No," replied the Hansa, "we hold to our old privileges."

"Then I limit your export of English cloth to five thousand pieces," replied the Queen.

Of course there was much shuffling; Elizabeth took a special delight in tortuous policy.

"Confirm our privileges, and we'll give you a factory at Hamburg," said the Hansa.

"No; first give the factory, and then we'll discuss the privileges," said Elizabeth.

But the upshot was that the Queen kept her ground, and that individual Hansa towns—the smaller ones especially—began to allow English factories, in spite of the prohibition at headquarters. The League had spent so much in supplying Spain with ship timber and warlike stores, that they were almost bankrupt; and the town of Stade's answer, when called to account for letting the English settle in it, is a sample of what all felt. "Almighty Heaven put them in our way that we might, by them, get a bit of bread to eat."

Goods for the Spaniards, Elizabeth, though at peace with the League, held to be contraband of war; and her captains were always snapping up Hansa ships—Norris and Drake seized sixty at one time—and no protests would make the Queen loose her hold either on vessels or cargoes.

The League retaliated by persuading Emperor Rudolf to order all English to quit his dominions within three months; but our trade thrived as briskly as ever, for the Dutch welcomed us at Middleburg, whence, under Dutch names, we traded with Germany as before; while Elizabeth—1598—turned the Hansa men out of the Steelyard at a fortnight's notice, and James, though embassy after embassy came to entreat his favour, declined to readmit them. The Merchant-adventurers

were triumphant. Their secretary, Wheeler, writes of the Hansa: "Most of their teeth have fallen out, the rest set but loosely in their head."

Not till the power of the League was wholly broken by the ruinous Thirty Years' War, which practically reduced it to three cities—Hamburg, Bremen, Lubeck—did the City, with a scrupulousness which cities have not always shown in like cases, give back the Steelyard, and the ground belonging to it. Cannon Street station stands on part of it. When the whole was sold, in 1853, to an English Company, it realized seventy-two thousand, five hundred pounds. The sole record of the Hansa's pride is the beautifully-carved oak screen, which divides All-hallows into German chapel and parish church.

Next in importance to the London factory was that at Bergen. The weakness of the Norse kingdoms left them mostly at the mercy of these imperious traders. "You shall not let the English trade with you," was their mandate to Denmark. To Norway, they said: "All your merchandise, though it comes from the furthest north, shall pass through our factory." The whole history of Bergen shows these German traders to have been as cruel as they were overbearing. One is almost glad when those famous pirates, the Victual Brethren, who took that name because they professed "to be moved with pity for the Swedes and Norwegians starved by the Hansa," burned Bergen, 1392. They had already seized Wisby in Gottland, another famous Hansa-town; indeed, had they not been beaten in desperate fight off Heligoland, 1302, their confederation would have superseded the League. They were Germans, too—strange to find Manteuffel and Moltke among their chiefs' names—and from pirates they would soon have become traders; while their wealth may be judged from the story of their big ship, whose mainmast was found to be hollow, and full of gold, out of which, after paying the costs of the war, was made the gold crown that used to be on Saint Nicholas' Church, Hamburg. But Bergen did not come off so well in the struggle. Twice the town was sacked, even the Bishop's library being plundered, and the Norman ships which had come for the summer fishing. Its Greenland trade, which had lasted five hundred years, was destroyed; and, in despair, the burghers pledged their town to the Hansa, who actually turned them out, compelling them

to live on the other side of the harbour, cut off from their own fish market, to which they had to cross a bridge, and run the gauntlet of "Shoemakers' Alley," peopled mostly by ruffians, in the pay of the Hansa.

"So thoroughly broken," remarks Miss Zimmera, the latest historian of the Hansa, "was the spirit of these descendants of the Vikings." Besides the Alley folk, the regular Hansa establishment at Bremen numbered three thousand, all calibates, all of fighting age, the term of their sojourn being ten years, during which they rose from "office-boy" to alderman. They were practically independent of Norway, refusing to pay rates, though they claimed the rights of citizens, felling timber without asking leave, forcing themselves into private houses, openly abetting the King's enemies. Cod—which, before it left their hands, became "stock-fish"—was their great staple, as herring was further south; their common seal shows half the two-headed eagle of the Empire, replaced by a crowned codfish. At Bergen, too, the probationary ordeals, which novices had to pass through in grotesque imitations of those of the Order of Military monks, took a very repulsive form, there being no public opinion in the place to keep German coarseness in check. The treatment of greenhorns, on crossing the Line in English ships, was bad enough; but it was nothing to what the "office boy" had to bear when he landed in Bergen. The "smoke game" consisted in hauling the fresh man up the great chimney of the Hall, and burning all kinds of stinking filth on the hearth. There, almost choked with foul smoke, he had to go through a mock catechism, and was then put under the pump, and sluiced with several tons of water. The victims of the "water game" were rowed out to sea, stripped, ducked thrice, forced to swallow their fill of sea-water, and then flogged as they were swimming about. In the "flogging game," the sufferers were made to gather their own birch rods; then they and the rest sat down to an ample dinner—for this game was held on Mayday. After this, they were led into a dark hole called Paradise, and flogged by two dozen men in succession, the other members playing all sorts of noisy music outside to deafen their cries. At the close of each game, a herald announced that "so long as the Hansa lasted, the noble practice of ordeals should never be abandoned;" nor was it till 1671, when, the League having grown

weak everywhere, Christian the Fifth felt himself strong enough to insist on practices, of which these were by no means the most brutalising, being put a stop to.

I said the Thirty Years' War gave the League its "coup de grace." That was, every one knows, a war of religion; but it became, to a great extent, a war of North against South, and the Hansa was in an awkward fix, Wallenstein on the one hand urging them to throw in their lot with "the Empire," which would thus gain a footing on the Baltic; the Swedes and Danes pointing out that their alliance was the more profitable. The Emperor's bribe was the whole trade of Spain, which he promised should pass through the depôts of the League; but his ambassadors pleaded in vain. The Hansa gave them three thousand dollars apiece, and put aside the question "ad referendum." Rage at this disappointment—for Wallenstein had, by anticipation, styled himself "Admiral of the Baltic and North Seas"—accounts for the cruel sack of Magdeburg, and the long and desperate siege of Stralsund. But, before this, there had been religious disputes, one of which is connected with the strange and puzzling history of Wullenweber, Mayor of Lubeck, which, early in the sixteenth century, had become the most important of the League towns. It was also the last to take up with Lutheranism; and for it—as for other places—reform in religion meant democracy, and the advent to power of men like Wullenweber, and his friend, the handsome blacksmith, turned pirate, Max Meyer of Hamburg. Max is as great a puzzle as Wullenweber. He was made leader of the eight hundred whom Lubeck sent to help the Emperor against the Turka. He came back with two waggon-loads of booty, and a body-guard of forty men in full armour. Hamburg and Lubeck vied with each other in honouring one who was so good to look upon, that he could pass anywhere for a noble. A Lubeck burgomaster's rich young widow insisted on marrying him, and through her he was put in command of the Hansa fleet that was to ruin the Netherlands' trade. Instead of this, he took some Spanish ships, laden with English goods, and boldly sailed into an English port to revictual. Henry the Eighth received him at Court with much feasting, and, three days after—Tudor fashion—had him seized as a pirate. The Steelyard merchants saved him from hanging by paying for his seizures; but he was imprisoned.

By-and-by, however, Lubeck begged him off, and opened to Henry her plan for seizing the Sound, and making the Baltic, once for all, a German lake, into which, if their King took the right side, the English should be admitted. This was Wullenweber's project; and while Meyer was being knighted by Henry, who took up the scheme right heartily, giving his quondam prisoner a gold chain, and promising him a pension of three hundred gold crowns and a half—why the half?—the Lubeck Mayor took into his pay Christopher of Oldenburg, a prince-ling, ready to fight for any one's hire.

In 1534 the Hansa, or rather that part of it which sided with Lubeck, attacked Denmark, and for some time had the whole country in their hands, offering it to Henry the Eighth if he would help efficiently with men or money. They were especially angry with Gustavus Vasa, whom they looked on as their own nominee—they had long been practically King-makers in Denmark—and in the great sea-fight off Funen (1535), they would have beaten, had not many of their hired Captains been bribed to sail away in the midst of the battle. At the news of this crushing defeat, Wullenweber's popularity went down like a house of cards. The Tories came in; the Radical Mayor was hooted by the mob, and, while travelling with Emperor's safe-conduct, was seized by the Archbishop of Bremen. He was never set free, though his brother went to Henry and begged him to expostulate. Henry's letters on behalf of "his beloved and trusty servant" were disregarded; Wullenweber was racked to make him confess himself an Anabaptist, and to make him refund the value of the church plate, which—including the huge silver chandelier of Saint Mary's—he had melted up to pay for his war. The Archbishop's brother, Duke Henry of Brunswick, was now appointed jailor. He shut the poor fellow up in a cell in Steinbrück Castle, and for two years he had him racked every now and then that he might gloat over his agony. At last he was tried, recanting before his judges all that torture had forced him to confess; but his death had been determined on, and he was beheaded and then chopped in small pieces at Wolfenbüttel.

"Duke Henry deserved this," wrote a Hamburg burgher, against the sword which he drew in red ink in his diary to mark the day of execution.

With Wullenweber ends the romance of the Hansa. Thence they were merchants, and nothing more, struggling hard for the privileges which were daily slipping from their grasp, but never daring to make a bold stroke like that by which Wullenweber tried to set up the League in its old mastery of the Baltic. They have left their mark on the civic domestic architecture of all the north of Europe. Their weakness—the weakness, too, of the Venetians and the Dutch—was that they were only carriers, save for a little fish-curing; and herring are fickle.* Trade sought other channels, and then no imperial edicts could give them back prosperity.

They did their work in the days when, in the weakness of the Empire, every little landowner became a robber-knight, pouncing down on wayfarers, plundering, or at best crushing with excessive tolls. Toll had to be paid to every lord whose land was crossed. There were tolls within sixteen miles of Hamburg. Along the Rhine the ruined castles show us how close one plunderer followed on another. On the Rhine, the Hansa began early in the thirteenth century; but it soon spread, and Wisby, well out of the way of noble robbery, became their first stronghold. How they got a footing in Denmark, more than once sacking Copenhagen—in 1362, carrying off its church bells to Lubeck—how Waldemar the Third (nicknamed Alterday, "another day," because, if beaten once, he tried again), for a time broke their power; but how at last "the seventy-seven cities" beat him, and forced from him the Treaty of Stralsund, which placed Denmark, and, indeed, the three northern kingdoms wholly at their mercy, is too long a tale to be told now.

Waldemar, young and handsome, disguised himself, and made love to a goldsmith's daughter of Wisby. She showed him the way into the town, which he soon attacked by land and sea, plundering to his heart's content, part of his spoil being two mighty carbuncles, which, in the rose-windows of Saint Nicholas Church, had served as harbour lights. All his treasure was lost on the way to Denmark, he barely escaping; and the Gottland fishermen say that on clear nights they can see the big jewels shining deep down. Of course he deserted the silly girl whom he had persuaded to

* Why have herrings almost wholly deserted the coast of Scania? Can it be because they are no longer driven south by the whales, since whales have been, in many waters, almost exterminated?

betray her people. The townsmen seized her—says the story—and buried her alive, in what is still called “the maiden’s tower.” Waldemar’s war was in every way a breach of treaty, and the Hansa, thoroughly ruined, and undismayed by the ill-success of the Lubeck Mayor, Wittenborg, whom they put to death as we did Admiral Byng, went on till, in 1368, Waldemar fled from his kingdom, and was forced to make an ignominious peace. Wittenborg got what he deserved, if the legend tells truth, which says he betrayed the Hansa, “and danced away Bornholm” for the sake of a dance with Waldemar’s queen.

Well; the League had its day. Its cities replaced the fabulous Julin—or Winetha, City of Winds—at the mouth of the Oder, which Adam of Bremen says was so famous in the eleventh century. They were pious Christians up to their lights—the Juliners were sturdy heathens; “when Saxons settle there they must by no means declare themselves Christians”—forming guilds for special devotions. Better still, though they clung to their monopoly, they were fair dealers; our word, Sterling, is just Easterling, their money being always good in days when the coin of the “most Christian King” of France and that of his English brother was shamelessly debased, while “German silver” was just pewter silvered over.

The honours which German Princes and Emperors bestowed on them, show how unlike the Teutonic character is to the old Latin. In Germanic countries, farming is always left to a lower class. In old Rome, senators worked in the fields; Cincinnatus was following the plough when he was chosen Dictator. Their worst feature was their high-handedness; wherever they dared they kept down the natives, and kept out all competitors. In Russia—till Ivan the Terrible brought them to reason—they insisted on all the trade passing through their hands, pouring in oceans of beer in return for furs and wax. Among other things they insisted that no one should be allowed to leave Russia who was not a member of the Hansa.

ON THE TOW-PATH.

OUR canals are comparatively little known, save to the bargemen and their numerous families, and a false idea prevails that they are wholly utilitarian and unbeautiful; while many firmly believe

that canal-folk are, like angels, a race apart, with manners and customs no better than the sailor’s savage acquaintances of anecdotal memory. Nevertheless, our inland waterways and their users are not altogether without a brighter side; and, although so near London, along the towing-path from Brentford to Uxbridge may be found a delightful walk, where really fine views of lovely tree-groupings, and interesting and historic mansions, and a thousand natural beauties of country scenery may be enjoyed by the watchful and contemplative wanderer along the banks and braes of bonny Brent.

Numerous locks make pleasing breaks in the usual monotony of a canal; and, indeed, near Hanwell, they form a series of steps that lend a peculiar interest to the silent waterway, for there is a considerable rise from the Thames, and the topmost lock is surprisingly higher than the level of the river.

At intervals along its course, the water runs over small ladders into tumbling-bays, and creeps round in its old channel to re-enter the canal at some lower point; and these breakwaters are in many places most charmingly shady and secluded pools of quiet water, beautified by the vegetation in and around them, while drooping willows and other trees overhang their undisturbed recesses. The harmless, necessary angler will at times frequent these quiet nooks not without good results, from his point of view; for, although the main channel abounds with fish, they are of no great size; but in the quieter back-streams a skilful hand may occasionally land a bream of three or four pounds, and this even close to Brentford town.

By the way, it is a curious fact that fishing, like feminine loveliness, is very fascinating, and that the charms of both are almost wholly powerless to attract the passionate devotion of ladies; but, indeed, one seldom or never sees a lady or a girl angling for fish with the desperate perseverance and devotion of a man or a boy in a punt! Perhaps it is the worms!

Before turning his back upon Brentford, with its crowd of boats and barges lying so peacefully among the locks and bridges, one may look back upon that fearful January night in 1841, when, owing to the bursting of a dam higher up, the roaring waters rushed down the valley, hurling death and disaster over all this spot, crushing and piling the craft in heaps as they were dashed among the wharves

and bridges, and spreading consternation and mourning into many a Brentford home.

Upon leaving the town, one soon catches sight, through the trees beyond the island-meadow, of the back of Boston Lodge, and the Butts; and after another glimpse of several old-fashioned, red-brick houses that stand in Boston Lane, one arrives at the inelegant wooden bridge which carries the South-Western Railway over the water to Isleworth.

From this point you just catch a distant glimpse of a curious survival of the long-demolished mansion called Sion Hill, which was the residence, in former days, of the Duke of Marlborough. He, being addicted to the study of astronomy, built himself an observatory in the grounds, at some distance from the house; and it is owing to this circumstance that we can still see this quaint, solitary, tower-like building, with its long, narrow windows, standing in the midst of orchards and market-gardens. It is now known as the Folly House, and is at present put to the base, unscientific use of storing potatoes and suchlike articles during the winter. The shape of its windows suggests to the knowing in such matters, their former use for purposes of telescopic observation; they being built high, in order that the instrument might take an upward sweep.

Proceeding farther, and leaving Colonel Clitherow's residence, at Boston Manor, away to the right among the trees on the higher land of the valley side, the stroller sights an almost semicircular bridge, of very dissimilar appearance from the usual architectural simplicity of such canal structures. This one is a light, iron, girder bridge, which spans the waters, and allows a towing horse to cross from one side of the canal to the other without disconnecting the tow-ropes; and this can be effected by a very simple, but, at the same time, ingenious contrivance, which is scarcely, if ever, used by those pattern Tories, the bargees.

Hereabout the Grand Junction Canal is a broad, irregular stream, winding through sloping fields and clumps of vegetation; and, as you walk, shoals of tiny fish, sunning themselves in the shallows, dart with silvery flashes into the deeper water.

Birds of every kind are plentiful in these quiet regions; and only last August I heard the peculiar, harsh cry of the corn-crake, at a point where the District

Railway crosses the canal, by an especially ugly viaduct, near Osterley. The bird repeated its cry many times, and I have no doubt that among the fields at this somewhat lonely spot, the landrail finds a congenial nesting-ground. Although common enough in the country, the corn-crake is by no means a familiar visitant near London; and, indeed, his stay with us is only from April to October, after which he knows better than to stop in misty England, to face the chills of winter. The cry is like the sound produced by rasping a quill quickly across the teeth of a comb, and that sound will even deceive the bird itself. Corncrakes seldom fly, but run through the thickest grass at a most astonishing rate, without the least difficulty. The little crakes have a curious and comical instinct; for, when caught, the little innocents pretend to be dead, and refuse to recover consciousness until they fancy their captor is safely out of the way.

A short time ago I also saw the black-cap warbler, another especially shy, migratory bird, at no great distance from Brentford, close to the canal. Its note is considered to be only second in melodiousness to that of the nightingale, and is heard from the midst of thickets, the innermost recesses of which it seeks at once if disturbed.

A gentle slope of grass-land, flanked by two dense groves of trees, forms a broad glade, up which one obtains a splendid view of Osterley Park House from the canal side. Some few years ago, the Earl of Jersey's fine old seat had a narrow escape from burning. Little of the original Osterley House, inhabited by Sir Thomas Gresham in 1577, remains, but the four copolas and turrets, which give the mansion so distinctive an appearance, were portions of the original design.

Sir Thomas, it is said, gave a noble house-warming in honour of that omnipresent old person, Queen Elizabeth; but this piece of history is better attested than many similar traditions elsewhere. Just a year after the completion of the house at "Awsterley," its celebrated builder most sumptuously entertained his gracious Sovereign there with elaborate pageants and stage-plays after the manner of those times.

Among the many uses to which Osterley House was put, was that of a State-prison. Elizabeth was in the habit of quartering her prisoners of State upon certain of her

loyal subjects, holding them responsible for their safe keeping; and the Lady Mary Grey, sister of the unfortunate Lady Jane, was detained in Sir Thomas's keeping at Osterley and other places, for three years and a half, notwithstanding that Sir Thomas and his wife begged the Queen to relieve them of so unpleasant a duty. The cause of this quasi-imprisonment was that Lady Mary had displeased Elizabeth by secretly marrying beneath her.

Many famous people have lived here; and it is by no means deserted in these later days. The ornamental water is a pleasant object in the semi-public park, and a lower lake, closely surrounded by trees, makes a most beautiful prospect in all the varying aspects of spring, summer, and autumn.

Along the despised canal may be seen long, calm avenues of magnificent trees, ending at the water's edge, mutely telling the past grandeurs of mansions to which they led in former days; and then you peer up the placid backwaters, the noise from the distant lasher coming to your ears with a soothing sound as you rest upon the grassy bank, while every now and then a silvery flash and ever-widening circles tell of a fish rising vigorously at the water-flies; or on broiling days you may take a welcome siesta in the solitary recesses of some piece of woodland waste beside the towing-path, or, stretched on the grassy slope of a bridge, gaze down the long reaches and watch the approaching barges—alive, at times, with a numerous crew, for most of the men live on the boats with their families; and though, no doubt, the system has serious social and domestic drawbacks, like many another primitive custom, it possesses a picturesque side.

On these "fly-boats" you often see such a display of drying garments fluttering in the wind, as to suggest afar off a craft under sail; and the barge-ladies' head-gear is a speciality in sun-bonnets not easily met with elsewhere. Be the life what it may, at all events, it is clearly a healthy one, because each member of the fly-boat family has plenty of fresh air and exercise, for they become of use at a very early age, and even as babies they amble about the cabin roofs in a surprising manner, and evidently under the particular guardianship of a special Providence.

Between Brentford Bridge and Norwood there are eleven locks; and at the latter place the water-level is some ninety feet

above the Thames at high-water. Immediately above the group of six locks, up the hill beside the County Asylum at Hanwell, the railway passes under the canal, and a road over it, which latter leads to Osterley in one direction, and towards Dorman's Well and Greenford in the other.

Dorman's Well is a pretty spot, hard by, where watercresses are cultivated, and close by is a bee-farm. The pond above the disused watermill forms a pleasant, willow-girt sheet of water, fed by a bright little rill that waters the cross-beds, and trickles down into the river Brent, below Hanwell, amidst a lovely piece of hilly landscape, mantled with trees, behind which peeps out the spire of Hanwell Church.

On the Grand Junction there are no locks after passing the trades above Hanwell, and the lock at Norwood, until you reach Cowley, a few miles short of Uxbridge, and the Paddington Canal, which makes a meeting of waters at Bull Bridge, near Hayes, is not interrupted by a single lock right up to the Paddington Basin. Boating, therefore, is a possible thing along these placid ways, the water of which is vastly different in quality, in these outlying regions, from what you are accustomed to find it in the neighbourhood of London, and other large towns, otherwise the fish would not be so plentiful and lively.

Now, there is one form of recreation, which, strange to say, is not much practised here, namely, canoeing; a method of locomotion, eminently well fitted for narrow rivers and canals where locks are scarce, and a bright look-out forward is a prime necessity. Out here, and still more so up-country, the canoeist need not complain of unpleasant surroundings, or unsavoury waters; and, indeed, to dare a canoe trip by canal, as far as Liverpool—a possible feat by this route—would provide him with all the charms of novelty, and give one many a glimpse of human nature, as developed in the barge race.

After our supposed velocity of living, this inland method of navigation presents to the weary mind a beautiful and restful impression of the vanity of hurry, and shining examples of the utility of deliberation. *Ohne Hast, ohne Rast*, might almost serve as motto for the bargeman's quarterings, and locks must be a grand school for inculcating patient and philosophic habits of mind.

A waterside inn at Southall Green is a curious architectural landmark, and a magnificent pear-tree climbs over its waterside wall. Not far beyond, in fact at the very next bridge, it is worth one's while to turn from the water into Norwood village—a quaint and pleasant place, and one so antiquated that, within the last few years, a genuine old sedan chair was to be seen regularly in use; an ancient lady being borne along in it to the curious little church every Sunday morning!

The situation of the village is particularly pleasant, and an abundance of foliage shelters, or throws into relief, the various points that are especially worthy of notice. The Green itself, with its triangular sweep of greensward, overshadowed by stately avenues of splendid elms, and with its oblong, tree-shaded pond, and restful surroundings of sequestered mansions, and rustic cottages, is a spot whereon to rest and meditate; and it, and its leaf-shadowed roads, form a fitting approach to the quaintness of the tiny village, that winds away towards the canal-bridge. The parochial almshouses stand on the right, and backed as they are by such a splendid mass of foliage, they make, with their modest colouration, almost a picture, and when one or two of the worthy old almawomen occasionally appear for some sociable or domestic purpose, they lend a suitable animation to the quiet scene.

The village can also boast of a veritable parish pump, in good working order, and beside the "Wolf," a curious and suggestive sign, stands one of the quaintest and prettiest little country cottages imaginable. Farther on one sees "A Free School, built by E. B., 1767," consisting of a queer little building, wherein many generations have received enlightenment. The church is new, but the old, sombre "Plough Inn," opposite, still remains much as of old, and still administers consolation to its attentive congregation.

Not far from here is Keston, with a churchyard possessing a remarkably fine specimen of the swinging lych-gate, a piece of ancient mechanism, that still works by means of a pulley and stone weight.

The flatness of the fields, adjacent to the canal at North Hyde, is suddenly and agreeably relieved by a series of abrupt high mounds of earth, picturesquely clothed in thick-foliaged bushes, calling to mind those ancient heroic tombs, such as Silbury Hill, but having, in reality, a more prosaic and

modern, if not less warlike origin. These striking objects once formed the site of extensive powder-magazines, which were, of course, most conveniently placed for water-carriage. They are now abandoned, and "laughing Ceres reassumes the land," to the no small comfort of those near at hand, who, for the most part, prefer the even tenor of their ways to any startling experiences.

Steam is little used on the canals, because of the washing down of the earthen banks; so the hauling is done more picturesquely, but not quite as much so as in Holland, where even the womenfolk often take a turn with the rope, whereas, here, lovely woman, in her beflowered bonnet, only occasionally takes the tiller, and assists in the family oburgations.

Near Southall, the Brentford Gas Company have lately built extensive works; and it needs no great penetration to foresee that, before long, the gasworks at Brentford will be superseded with considerable benefit to all concerned.

Beside Bull Bridge, where the telegraph poles first make their appearance, is the gauging-house for all laden barges entering the Paddington Canal, the operation consisting of dipping a floating gauge over either side, both fore and aft; the charge being reckoned according to tonnage. The sharp crack of the driver's whip-lash is the signal for attracting the attention of the official on duty. This branch runs northward for a considerable distance, through open country, where railways and high roads are not; and when you leave the canal, the rustic quiet is unbroken for miles by anything more noisy than birds and cattle.

It is not generally known that steam-launches carry passengers the twenty miles from Paddington to Uxbridge, by way of the canals, during the summer months, and on a fine day this journey is by no means an unenjoyable one.

Having gone thus far, the reader will no doubt take for granted the rest of the way towards Uxbridge, and content himself by turning aside into Hayes or Southall, whence the train will rapidly whisk him whither he wishes, to luxurious slippers and a welcome rest.

ROMAN LIFE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"We esteem ourselves happy in your arrival among us," said to me the pretty daughter of the house to which I had been

directed in search of rooms for my sojourn in Rome. She said this when we had known each other rather less than a day; and I could not mistrust her words when I read them by the light of her beautiful eyes.

"If it please you, why?" I asked; for I had already conceived misgivings about the position in which I was likely to stand towards the large, hearty, Roman dame and her pretty daughter, who, between them, were the tenants of the flat of No. 9 in the street.

"Because, signor, when your carriage came to the door, my mother and I were looking at the book of numbers, for the lottery-drawing, you understand; and we were in extreme doubt what to do. It was all arranged in one minute when we had seen you, and let our rooms to you."

"And how, in the name of Heaven, Signorina Celeste?" for such was her name; of which may she never prove unworthy.

"Why, you are almost dull, Signor Carlo. It was in this way. You were a stranger; you are dark, and, if you will allow us to think so, sufficiently beautiful to be called beautiful in the book—" "bello" was her phrase, which I venture to translate as much in my favour as possible—"also, you came to do us a service. 'A beautiful stranger and benefactor' gave us a clue; and so we have taken a 'terno'" —a series of three numbers—"to represent you, and we hope to win on Saturday."

"I sincerely hope you may," said I.

Of course, when Saturday came, and the drawing was made, they found that they had built a most unsubstantial castle of hope upon my apparition in their midst. I condoled with them as much as my imperfect knowledge of sentimental Italian, and my good sense would allow me to; and I ventured further to suggest that they would, of course, not risk, in so imbecile a manner, any more of the francs by which they came so hardly.

"Why, Signor Carlo," exclaimed the mother, with decision, "you are remarkably weak in the head. Of course we shall continue. We invest every Saturday; and when we win the great prize, we shall withdraw to a lovely little property near Ancona, which was my grandfather's, on the mother's side, and where the wine is so good, that there is none anywhere else in Italy to compare with it."

This time, I held my tongue. You may argue with some pleasure, and perhaps

with some persuasive result, with a Roman maiden; but with a Roman matron, it seems to me, by no means. These portly, stern-faced dames inherit, in some mysterious way, at least the semblance of those great qualities which made their ancestors cut so mighty a figure in the world's history. At heart, no doubt, they are as impressionable as their dear sisters all the world over. But in one's travels, one has not always the time to sound those sweet depths that lie hid under an exterior which does not attract, even if it does not positively repel.

Now the Signorina Celeste had a brother as well as a mother. The youth was of quite another order of beings. He was small and thin, with a large Roman nose, a delicate complexion, small hands and feet, and a highly-enlightened appreciation for fine clothes, and the tricks of fashion. A Roman of the time of Julius Cæsar could, I imagine, have broken this boy, Achille—for so he was called—across his knee, as easily as you or I would break a stick of macaroni with two fingers.

I learnt to understand Achille, when I heard him one morning storm in a most unmanly way at his pretty little sister, for proposing to go to S. Peter's, to hear a certain mass. To be sure, he fell silent quickly enough when his mother appeared, and demanded, in a deep bass voice, what was the matter. But, ere this, the fair Celeste was in tears. She and her mother were devout; loved the Church, and all its ceremonies and institutions; deplored the situation of the Pope; and would, if they could, have banished King Humbert and the Royal Court a hundred miles from the city. Achille, on the other hand, was a typical Roman youth of the period. He called his Holiness many rude names; vilified the priests without mercy; and had not the least scruple to proclaim himself, with so many of his superiors, an Atheist of the most uncompromising kind. His views of human nature, human effort, and the varied features of life and the world were fitly signified by that epitaph over the Cardinal Barberini in the Capuchin Church—"Hic jacet pulvis, cinis, et nihil" (Here lies dust, ashes, and nothing besides). As for the mass, he would, he said, as soon think of participating in such a superstitious and absurd reunion, as he would of joining in one of those sacred cannibalistic revels of the old Aztecs—who were wont to sacrifice living men to their dumb,

grisly idols, and afterwards cut up and eat the victims as if they had been so many sheep and oxen.

"You will go out of the house, Achille," said mamma, when she saw the diamond tears glistening on her daughter's cheek. "The English gentleman will not have a very noble opinion of you unless in the future you can get your tongue to be more reticent. So go at once. And, Celeste, my dove, we will proceed to dress ourselves for the function."

Achille believed in nothing, except the desirability of having as many francs as he could spend, and more. Mamma and Celeste believed in everything they wished to believe in: the lottery, the church, the possibility of a brilliant matrimonial alliance for Celeste, and much else.

Between them they were admirable representatives of the discordancies which abound in Rome nowadays as they abound nowhere else. The women were on the side of the Pope and the past; the man was all for the King, his anti-clerical minister, and the glorious future that King, minister, the voice of the people, and inscrutable, irresistible Destiny were, in combination, contriving for Italy and the Italians.

The women were vastly excited about the preaching of a certain monk whom the Pope had licensed to preach in one of the chief churches of Rome every day during Lent. These sermons were a sensation of the times. All the women who could go to hear them went; and rather than miss their chance of hearing the friar, were content to stand for hours outside the church, awaiting the opening of the doors to let them and their camp-stools within. Some made a point of attending daily, with the same method that led them to eat, and sleep, and put on their clothes. It was a wonderful and signal demonstration of the Divine good-will, this eloquence of the poor, humble friar on behalf of his spiritual master on earth, his Holiness Pope Leo the Thirteenth.

I am sorry to say, in furtherance of my parallel between the sympathies of the sexes in Rome, that I believe, so far from bearing this friar any love or respect for his unselfish exertions, Master Achille was one of a band of ruffianly young conspirators who not only reviled the good man in the newspapers, under the cloak of anonymity, but also threw oyster-shells at him when he withdrew from the church to his monastery, after his labours of the

morning, and who were responsible for the ungenerous scribblings which now, as never before, besmirched the city walls and pillars on the subject of the conflict of the Church and State in general, and this champion preacher in particular.

I have invaded the privacy of this Roman household in order that my readers may form some idea of the schismatic condition of the Eternal City in the present day. The newspapers fight duels with each other; stranger quarrels with stranger; and the family itself is divided in civil war—upon the great and "burning" question of the day, as it is called. This question has become more "burning" than ever since the secularists last spring publicly, and under the patronage of Signor Crispi, unveiled a statue of Giordano Bruno in the heart of Rome—that Giordano whom the Catholic Church a few centuries ago judged worthy to be burnt for a heretic, and duly did burn.

This question apart, however, one may live in Rome with lively pleasure and much tranquillity. Though the Pope has deprived his faithful subjects of the entertainment they formerly had in his constant presence in their midst, and the pompous celebration of the chief festivals of the year, he has not shut the city churches; and it would need a vast extinguisher to hide the many ruins and natural features which endear Rome to one's heart.

At first, perhaps, one is a little out of humour with the famous city. Until you have lost your way in it twenty times, and come as often upon some engaging old relic of antiquity hid behind a big palace, or shadowed by one of the new blocks which the speculators are raising with such speed, until then, I say, you will not have much chance to realise that Rome differs very materially from London.

To be sure, the faces of the people are of a southern cast, and in London one does not, unhappily, see pretty girls with their own tresses hanging to the ankle. Nor does one, in our metropolis, pay but fivepence, as here, in remuneration to a cabman for an ordinary drive within the city. English architecture, too, is decidedly less impressive than the huge houses of the nobility, which stand among the shops, or as sides to the squares of the city. In England, again, it would seem odd if the shops themselves, as in the Corso of Rome, were so largely used for the sale of what are called articles of devotion—crosses, reliquaries, miniatures of the masterpieces

of Italy's painters, rosaries of every precious material, and the like. You would never suppose that Rome was an infidel city, if you paid it but a flying visit, and looked in the shop windows. It is well, however, to remember that hither still come the faithful from the four corners of the earth; and that it is they who are the chief purchasers of these attractive little treasures.

There is the same bustle here as in any other large city of modern times. Boys cry their papers, or signify their desire to black your boots. Carmen prowl about the streets in expectation of hire. Girls offer you flowers; indeed, they go much further than that—they thrust them into your coat, and walk away with an arch, studied smile that says as plainly as a printed book: "You must pay me twice the price of the things now that I have condescended, with my own lovely hands, to deck your insignificant person." Beggars beg; and the more impatient passers-by tread on your toes.

It may seem absurd to talk of impatience in Rome in the sense of an ardent desire to make haste. As if any one south of latitude forty-five degrees, or thereabouts, was ever concerned to hurry himself about anything! But such an objection is really quite antediluvian by this time. Italy under King Humbert has, by some subtle method of transfusion, acquired a good deal of the stir of the north. Spain is now out of question the slowest country in Europe. The average Roman, if he be so happy as to have a business of any kind, is anxious to be energetic while the sun of Royalty shines over his head.

You must not, therefore, judge of other Romans by yonder group of dandies standing upon one leg, or leaning against the lintel of this or that coffee-house in the Corso. These youths are the scions of lofty houses, and thus they kill their time. What has a Colonna to do with trade that he should be called upon to bestir himself and behave like another man? Can a Borghese, or a Torlonia, or a Doria add new laurels to his house, that he should be required to uncross his legs, and throw his cigar of idleness to the ground? No, indeed. These are the great and revered ones of the city. I dare say they are the idols which the foolish young Achille has set up in the bereaved shrine of his heart, and at a word he would fall down and worship—their rent-rolls, and the esteem their high names procure for them.

The fact is, however, that even these youths are not half so inert as they may seem to you. Most people have their idle moments; but they are scrupulous to spend them alone. Our friends by the café, on the other hand, prefer to fill up the vacancies of their life in public. Towards evening their day begins, and they are hard at work amusing themselves—grim, futile task—long after their fellow-citizens have finished their first sleep of the night.

In another way, these lads may be said to be very much awake, even while thus killing the weakest hour of their twenty-four. If you are so happy as to possess a pretty sister, or a pretty young wife, and to be accompanied by her in your walks through the city, the moment you approach them, our idle friends will pull themselves together, and take great interest in you and your companion. They attitudinise magnificently. It is hard saying how their glances may affect your sister or your wife; but they are of a kind to make a sensation in the heart of the average Italian fair one upon whom they are concentrated. With them life is truly lived only when they are in the thrall of such emotion as beauty stirs within them. They will follow a pretty face until their legs, or rather their horses', will bear them no longer, and even then their aspirations will continue the chase. If they are so fortunate as to run you to earth, to use a fox-hunting phrase, there may be trouble in store for you, and excitement for your partner in the chase. No man likes his wife to be courted by another man, specially before his eyes. Yet this may be the pleasurable experience that Fate offers you. There is not a doorkeeper in Rome who is not amenable to the wishes of a distinguished Roman nobleman. The consequence is, that ere you have been in the Holy City two days, your pretty wife may have received two or three separate letters from individuals who profess, on coroneted paper, an undying affection for her. The climax is reached when, on the third or fourth day, the young reprobates, though they have had no encouragement from your fond partner in this reproach, implore her to give them a rendezvous, to enable them, by word of mouth, to tell of the undying passion which consumes them. It is enough to make you very angry; and the more angry because you know that you are the subject of banter among these empty-headed aristocrats. I know families that

have come eagerly to Rome, proposing to stay for a month or two; but their pleasure has been so much marred by the conduct of these youths, that, at the end of a week, they have thought themselves compelled to fly elsewhere. Beauty is nowhere the source of more trouble and responsibility than in the capital towns of Italy.

The obverse side to this eccentric picture must be shown.

Manners have so free a cast in this bold, untrammelled city, that even the ladies are under but little restraint in the expression of their heart's whisperings. Of course, we are not now in an epoch so iniquitous as that of the Cæsars. Nor, on the other hand, would it now be possible, as it was then, for the aggrieved husband to take the dagger, or phial of vengeance, in his own fingers, and mete out dire chastisement to his wicked wife. We live in a milder age. It is not outrageous, in the opinion of the Italian world, for an Italian wife to give two or three corners of her heart to men who are not her husband. So she does not openly shock society—by no means an easy task, be it said—she may even be as generous in this particular as she pleases. The worthy man whose name she has accepted as a passport into the fulness of experience, will only make himself ridiculous if he ventures to demur to the warmth of tone with which she addresses men who are professedly her admirers. Her answer to him is stereotyped: "Have I not married you? What more would you have? For Heaven's sake, since I have consented to that sacrifice, let me have some reward! I do not say to you, 'Be so kind as to abstain from paying your attentions so effusively to the Countess C—, or Signora D—. I behave to you as I wish you to behave to me. We are both of mature age; life is short; its pleasures are ephemeral; the past cannot be recalled; let us live and enjoy while we may!'" To this the average husband, with divers misdeeds heavy as lead at the heart, has no reply. He can but shrug his shoulders, and spread forth his palms. And with this signal of submission he surrenders his wife to her will, and goes straightway to pay his respects to the Countess C—, or Signora D—.

The earlier satirists of the century, and previous to the time of the French Revolution, were never tired of depicting the humour of such life as this. The husband

was ever a nonentity in his own house. Having, once for all, at the altar, given that happy woman, his wife, her freedom to act as she chose, it was his duty to trouble her as little as possible. And so society determined that it was his business to seek entertainment elsewhere, what time his fair spouse was receiving company of the kind she loved best to welcome. Only, when all was over, he might appear ceremoniously to bid her guests farewell, and to enter as the warder of the house for the watches of the night.

Much of this still remains in Italy—to the undying marvel of those of us who, from the North, become acquainted with so strange a phase of life. The fair matron of Rome does not behave in a manner vastly outrageous if she bestows the notice of her eyes upon this or that handsome stranger, whom she marks in the Corso, during the fashionable afternoon promenade. When her eyes have known him a little while, and he has begun to pique her interest, she will not think herself disgraced to all eternity, if, once in a way, she bows her noble head to him, so that he may, if he will, acknowledge her salutation by raising his hat. The ice broken, it is not difficult to advance this imaginary acquaintanceship, until it becomes a matter of fact. Either she takes a sudden fancy for a cream tart, at the moment when her carriage and the handsome stranger are both at the same time at the door of the confectioner's shop; or she drops her handkerchief from the vehicle with equal discretion.

"You will take my arm, I beg!"—or, "Pray, madame, is not this handkerchief yours!" Thus the overture is at an end; and the play may be said to be well begun.

If the lady be accompanied by her husband, the poor fellow stands like a lonely hen balancing itself upon one leg. He is at his wife's service, since he has ventured to impose his society upon her. She may, or she may not, introduce the handsome stranger to him. It will not disturb his peace of mind if she overlooks him wholly. But in any case, and though he knows no more of the man than of the Emperor of China, it will be his obvious duty if, when his wife has talked sufficiently to the stranger, she invites him to call upon her, to second his wife's wishes with a courteous eagerness, that seems to imply that he will be utterly unhappy for a

year if the petitioner does not accede to his request.

It would, I am sure, astound some of my readers if they could see how rapidly such an introduction leads to intimacy—in Rome. What are tongues, faces, and hearts for—the Romans seem to ask—unless to be used according to the dictates of, shall we say, instinct? “It pleases me,” confesses the matron to the stranger, “to see you, to talk to you, and to expose the sensitiveness of my poor heart to you. I do not feel that I am doing wrong. You of course have no such scruples, for the hardness of the masculine heart is well known to us unfortunate weak women. Can you tell me, then, why I may not give myself the indulgence of your company, since it is so great an enjoyment to me, and since you are so courteous as to acknowledge that you are not unwilling to be friendly with me?”

“Upon my soul, I can’t,” replies the stranger, bluntly; and though, if he be, let us say, an Englishman, he is dimly conscious that his fellow-countrymen, and especially his fellow-countrywomen, would be prone to say some odd things about him if they could see him in his present situation, he continues to allow himself the privilege of looking into the dark eyes of this interesting Roman, who—not to pick words—seems to have taken such a fancy to him. Her servants are extremely deferential. Both they and their mistress call him Signor Carlo, or the Count Carlo, with a most agreeable disregard for his more frigid surname. The husband, when he appears, or if they meet on the marble staircase leading to the salon, or even the thickly-carpeted, lesser flight towards my lady’s boudoir, is quite affectionately civil, and takes the stranger’s one hand between his two diminutive palms with an earnestness that is half-paternal and half-patriarchal. In fact, the atmosphere of the place, once he has passed the gigantic porter of the palace, who stands all day at the door, in a cocked hat, and leaning on a staff with a golden head, is too romantic to be estimated seriously. It fascinates, however. And so it is probable, if the lady be not destitute of all the graces of her order and sex, ere long, our friend becomes an habitué of the most welcome kind. The Countess pours out her heart and her aspirations to him as if she had known him from her childhood. The yellow silk hangings of the dainty little

room in which they meet, the Madonna by Sassoferrato, the two enormous vases from the Abruzzi factory, the little pug dog with silver bells round its neck, the perfume of the flowers which always comes forth half-way down the stairs to meet him, the jewelled ivory crucifix upon the writing-table consecrated to those short but expressive little “billets doux” which she sends him so constantly—these among the other features of the house, the room, and the lady, get familiar to him as an old glove; and most familiar of all, is the tender, almost entreating look in the dark eyes of his hostess, and the sweet, glad smile with which she greets him.

When the sorrowful day of parting arrives, the lady may or may not offer her cheek to her friend, may or may not place with her own delicate fingers a ring of remembrance upon the stranger’s hand, may or may not say that the time will seem long until she sees him again. But it is at least likely that she will ask the stranger if he thinks he has cause for self-reproach in this their abnormal friendship. Our hero will easily satisfy the lady in this respect. And, indeed, when all’s said, and done, and thought, he will find it just as easy to satisfy himself in his answer. There has been nothing wrong about the adventure; and his heart seems the larger for his experience.

In the old days, the ladies of Rome amused themselves with the Platonic friendship of those dignitaries of the church who did not think the sex too dangerous to associate with. Nowadays, it is not the vogue for a Cardinal or a Bishop to dance attendance upon a fair face, any more than it is common for other Cardinals to devote their evenings to “faro” or “roulette” in their own palaces or the palaces of others.

What then? Are hearts also of different calibre, even as customs have changed? No, indeed. There is the old aching void in many a breast in Rome as elsewhere—a void which may be charmed away for a time by pleasant intercourse with what solace the world can afford it. This explains the ease—not to speak uncivilly—of life in Rome, and in other cities of Italy. It is well to know this, lest one be led to think harshly of fair ladies whose misfortunes, and the custom of the country, have tied to husbands for whom they neither have nor can be expected to have much sincere affection.

"THE FABLED UNICORN."

ABOUT one hundred years ago, Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, wrote: "It seems now a point agreed upon by travellers and naturalists, that the famous animal, having one horn only upon his forehead, is the fanciful creation of the poets and painters."

He treats with contempt the assertions of other travellers, that they had seen such an animal in Africa, although he himself describes at considerable length the rhinoceros, a species of which with one horn, he said, is often found in Eastern Africa, towards Cape Guardafui. He thought the "reem" of the Bible might have been the rhinoceros, and was probably the origin of the fabled unicorn.

A great many people have supposed the same; and yet the sculptured unicorn, in the ancient ruins of Persepolis, points to a very different conclusion. Heeren, the author of "Asiatic Nations," says, that the unicorn was adopted by the ancient Persians as the emblem of speed and strength, and the figure on the sculpture has no resemblance to the rhinoceros.

Barrow, again, the famous South African traveller, reported that he had seen drawings of the unicorn made by the Bushmen, and that all the other drawings by them of animals known to him were accurate copies.

Robert Southey frankly recorded his belief in the existence of the unicorn, and said, further, that many believed with him. And Robert Southey was right, as we propose to show.

Sir Thomas Browne, it may be remembered, agreed that there are "many unicorns," for "this animal is not uniformly described, but differently set forth by those that undertake it." And because of the lack of uniformity, he repudiated the idea that there could be the medical and antidotal virtue in the unicorn's horn, which was popularly supposed. He set forth the various descriptions of the unicorn by "the Ancients," and showed that they so materially differ "that under the same name authors describe, not the same animal, so that the unicorn horn of one is not that of another, although we proclaim an equal virtue in all."

Pliny's unicorn, which, as the good doctor says, was "a fierce and terrible creature," had the head of a hart, the feet of

an elephant, the tail of a boar, and the body of a horse. Elian describes one as the size of a horse, and with a black horn, but Paulus Venetus made it as big as an elephant. Ludovicus Romanus, the traveller, reported that he had seen two in the temple at Mecca, with heads like deer, and feet like goats.

But numerous as are the differences among the old writers, their unicorns may be divided into two broad classes—those which support the rhinoceros theory, and those which point to a distinct animal, such as that, which, by the alterations of fable, and the modifications of heraldry, comes to be regarded, as on our national coat-of-arms, as a horse-shaped animal, with a horn issuing from its forehead.

This heraldic animal undoubtedly owed its importation into Great Britain to the Crusaders. They brought home from the East wonderful stories of the mysterious animal which they had seen on Egyptian and Persian monuments, or had heard described by those who had seen them. This was, of course, before the translators of the Bible had introduced the unicorn into the Book of Job, where the reference is plainly to the rhinoceros: "Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?"

Yet, by Shakespeare's time, the animal had become a myth and nothing more, for when the "strange shapes" appear to the shipwrecked mariners on Prospero's island, Sebastian is made to say of them:

A living drollery! Now I will believe
That there are unicorns; that in Arabia
There is one tree, the phoenix' throne; one phoenix
At this hour reigning there.

This is a clear reference to the reputedly fabulous and incredible. There is another reference, in "Julius Cæsar," where Brutus says of the man he is about to slay:

He loves to hear
That unicorns may be betrayed with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,
Lions with toils, and men with flatterers.

The allusion is here to the fable upon which rests the traditional enmity of the lion and the unicorn—that the unicorn is such a combination of pride and fierce anger, that, when he is attacked, he puts down his head and rushes blindly at his foe. In doing this he was said to drive his horn so fast into a tree that he became a prisoner to his own fury, and the lion devoured him at leisure.

From the Crusaders the unicorn readily

found its way into heraldry. The familiar animal, which now joins with the lion in supporting the arms of Great Britain, was incorporated at the time of the Scottish union. Before that event the Scottish arms had two unicorns as "supporters."

As an heraldic emblem: "The unicorn is the symbol of strength of body and virtue of mind. It also denotes extreme courage, and well befits the warrior who had rather die than fall into the hand of the enemy." So says Sloane Evans in his "Grammar of British Heraldry"; while also disposing curtly of the unicorn as one of the "chimerical charges" of heraldry, and compounded of parts of the lion and the horse, with one long projecting horn in the middle of its forehead.

A careful examination of the Eastern monuments, from which the Crusaders obtained their idea of the unicorn, reveals the fact that the oryx must have been in the minds of the designers—the very animal from which, doubtless, the Bushmen made those drawings on which Barrow commented. For the oryx is a native of South Africa, and is known to the Boers as the gemsbok.

But then he is not a unicorn, for he has two horns. Yet, looked at in profile, he appears to have only one.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that the arms of the Cape of Good Hope are "supported" by two animals, both of which are now almost, if not quite, extinct in the colony, but which once abounded on the grassy plains of South Africa. One of these is the black hartebeest, or white-tailed gnu; the other is the gemsbok, or oryx—the true unicorn. The latter is still to be found in small numbers in Northern Bushmanland, and on the borders of the Kalihari desert, but is seldom or ever seen now in Cape Colony.

Strangely enough, this rare and beautiful creature frequents the most arid and uninviting regions, for it is almost independent of water, and prefers solitude to verdure. It stands at the head of the large and beautiful species of antelopes with which Africa abounds; for the gemsbok is an antelope, and not, as the Dutch settlers seem to have supposed by the name they gave it, a chamois.

In size, the gemsbok is that of a large ass, the adult being about three feet ten inches at the shoulder. In colour it is of a greyish buff. Its form is robust, and its carriage majestic. Its head is its chief point of beauty—of pure white, painted

with eccentric black markings, surmounted by two straight, sharp-pointed horns over three feet in length. It has a full and beautiful eye, a white breast and stomach, with a tuft of thick, black hair on the chest, an erect mane, a long, black, switch tail that touches the ground, and broad, black bands over its back and sides.

Two of its characteristics at once identify it with the fabled unicorn—its unrivalled speed, and its fierceness when turned at bay.

Another is, that of all the antelopes, the oryx alone will face the lion. It is well known in Cape Colony that the carcasses of the lion and the gemsbok have frequently been found rotting together, the body of the lion firmly impaled on the horns of the other. Old hunters have described the gemsbok's method of meeting attack. When sorely pressed, it throws itself on the ground, and keeps sweeping with its horns a deadly circle that no foe dare venture within. Although both leopards and lions do, at times, attack the gemsbok, they never do so unless very hard up indeed for a meal; and as often as not they come off second best. Gordon Cumming and other hunters have gone into raptures over the beauty, speed, grace, and courage of the gemsbok.

Now the size, colour, and shape of the gemsbok all correspond with the drawings and descriptions from which the fabled unicorn has grown. The horns, when seen in profile, appear, as we have said, as one, and "the ancients" have merely given them a forward set, and added a few other little touches, which Europeans have exaggerated, and heraldists have travestied. Let it be remembered that Aristotle spoke of the oryx as one-horned; and the subsequent Greek writers spoke of the unicorn as of the size of a horse, with one straight horn of from one and a half to two cubits in length—that is, three to three and a half feet—and it is not difficult to see how the oryx or gemsbok developed into the unicorn.

As we now see him on our national arms—"Argent, crived and unguled, or, with a coronet composed of crosses patée and fleur-de-lys, with a chain affixed between the forelegs, and reflexed over the back of the last"—he is a somewhat different creature from the shy, swift, bright-eyed embodiment of grace that lingers on the wild, desert plains of Kalihari. But, after all, the heraldic unicorn is not so very much more of a

travesty of the real unicorn, than the heraldic lion is of the real lion.

As to the medical virtues which reputedly lie in its horns, we agree with old Sir Thomas Browne in thinking that there are, and can be, none which is not to be found in all horns, from which hartshorn can be extracted.

Another thing which helps to identify the gemsbok with the Persian and Egyptian unicorn, is the fact that it has been found in North-east Africa and in Arabia. Whether it will ever return to adorn the plains of Cape Colony again is extremely doubtful, notwithstanding the immunity which both it and the hartebeest enjoy from the gunner under the Colonial Game Preservation Act now in force. It is to be feared that that law has been too long deferred, and yet there is one thing in favour of the survival of the gemsbok from the general extermination, which seems to threaten certain animal life in Africa—including the elephant—and that is, that his absolute independence of water enables him to seek sanctuary in parched regions, where the huntaman dare not follow.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that the unicorn came into our national arms only at the Scotch Union. The personal arms of the Stuarts consisted of the lion within a double tressure, supported by a unicorn on each side. When King James succeeded to the English throne, he placed the lion on the dexter side and the unicorn on the sinister side, in place of the red dragon of the Tudors. Thus do we have "the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown."

In Nisbet's "System of Heraldry" it is stated that the unicorn was, at a very early period, one of the devices borne by the Scottish Kings, "not only for his strength, courage, and particular virtue of his horn in dispelling poison, but as the emblem of unconquerable freedom—a suitable device for Scotland, which became the supporter of its imperial design, and continues the badge of its independency."

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot,"
"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LIV. VENGEANCE

How long Hoel stayed in the little church he could not tell. No one came to disturb him; the door remained opened,

and the sudden gusts of wind that now and then swept up through the pine plantation only blew in a few of the crushed petals of the white flowers that the bride had not trodden on again.

All the mental suffering he had experienced, added to the physical weakness which still remained, made him only able to bear his utter misery by thus resting in this perfect solitude. He did not fully realise that the wedding had been arrested voluntarily by Elva herself. He believed that she had been too much overstrained to go through with it; and that the next day, or as soon as she had sufficiently recovered, she would finish the ceremony. He now began blaming himself for having come. Again he had behaved selfishly; and what right had he even to come and beg for her forgiveness, even if it had been merely by a look?

Hoel was again thrown into a state of penitence, and recognised that unselfishness is not acquired in a day, nor even after having experienced a great shock. He began also to writhe under the idea that, by showing himself, he had but added in her eyes to his former cowardly conduct. How should he ever be able to explain to her that his intentions had been at this time, at least, good and honourable? He fancied he should be content to let her be the wife of another if only she could know that his conduct had had much excuse.

"But how can she ever know this? How can I ever tell her?"

Suddenly Hoel raised his head and recalled his resolution. After the wedding, he had promised to tell Jesse the truth. He might even now be trying to see Mr. Kestell, and— No, that must not be. Already, to spare Elva, and, therefore, himself, he had too long put off what was right. Jesse ought to know, and he, Hoel, was the only man who might influence him. On the other hand, Hoel could not make up his mind to leave this spot without first finding out whether Elva were better. He looked at his watch; it was nearly half-past four. He must find Jesse before going back to town. Poor fellow, he had been wronged by every one. "He looked to me as a friend; I have behaved as no friend should have done."

He stood up, and felt stronger and calmer. Deep down in his heart there was the thought that Elva was not yet another man's wife; but he wondered how he could draw comfort from such a poor

source of hope. Two or three days at the most and the same ghastly scene would be re-enacted. Anyhow, he would be a man now; he would put away thoughts about himself and face life and all its emptiness as best he could. Vicary had been able to find some outside sphere in which to throw himself out of himself. That seemed the great motive power of men whose lives were mysteries to the worldly and the easy-going.

"If I can't get up to his exalted state of feeling, at least I can try the working part of the affair. After all, can I honestly say that I have been happy all these years? I have lived happily; but is that happiness? What is happiness? But that other thing, I must not put it off any longer. Elva is not away. Ought I to consider that? Have I not done it too long already? Fate is too strong for me. Anyhow, I must see Vicary."

He stepped out of the church and looked round cautiously, almost fearfully, as a prisoner just released from prison might do. But all was silence. The path was strewn with crushed and much-soiled flowers. All the rustics had walked over them. No pink-dressed girls were there; no smart carriages; nothing of all the show remained except the arch, and its flowers were already withering.

No one was about. He could not see the Vicarage; and in its shrubbery, which joined the churchyard, no sound was audible. He longed, intensely, to know something of Elva; but how could he show himself? Here he was; he must be looked upon as a scoundrel, whom, perhaps, even Herbert Heaton would pass by without notice.

This idea was maddening to one of Hoel's nature, and caused him to walk quickly out of the little wood, and to plunge into the deep heather up towards Mrs. Joyce's cottage. He would get his duty over and leave Rushbrook for ever. The stormy clouds had not increased, and a refreshing breeze had sprung up and restored a little of his strength. Before he reached the cottage—happily for him—he met Joe, 'Liza's brother—who was much too shy to do anything but answer questions.

"Is Mr. Vicary at your house still?"

"Yes, sir; leastways——"

Joe touched his cap and stared.

"Is he there now?"

"No, sir; leastways——"

"Do you know anything about him?"

said Hoel, impatiently, not having George Guthrie's power of getting everything and anything out of the rustic mind.

"Mr. Vicary was at 'ome ten minutes ago. He just did up his things, he did, as he's going back to Lunnon to-night. He's not coming here again."

"Where is he?"

"He was going to Rushbrook House, he said, sir, and then would walk on to Grey-stone. He weren't coming here no more."

"Then I can, perhaps, catch him up," said Hoel, a sudden inexplicable fear seizing him.

Joe looked Mr. Fenner up and down, and grinned. The idea of his catching up Mr. Vicary seemed quite out of the question.

"He walks fast, he does."

"Thank you," said Hoel, understanding perfectly; but not in a mood to be amused, as he would have been at another time. He turned at once, and hurried down the hill as fast as he could. The forest land had once more become—as it usually was—solitary and silent. Though the storm had not come on yet, all the sky was overcast: a grey curtain shutting in the beautiful blue. There was an intense melancholy look, even in Nature. It was all in harmony with the deep depression which would seize upon him as he hurried on to find Jesse.

"We can go back together," he thought. "I must set about helping him. He has too much power to be allowed to lie hidden for long; but how will he take this news, poor fellow? I wish I were a hundred miles off; but it's no use thinking of it any longer. By telling him, I may induce him to be generous. He is generous. A noble-hearted fellow at the bottom, till he took this craze. I ought to have got that out of his head long ago; but he would never have believed me without going into the whole matter."

Suddenly he paused. There were the Rushbrook chimneys. How beautiful it all looked now! Could he have the courage to enter that gate again? Yes, he must. Of course Mr. Kestell would not be at home, and Jesse might be waiting in the study. It was tiresome that he had not overtaken him. He reached the road close by the bridge, and looked round again. He positively dared not open the swing-gate of the drive; but, instead, he walked on in the opposite direction from the Pools, hoping Jesse might come out. This road took a turn, which hid Rushbrook

House, and then ran by a little dell-like plantation, with the small stream and tall hedge on one side and oaks and larches on the other.

With sunlight falling aslant, this part of the road was lovely; now it looked gloomy and dull. Hoel again paused and looked back. At this instant he heard the sound of a vehicle being driven very quickly. He moved on one side near the steep bank of the stream, and instinctively began to walk on. He was afraid now of being recognised. It was a dog-cart—he heard there were only two wheels—and, from force of habit, he glanced quickly at it as it passed him. That glance was enough for mutual recognition. It was Walter Akister, with a groom by his side. The look of fierce hatred that flashed into Akister's eyes was unmistakeable, and, before Hoel had decided what to do, Walter had thrown the reins to the groom, and, telling him to drive on, sprang down, and, whip in hand, in a moment was by Hoel's side.

"You're here again!" he cried, mad with passion. "I wonder you dared to show your face. You are beneath the notice of a gentleman, and deserve the treatment of the brute. Take that, and that, you blackguard."

Hoel had only time—so quick had been Walter Akister's movements—to make a spring forward and try to wrench the whip out of his enemy's hand. He failed, and, stung with the pain, he closed with Walter, merely, however, in self-defence. He could not, otherwise, have laid a finger on him; but, though it has been asserted that a certain man with a guilty conscience once bore a horse-whipping with a due humility, Hoel did not reach this pitch of perfection. His conscience was self-accusing, certainly; but not in the way that Walter imagined. Alas! right and might are not synonymous terms. Hoel was not by any means strong enough to cope with Walter, and this young man's blood was up. In another moment, Walter had once more struck him, and, in the hand-to-hand struggle, Hoel was thrown down. As he fell, he struck his head against a great way-side milestone, and for a few minutes was dazed by the blow.

Walter did not even wait to see what happened; he merely strode on, and the next turn soon hid him from sight.

Hoel did not know how long he remained lying on the brink of the ditch. When he regained his power of thinking,

the blood rushed back to his cheeks as he remembered the indignity of his assault. He laid hold of the milestone, and raised himself up; but he had to rest again before framing a plan. His head throbbed painfully; and, after another interval, he walked on a few paces to a spot where the stream was easily reached. Here he dipped his handkerchief in and bathed his temples.

It was only at this moment that he recollected his previous intention of finding Jesse. He might be too late, for the latter might have started already for Grey-stone. No, that was not likely; he would almost certainly have taken this road.

The need for action is the best cure for soothing tumultuous thought, and Hoel once more turned his steps towards Rushbrook.

He looked at his watch. It was nearly six o'clock. The clouds were lower and more threatening; the air was close; and, to Hoel's mind, the sadness of the country seemed realised on this evening to its fullest extent. Elva and he had one day argued about the disadvantages and advantages of country life, and Hoel remembered having said that some days, and in some conditions of weather, the oppressive melancholy of the country beats description. He remembered Elva's wry look as she answered, that she had never experienced oppressive melancholy, only a sadness that was not without its compensating charm. From this, he had first realised that a woman's mind has naturally much of the poet's analysing power in it; its vibrations are more numerous, and, therefore, capable of finer perception. He had rather enjoyed following out this theory; but at the time it had not made him put womankind on a higher pedestal because of their nearer relationship to poets; on the contrary, fond as Hoel was of all literature as such, he did not rank poetry very much higher than prose, and for this he could have given very forcible and well-explained reasons.

How curious such a small thing as this should come into his head now, he thought, when the day had been one filled with a great event! How incomprehensible was man's mind both in its power of soaring and its inability to resist the influences of small things! Pshaw, there he was again wandering on about theories when all his mind ought to be centred on what he meant to say to Jesse Vicary, that was the important fact of the moment, it was that confounded blow that made him so stupid.

He was in sight again of the swing-gate. The grey light made it seem more like late evening than the hour warranted; the road by the Pools was soon lost in the light on account of the overshadowing trees, whose leaves had already lost their fresh greenness.

There was no Vicary in sight. What should he do? He passed his thin, white hand over his forehead to ease the throbbing, and to force himself to be definite. Would there be any chance of meeting Mr. Kestell? He, Hoel, had nothing to fear from him; for there was no secret between them; besides, was he not coming for his sake?

Suddenly he swept away all reasoning, walked up to the swing-gate, and entered the drive.

How beautiful it all looked; the lawn was the perfection of green velvet; the copper beech and the clump of silver birch could not but claim admiration in all lights; the flower beds were in their prime, all that money could do was found here in its best conception. But there was a strange stillness about the place. The gardeners, who had had a holiday given to them, had naturally absented themselves after the unfortunate ending of the service—the guests had made themselves scarce, of course—and it appeared that those who had to remain on duty were anxious not to obtrude their presence. So Hoel settled. He himself could not walk up the drive unmoved. The strange events that had happened, since his last visit here, had produced too serious consequences to allow him to dispel all the miserable recollections that crowded his brain.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by the sound of a footfall in front of him. He looked up and saw a figure coming down the steps of the front door. For one instant his heart bounded and his pulses throbbed. The figure was all in white. He fancied he was going to find himself face to face with Elva; then another glance showed him his mistake. It was her sister.

Amice, having made three steps forward, stopped short and gazed fixedly at Hoel. For a moment she, too, had hoped he was another; but when she recognised him, she did not appear surprised; she, too, had seen him in the morning. Mechanically Hoel walked straight on till he stood close beside her.

"Tell me," he said, without any intro-

duction, "how she is. If I knew that, I could go away happier. You will not believe me, no one will, when I say that now I only wish to see her happy." He spoke very low, and he could not prevent himself from imagining all the evil Amice must be thinking of him. Her blue, penetrating eyes were fixed on his face, but their expression made him insensibly shudder, and remember the strange hints people had thrown out as to Amice Kestell being somewhat uncanny.

"Elva is very unwell; she is still at the Vicarage. Oh it is dreadful, dreadful, mamma feels it so much; but I came back here to find papa. Have you seen him, Mr. Fenner?"

"No, I suppose he is still at the Vicarage."

Hoel was much surprised that Amice did not seem to regard him in the light of a villain. He remembered their interview in the wood; perhaps, then, she alone was capable of believing that he had had a reason, if a wrong one, for forsaking Elva. The thought made him feel grateful to her. He added, with a new tone in his voice:

"Amice, for pity's sake tell me that I had nothing to do with that interruption; listen, I only wanted to see her once again, the wish was too strong to resist; I believe if I had been on my death-bed I should have risen and come here to-day. Will she think it another sign of my villainess? The idea is unbearable."

"What do your feelings matter?" said Amice with a force that staggered him. "Don't you know, Mr. Fenner, that we individuals are nothing, mere nothings in the hands of God? That He works out His ways by our means, that is all; the curse was bound to fall for the sin. He deals out justice; but, oh, He is merciful, too, very merciful. You know the—cause. Look, because one poor, feeble, human being can help another, I ask you for your help now."

Never before had words acted so powerfully on Hoel, the very depth of his heart was stirred with pity; never before had he recognised his own nothingness in the great world of creation. What, indeed, as Amice said, were his feelings; was he not but one of the million sufferers through sin? Was he not as much in need of mercy as any other, and was not his only birthright the power of doing good? That power he had never exercised in an appreciable quality; but, instead, he had set himself up as a ruler and a judge over his fellow.

At this moment, weak as he was, Hoel

Fenner would have worn a penance-sheet had Amice bidden so. What if she were, after all, a woman far beyond the ordinary level of womankind—a woman who believed with a true belief in the retributive justice of Heaven?

"Tell me what to do. What is it you fear? By my love, my unalterable love for Elva, let me be of use, dear Amice."

"You forsook us before," she said, sadly, and Hoel's soul was filled with shame; it needed Amice's words to bring him to the full consciousness of his cowardice.

"Yes, and I have suffered for it."

"I am not blaming you," she said, sadly, covering her eyes; "it was natural. You know the curse; I have partly unravelled it—only partly. You know all. Help me. Is Jesse Vicary to be feared?"

"Feared! Jesse Vicary, at the bottom the noblest of men! But now he has a craze, a false idea. It was to set that right that I came here again. Has he been here? I was waiting to see him."

"He has been here, and I have seen him. He was changed; he looked so dreadful. You are a man of the world—you do not believe that the devils can do us harm. But yet I saw it so plain; Jesse was not himself. When he heard my father had gone out, he was furious with him; he frightened me. I do not know why papa broke his word; he had promised to meet him here at six o'clock. Jesse Vicary came at five minutes before, and papa had gone out half an hour before.

Jones said so. He left the Vicarage to see after mamma, he told us. Do you see how I am placed? I dare not leave the house; mamma will not be left for long; she is so much upset about Elva. I dare not go after the others. But oh, Mr. Fenner, I am so anxious. Will you follow Vicary? He cannot be very far. It is not more than five minutes since he left this spot."

Hoel was immediately seized with the same dread. What he had feared might happen. Jesse would perhaps say things he might regret all his life, from want of knowing the truth.

"I will follow Vicary at once. Do you think he went by the Pools?"

"Yes, I know he did, I watched him. But I do not know where my father is. Not there, not there, I hope. But it would comfort me to think you would be on the watch."

"I will bring him home," said Hoel, earnestly, taking Amice's hand, which was icy cold. "One thing more—if you know the truth, promise me to spare Elva."

Amice turned her eyes full on him.

"I do not know the whole truth," she said; "no one has ever told me. I only know that God's laws cannot be broken without the punishment following, unto the third and fourth generation. But go now, go at once, for Elva's sake."

Hoel turned away, and was soon lost to sight when he had passed over the bridge.

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A RED SISTER.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," "At the Moment of Victory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON the Castle terrace, the sun-dial, gorgeous in new bronze and sparkling granite, lengthened its shadow over the flying hours. Half-past four struck, and Lady Joan went indoors to afternoon tea in the library. Lord Southmoor was there awaiting her. He was standing in one of the long narrow windows of the room, holding one of her delicate Sèvres tea-cups to the light.

To every man, say the artists, comes in the course of his life an inspired moment, when, if his portrait be taken, the man is seen at his best.

To see Lord Southmoor with a Greuze before him on an easel, or with a dainty bit of china in his hand, was, so to speak, to catch him at high-water mark, and to get a glimpse of that special commodity, which, in his organism, did duty for a soul. A something of intelligence would come into his eye, a something of animation into his speech, and it was possible to conceive what Lord Southmoor might have been under happier conditions, that is to say, if life could have been made "all Greuze and Dresden china" for him.

"If only I had been moulded in a pottery, and fired in an oven, I should have been appreciated," Lady Honor was in the habit of saying; "I should have been fondled, and admired, put upon a pedestal, and under a glass shade. Thank you! I prefer my ugliness and my freedom."

He passed his finger caressingly over

the tea-cup, as Lady Joan entered the room. "After all, there's nothing like Sèvres for tea-cups," he said, musingly, "the very touch of the glaze to the lips is a pleasure."

Lady Joan's reply was not to be spoken, for at that moment the door was opened, and Lady Honor, followed by Argus, came in at a rush. She had evidently just returned from a ramble with the dog, who, during his master's absence, had transferred his allegiance to her; her hands were full of field-flowers, and a big trail of briony decorated the mastiff's collar.

"Tea for one, bread and butter for two," she said, giving the order as if she were entering a pastry-cook's shop. Then the straw hat, which she was swinging vigorously on one finger, came into contact with a photograph frame that stood on a small table, and the thing came down with a crash.

Honor stooped to pick it up. The action seemed to displease Lady Joan more than the accident had done.

"William will do that," she said, icily. Then her eyes rested with manifest disapproval on her niece's ungloved hands.

Honor felt the look. "I only took them off after I had passed the lodge, Aunt Joan. See, here they are safe in my pocket." She pulled forth a big leather-like pair of gloves from the pocket of her coat, and held them up to view.

Lady Joan surveyed them with a critical eye. "I shall be glad, Honor, if you will allow my milliner to supply you with gloves for the future," she said, "I have never seen gloves of that description on a lady's hand."

"I gave three francs for them only the day before I left Brussels," exclaimed the girl, indignantly. Then she took her tea

and a plate of bread and butter into a window recess at the farther end of the room, whistling to Argus to follow.

"She has not been a widow for a fortnight, and she can think of the cut of my gloves!" said the girl to herself. "Why, if I had a husband, and he were to die, all I should pray for would be sticks enough to make a suttee fire, so that I might go up to Heaven after him as soon as possible."

From the far end of the room, fragments of the talk between her father and aunt came to her.

"I can tell, by the way his lips move, what he is saying," she thought. "He's apologising for my shortcomings. 'It's the school at Brussels, that's what it is!' Yes, there's a big 'B' coming out of his mouth. Just as if I had chosen my own school, and sent myself there! Oh, good gracious! What are they saying now!"

"I shall be delighted," the Earl was saying, "to leave Honor in your care for as long as you like to keep her—your society will be of inestimable advantage to her. I must return in a day or so. Lily tells me her present quarters don't suit her, and I expect we shall have to get back to Cannes before the cold weather sets in."

Lady Southmoor, it may be mentioned in passing, generally found that her "quarters didn't suit her," after about three weeks' stay in them. The pleasant little flutter caused by the removal to a fresh hotel, the inspection of new menus, and the attendance of another doctor, was the nearest approach to a diversion that she admitted into the rôle of interesting invalid, which she filled so well.

"I'm to be left behind, am I! To be pruned, and trimmed, and tortured into a second Aunt Jo! Too late in the day, good people. Now ten years back, before my hair was quite so pronounced in colour, Aunt Jo, you might have done something with me; but not now. What, all your bread and butter gone, Argie, dear! Never mind, we'll go in for the cake, now. Ah! who's this! Aunt Joan, here's such a nice-looking man coming up to the house—carries himself like a soldier. No; I think he looks more like a gardener in his Sunday clothes."

The library was at the side of the house, and, facing the window at which Honor sat, was a small pine wood. Possibly, by the time three more generations of Gaskells had been reared and had passed away, that plantation might be worth looking

at. At present it was just a bit of scrubby woodland, through which a bridle-path led into the high road. From out this woodland Ralph Harwood had just emerged.

"Yes, a gardener in his Sunday clothes," Honor went on, taking up an opera-glass, and steadily scrutinising the man; "and, now I look at him again, I fancy I should very much prefer him in his shirt-sleeves with a spade in his hand."

"Are you addressing your conversation to me, Honor?" interrupted her father, in mild, lazy tones. "Your aunt left the room directly you announced the approaching stranger. Dear me! She seems to have a great deal on her hands just now."

Those were the very words on Lady Joan's lips at that moment, as she leaned forward on her writing-table, addressing Ralph, who was seated facing her on the other side.

"I have a great deal on my hands just now," she was saying, "and I shall be glad to arrange this matter with as little delay as possible. What does your priest—Father Elliot—say to my offer?"

"He says, my lady, that he must think it over; Lucy's future cannot be decided for her at a moment's notice."

Lady Joan's face changed.

"Surely," she exclaimed, "you could not have made it plain to him that my offer meant the providing for life for your sister, who is so incapable of providing for herself."

"I did, my lady, and he seemed surprised—startled I might say—when I told him who you were, and what an interest you had taken in her; but still he said he must have time to think the matter over."

Lady Joan's face grew darker still.

"Am I to understand," she asked, coldly, "that you mean this priest's advice to stand in the way of your sister's undoubted advantage? I told you before it is a doctor's advice, not a priest's, she is needing. Why do you not, now that the doctor who attended your mother is so near at hand, write to him to come and see your sister? His professional opinion might carry weight with your priest."

"Oh, my lady, I'm expecting him to come every day. I owe him a good deal of money; he'll be sure to come over and see me," answered Ralph, a little recklessly, and not a little bitterly.

"Well, when he comes to see you, you must let him see your sister also; and then I should like you to come here again and tell me exactly what his opinion is. I

suppose you clearly understand that I am willing to pay all his fees, and whatever he chooses to charge for receiving her into his house as a patient?"

"Oh, yes, my lady; and I shan't know how to be grateful enough to you, if the Father will let me accept your offer," protested Ralph, repeating words that grated on Lady Joan's ear in a manner impossible for him to understand.

"Will you write down the name and address of this doctor," said Lady Joan, handing a pen to him, "in case I may wish to communicate with him at any future time?"

Ralph rose from his chair and took the pen, placing his hat, which, until then, he had held in his hand, on the floor, beside the writing-table.

"Gallagher!" repeated Lady Joan, "an Irishman, of course?"

"No, my lady," said Ralph, as his pen slowly travelled across the paper, "his father was Irish, but he was born and brought up at Liverpool."

Lady Joan did not hear the reply; her eye, unconsciously following the man's movements, had discovered a letter hidden in the crown of his hat, which he had placed almost at her feet. This letter was addressed in handwriting which sent a thrill through her. Thirty years since she had last set eyes on that bold, clear hand! Then it had conveyed to her, in glowing language, burning, passionate messages of love; now, it merely addressed an envelope to:

MISS WHITE,

Convent of our Lady of Mercy,
Mount Clear,
near Liverpool.

For a moment she sat staring blankly at it. Here was blind chance absolutely playing into her hands and making her game easy to her!

Ralph laid down the pen. She pointed to the letter.

"You know the young lady to whom that letter is addressed?" she asked.

An expression of annoyance passed over Ralph's face.

"Not at all, my lady. It was a letter given me to post in Wrexford by Father Elliot—I am sorry you have seen the address. I hope your ladyship will not mention it to any one. The Father gave me strict orders not to let the letter pass out of my hands, and on no account to post it in Longridge."

Father Elliot again! And with two of

the most important threads of her life in his hand now!

"The address shall not pass my lips, I assure you," she said, with a double meaning, lost on Ralph.

For a moment there fell a silence between them, a silence which Ralph made busy with the thought of how strange it was that Lucy's two days' residence at the Castle should have aroused in this lady's mind so strong an interest in her.

Lady Joan's next words set his wonder travelling in another direction.

"Now I want to speak to you about the young lady to whom Father Elliot's letter is addressed. I know her slightly, and requested her to write to me when she left Longridge. She has not, however, done so. Tell me, do you know what sort of a place this convent at Mount Clear is?"

Ralph shook his head.

"I know nothing of the place, my lady. I could easily make enquiries about it through Father Elliot."

"No, don't do that. I was only thinking——" She broke off abruptly. She had a delicate matter to handle now, and one that must not be approached in too straightforward a fashion. She leaned back in her chair for a moment, then resumed: "I was only thinking that, as this young lady is very young, and very friendless, her inclinations might incline towards a religious life, and as I consider she has a strong vocation for it, I should be very pleased to assist her views."

This was her manner of expressing the thought that it would be a most desirable thing if this foolish and hysterical young person could be induced to expend her folly and hysterics in a religious channel; she was evidently designed by Nature to fill the rôle of the emotional religious recluse.

Ralph's face expressed simple, stolid astonishment. He was not quite sure that he grasped the lady's meaning; but if he had, what an amazing benevolence she was showing towards two friendless young girls!

"I don't know anything about her views, my lady," he answered, slowly. "In fact I know nothing at all about her, except that the Father gave me this letter to post, and was very anxious that no one should see it."

"Let no one see it! Tell the Father that it was quite by accident that I saw it. No doubt he has some wise reason for wishing to keep the address secret. At

the same time, I want to know a little about this young lady's doings; in fact, I have a special reason for wishing to keep my eye on her for some little time to come."

"Ye—es, my lady," said Ralph, slowly, his curiosity in the matter beginning to subside.

After all, it was no business of his what the lady's motive for wishing "to keep her eye" on this young person was.

"She is very poor," Lady Joan went on, presently, "and it occurs to me that I may possibly be of service to her. There are certain convents, I think, which expect a sum of money down before they admit a novice. Now, if this should be the case here, I should like you to make Father Elliot understand that I am anxious to assist in removing what might be a difficulty to a girl in Miss White's position in life."

"Yes, I will do so, my lady," said Ralph, rising to take his leave.

As he did so, a sudden rush of probabilities and possibilities came into Lady Joan's mind. First and foremost, there was Vaughan Elliot to be thought of. A bait to which, perhaps, ninety-nine priests out of a hundred might rise, would not tempt him—unless he had strangely altered since "the days of long ago." She must be cautious.

"Stay a moment," she said, arresting Ralph's departure. "Does Father Elliot, do you know, advocate conventual life for women?"

"Not in all cases, my lady. He says a nun is born, not made."

"Quite so; I agree with him. Then before you even mention my offer to him, will you kindly find out if he considers this young lady born to the vocation; do you think you can do this for me?"

"I will try, my lady," answered Ralph, hesitatingly. "The Father doesn't make much of a confidant of me; but still I'll do my best."

Lady Joan bethought her of the readiest way to ensure his "doing his best!" She took out her purse, and without preamble, handed him a bank-note. "I've already taken up a great deal of your time, which, no doubt, is of value to you, and if you act as my agent in this matter, I shall probably encroach still farther on it," she said.

"But, my lady, I've not earned so large an amount," said Ralph, gazing in amazement at the twenty-pound note, which

suggested such an easy way of solving one or two of his pecuniary difficulties.

"Never mind about that," said Lady Joan, pleasantly; "your sister, if she is ill, must be wanting all sorts of things, which, perhaps, you are not able to get for her——"

"That's true," sighed Ralph.

"And remember, I shall want to see you again in a day or two—that will mean more outlay of your valuable time."

Ralph began a profusion of thanks. Lady Joan interrupted them.

"Now this is the sum total of what I want done," she said. "With regard to your sister, I shall be glad if Dr. Gallagher will write to me his professional opinion of her mental and physical condition, and I shall be glad if you, on your part, will do all you can to induce Father Elliot to give his consent to her remaining, for a time, at least, under Dr. Gallagher's care."

"Yes, my lady, I understand."

"With regard to Miss White, I shall be glad to know what her plans are for the future. She may wish to emigrate; she may wish to do a great many things for which her resources are insufficient. Make Father Elliot understand, please, that I wish to help forward her plans for her future, whatever they may be—whatever they may be—do you see?"

And once more Ralph protested his willingness to do the lady's bidding to the utmost of his ability. Then he took his departure, his mind holding but one thought now: gratitude for the lady's great benevolence, which could not have come at a more opportune moment.

A great golden moon was throwing gaunt shadows across the green-sward as he crossed the Park on his way back. At the lodge gate he paused, to hold it open for a white, weary-faced young man, who came riding slowly along.

"That must be young Mr. Gaskell," he thought, as he touched his hat respectfully.

If Herrick could have known of the letter which lay hidden in that hat, he would scarcely have ridden past as he did, with a slight nod and indifferent "Good-night."

ROMAN LIFE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

DELIBERATE sightseeing is vanity everywhere, and perhaps nowhere more wearisome to body and mind than in Rome.

The Italian sky is a constant reproach to the unhappy tourist whose necessities compel him to be here one hour, there the next, and no one, except his indefatigable guide—chartered for a programme—knows where the third hour. Moreover, there is peril in it. The seven hills of the city are not formidable in their elevation; nevertheless, they are realities. You go from valley to hill top, and there, heated from your exertions—which in the relaxing South seem ten times as severe as they ought to seem—you are embraced by a breeze straight from the snows of the Apennines, twenty miles away, white over the purple of the lower hills and the pale green of the forlorn Campagna. This is the road by which not a few earnest and unresting travellers from the North have ended their travels in the little, violet-scented cemetery by the Porta Saint Paolo, with Keats on one side of them, and the heart of Shelley on the other side. It is the fashion to laugh at the thought of Roman fever in the spring months. The truth is, that such chills as one takes in Rome, are to be scorned at no time; and any old dame of the slums will tell you that it is no difficult matter to get the fever, even when there is frost in the air.

Some say the sensible tourist will always, upon his arrival in a famous town, straightway ascend to the highest tower of it, that he may begin his experiences with a bird's-eye view of the work that is before, or, rather, beneath him. Saint Peter's of Rome is obviously the place of resort for those who pin their faith to such a method.

Now Saint Peter's is interesting, quite apart from its use as a platform of vision. It is enough to make the perfervid Catholic exhale into nothingness in the rapture of his reverence to know that in the vaults underneath this vast church nearly seven score Popes find a resting-place. True, the record may be a little vague; especially when we find the first of the list entered as Saint Peter himself. But there can be no doubt about the unique sanctity of the spot. One may muse for hours among the dust of Emperors and Pontiffs who, in their day, could with a word have set the universe aflame.

Every man has his likings for this thing or that, in preference to another thing, though the latter may generally be accounted surpassingly excellent. I, for instance, do not feel so hugely attracted by Raphael's "Transfiguration." Domeni-

chino's "Last Supper of Saint Jerome" seems to me its superior. When, therefore, I see a group of visitors set themselves in front of the "Transfiguration," and assume those attitudes of rapt attention and determination, which, as plainly as the sun, tell of the vain effort to induce any natural appreciation of the picture, I fancy I can hear the questioning that goes on in their minds all the while. Domenichino's picture is on the other side of the room; but what was Domenichino to Raphael?

"Divine, is it not?" remarks one person to her neighbour, when her eyes begin to tire.

"Oh, very," is the prompt reply.

Baedeker says a few eloquent words about it, and the echo of these, diluted with native wit and criticism, is bandied from beholder to beholder, until the visit is at an end. The visitors then flit away to another room, and renew the same attitudes and the same self-interrogations. How many a time have I not caught the mind of such art-students as these in a brief moment of *déshabillé*, so to speak! The eye has turned aside from the object of pilgrimage, the mouth gapes, and there is a plaintive look of inexpressible weariness in the folds of the flesh of the face. "Oh, dear me, I am so tired of all this trotting about to look at things!" says the sufferer within herself; but the next moment she has recovered her energy.

Daily when I entered Saint Peter's I was wont to give a minute or two to the famous Pietà of Michael Angelo—the altar-piece of the first chapel on the right. I may be forgiven if I remind my reader that the group represents the dead Christ in the arms of the Virgin. It is so simple; but the wrinkled skin under the dead arms, where Mary supports her son, has the appearance of a body only just rid of its breath. The Virgin is in figure, face, and expression a girl of but twenty or twenty-two. Some reckoned this a fault in the great sculptor's work. How, they asked, should she be so young, when her son, who is dead, is more than thirty?

"It is to signify," replied Michael Angelo, "her purity. The pure retain their youth longer than those who are not pure. Was not she the very emblem and archetype of purity? Therefore it is that she seems such a child, though thirty years and more a mother."

Often while I looked at this precious statue, the hum of a service, from a chapel

on the other side of the church, drew me slowly away from it. The sound was like the distant roll of the sea on a sandy shore. One might go here and there in the spacious building and search in vain for the quarter whence it came. But, after a time, instinct guides the steps.

There was always a certain fascination about the scene. It was not wholly the kind of fascination that one may ascribe to the influences of Heaven. The grandiose demeanour of the scarlet and crimson prelates and cardinals, adorned further with gold lace and purple, was eloquent of earthly greatness. Here was the pomp of the priesthood of all times admirably signified. The large, statuesque features of the reverend men were almost as awe-inspiring as their gowns. They brought to mind that terrible last resting-place of the Incas of Peru: a chamber wherein for many a generation the mummified bodies of the Sovereigns were assembled, each on its golden chair; and wherein the dead monarchs periodically received the obeisances of the Peruvians, sons and grandsons of the men who kissed the dust before them while yet alive.

Incense and the chant solemnified these moments. In front of the corrugated elders of the church sat the priestlings of a third generation. They had received but their first tonsure. The very ceremonies in which they took a part were unfamiliar to them. One nudged his neighbour to do something he would else have omitted to do. The sacristan, less scrupulous, pushed another by brute force into the position it behoved him to assume. This boy blushed over his stupidity; that smiled in a composed, angelic way; a third looked cross for one moment, but the next, as if reminiscent of the requirements of his high calling, was as calm and self-contained as any of the corrugated old men behind him, and who might, from their faces, have been carven in stone, or dimly mindful of the time—some threescore and ten years back—when they, too, were novices in the world, and awkward agents in the ritual of services now familiar to them as the ringing of the Angelus bell.

But to recur to the dome of Saint Peter's, as a landscape tower. The ascent, at least to the roof of the great nave, is available for beasts of burden as well as human beings; inclined planes being the substitute for steps. You may not go up every day. The consequence is, that on Thursdays—when alone it is permissible

to ascend—a multitude of persons of all kinds muster at the door by Canova's tomb of the Pretender, the Young Pretender, and Cardinal York. This tomb is worth looking at for a moment—as much for the sake of the luckless Stuarts themselves, as for the sake of Canova. The Cardinal was not a very eminent personage, if we may credit contemporary estimates of him. The private agent of Joseph the Second of Austria, in his record of certain of the dignitaries of Rome, made for his master's eyes alone, styled Cardinal B., "an old woman;" Cardinal S., "a miser;" and York, "soft." But he bore a great name, and much was therefore made of him.

The roof of the nave of Saint Peter's is an admirable, easy, and spacious promenade. It has been termed a city in itself; so obtrusive are the quarters for the workmen, and the various sheds for their tools and working material. I once saw a couple of American boys play a protracted game of hockey on this arena. Elsewhere, in the corners, behind the wings of this or that gigantic image of stucco, there was tender converse between young men and young women. And above, with sublime dignity, the great dome, springing from the platform!

The famous copper ball at the summit of the church is too limited in size, and the approach is much too narrow, to admit all who wish to enter it. You tarry for your turn in a convenient waiting-room at the foot of the final staircase, vertical as the trunk of a pine. The son of a Duke may have for his neighbour in this resort of the ambitious a barefooted tatterdemalion from the Ghetto, and, on the other side, a pretty, buxom German damsel, here with her devoted husband for their wedding trip, and bound to see everything that can be seen in a week or a fortnight. But in truth it is no climb for a woman; and when the German girl sees her task, she withdraws with flaming cheeks.

As for the ball itself, you rest in it at some personal inconvenience, and peep at the world below you through the narrow slits in the copper upon which you sit and lean. If the writing on the wall may be believed, hither on the twenty-seventh of December, 1783, came Gustavus the Third of Sweden; and no doubt His Majesty's legs were tired enough when he set foot again on the pavement of the church. The view of Rome from this standpoint is great, but unpleasing. The morsels of the antique that still survive

the invasion of the speculative builders are so few and hard to discover amid the acres of chimney-pots and unbeautiful brick walls which collectively go by the name of Rome. The seven hills are all but flattened away by one's superiority of altitude. The Tiber is but a yellow brook with a brisk current running to and fro among the houses, and hardly deserving to be bridged as it is in six or seven places. But if Rome seems a little spoiled by this airy view of it, so is not the country around. How strange appear those desolate miles of undulating, treeless land between the city walls and the mountains to the east! Span by span the aqueducts stretch across this pale green wilderness. Here and there a ruined wall or a tower stands alone. Never had great city so weird and appalling a vicinity as this. Beyond, however, there is brightness in the glow of the snow on the Apennines, in the white specks on the slopes of the hills where they first spring from the Campagna—telling of the gay summer cities of Tivoli and Frascati—and in the fair purple of the hills themselves, where they do not rise to the snow line.

From Saint Peter's, let us travel with the wings of the wind to the eastern gate of the city, that by Saint John Lateran. Here you see the same tall blocks of new houses which cover the flats by the Vatican. They glisten with their unblemished white-wash; and the occupants—where tenants exist—hang canaries in cages, and their cleansed linen to dry from the balconies, which diversify the monotony of the white faces of the houses.

Saint John Lateran is hardly less venerable to the faithful Roman than Saint Peter's itself. For my part, however, I do not care for it. Just as in Goleonda a diamond that would delight a London jeweller is likely to be slighted, so here, where there is so much to love and admire, one is privileged to be capricious.

A stone's throw from Saint John's is a building with a wide portal, and the stream of people entering and leaving it seems endless. It was the same yesterday, the same this time last year, or this time two hundred and more years ago. Mark this picturesque old peasant, bronzed and groaning, and, if you please, let him be your guide. You see a staircase with a sheathing of wood on its stones, and each step, from the lowest to the highest, has its kneeling men, and women, and children upon it. The priests by the door will receive your

alms, or sell you an indulgence at a very moderate rate. He is but a poverty-stricken peasant, who, when he has made the ascent on his knees, prayed awhile before the altar at the summit, and descended with a glad and joyful heart, does not drop a coin into the treasury, and carry away a precious paper or two.

This is the Scala Santa, or staircase of Pilate's house in Jerusalem, which, it is assumed, our Lord sanctified with His own footsteps, His tears, and His blood. Saint Helena brought it from Jerusalem, with many another relic of price, and especially the wood of the true cross. Whether or not it was ever in Pilate's Palace, it has, by this time, been made sacred by the prayers and vows of millions of people.

The Lateran Museum, hard by the Lateran Church, is not as a rule put in the programme of the visitor who has but a week or two at his disposal in Rome. That is a pity. It is especially a pity if the visitor wishes to realise the historical, and even the artistic value of the catacombs of the great city. For here there are many roods of walls covered with the disinterred writings from these vaults, and such rude sculptures as in the early ages of Christianity were the sole links that seemed to bind the art of the future to that early art illustrated by the Laocœon of the Vatican, and the Venus of the Capitol.

One little, dainty treasure of a less venerable kind occurs to me when I think of this museum. It is a relic of the old masters of mosaic. The artist has inlaid a representation of the floor of a dining-room, after the feast. So truly has his hand worked, that the scrupulous housekeeper, whose master fancied such a floor to his room, would have suffered agonies daily in the sight of these fish bones, lettuce leaves, fowls' legs, bits of bread, and the like, which the artist has here wrought with such marvellous ease and such cruel indelibility. Form and colour are done to the life. As for the labour of the work, this may be imagined from the fact that seven thousand five hundred different pieces of marble have been counted in but a square palm of the mosaic.

The Lateran Museum is, however, most valuable as an appendix, as well as an incitement to a visit to the catacombs. Nothing is easier than to get into this underground artery of Rome. There are shafts in all the suburbs. You may take a taper by the church of Saint Agnes, in the

north-east, and, under guidance, get, in a moment or two, into the chilly crypts of native rock, where, among other bones and dust, and mummified bodies, they found the remains of sweet Saint Agnes. Or you may, in the south, descend to the most famous vaults of all, those of Saint Callixtus. It is reckoned that there are in all, including, no doubt, Pagan excavations as well as Christian, some twelve hundred miles of these alleys of the dead, vermiculating to and fro under the débris of the past still above the surface. The Pope has the control of this subterranean territory; and by the Vatican they are leased in sections to monasteries and churches adjacent to the different entrances.

Fifteen hundred years ago, the catacombs were already well occupied with their silent denizens. Saint Jerome, in one of his commentaries, gives us a lively idea of them in those days:

"During my boyhood," he writes, "when I was in Rome for my education, I contracted the habit of visiting, every Sunday, with certain of my companions and school-fellows, the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs, penetrating by the mouth of the open shafts—or crypts—into the depths of the earth. Here, in both sides of the walls, were an innumerable number of dead bodies, and there was such a terrifying obscurity all around, that it almost fulfilled the words of the prophet: 'The living descend into hell.'"

Nowadays, the eager tourist merely drives through the gate of the city until he comes to a board inscribed, "Entrance to the Catacombs of Saint Callixtus;" and having ascended into the vineyard, adjacent to the high road, he approaches a little shed, where he finds a monk and a small room of curios and photographs. The monk lights candles, and leads him to the shaft, into which he descends by a regular flight of steps. Then he sees precisely what Saint Jerome saw—with this exception: that the bodies which were then tranquilly sealed up, each in its narrow niche, are now for the most part gone, and an air of general ruin and desolation prevails. But they are not all gone. The early founders of Roman and other Christian churches have not entirely ransacked the depths for the bones of martyrs—as they are called, with no doubt some slight begging of the question. Nor have the Goths of one generation after another, rummaging here and everywhere

for treasure, dispossessed every corpse of its grave. Your guide bids you look into this cell and that; here and there you see a dark skull, some mouldering bones, and a thick sediment of dust like snuff. This is what is left of one of the Christians of Diocletian's reign. It is like enough he had no peace until he came hither, borne along by his friends in the watches of the night, and thus laid to rest, with prayers and songs of thanksgiving for his release from a cruel and tiresome world.

How rude and coarse are the emblems on the walls of this vast abode of the dead! Here is no pomp of inscription; no straining of the genius of the mason to signify in stone the heroic deeds done by the departed. The simple words, "In peace," are the common epitaph; or, "Here rests in peace;" or, "Here sleeps in peace." Sometimes there is a symbol over the words: either the palm-leaf, to tell of the victory won by the dead in his martyrdom; or the cypress, token of virtue and incorruptibility; or the anchor, figure of faith and salvation; a fish, to typify a man regenerate; the dove and the olive-branch, to mark hope, or purity, or as a figure of the Holy Spirit; the cup and the circular piece of bread, to symbolise the Eucharist, and so on. Thus the dead Christian went to his tomb through a picture gallery, in which his faith was fully illustrated; and the living Christians lived, and worked, and worshipped, and slept in an atmosphere which could hardly fail to constrain them to be true to the teaching of their masters, buried to the right and left of them, and to suffer and die, if need were, like their predecessors.

Come we now for a moment to a Pagan family sepulchre, a mile or so nearer the city. The proprietor of this elegant little tomb chamber lives in a house at hand, with sturdy vines around him, and some red poppies among the green vines. He is one of those untiring antiquaries who are content, the world forgetting, by the world to be forgot, and who find, in the hobby of their own election, as much pleasure as all the common pleasures of life could afford to them. He does not care vastly to see a stranger; but if you express a wish to buy some genuine relic of Rome, the guide to his Pagan sepulchre takes you into the old man's villa readily enough.

Three rooms full of antiquarian treasure. Vases of many shapes, sizes, and epochs; bronze work; statuary; coins by thousands, of all metals; bones and glass; mosaics;

inscriptions; or marbles—the old man with the long, dishevelled grey beard, has had them all unearthed in the precious little vineyard whence he draws his livelihood, and which bears his name. He shows you something else also, by which his fame is like to be perpetuated—a quarto volume of such engravings as one does not see out of Rome, and with printed commentaries upon the articles engraved. These last are all from his own collection; and he himself is the writer of the text. He is scrupulous to exact a franc from you for your visit to his sepulchre, and to abate not a jot from the price he asks you to pay for this vase or that in his villa, which takes your fancy; and he pays two or three hundred pounds that he may see his labours and treasures set before the world's eye for its appreciation. But one may praise this old gentleman unfeignedly in one particular: he is no friend to spurious antiquities. What you buy from his villa, you buy with the certitude that it is what his skill and experience assume it to be.

As for the Pagan tomb, it is not so interesting as its master. You descend to it by steep steps. The walls are honey-combed with pigeon-holes. In the centre is an isolated mass of rock, also honey-combed in like manner. The sepulchre was discovered intact. The old man himself had the pleasure of plundering it of its vases, and lacrymatories, and inscriptions. But he has left many cells unbroken. In all, perhaps, two hundred members, clients, and slaves of the family here found their repose, and consecrated their dust to the "infernal gods." There is not much of value here as epitaph material. One cannot help, however, contrasting the sentiment of the Christian tomb-writings and that of certain of the Pagan tombs. Where the Christian merely rests "in peace," the Pagan—as in the case of a certain old lady of sixty-six—sets a questionable example before the minds of those of us yet alive. The dame here referred to points this pretty moral to the passers-by: "While I was in the world, I lived to the best of my ability. My comedy is at an end. Yours will have an end. Clap your hands."

It were vain and futile to attempt to say much of an informing kind about a city like Rome in so short a paper as this. It is with the writer as with the schoolboy attracted by the plums near the exterior of the cake his fond mother has sent him. It is probable there are far finer plums inside the cake; but, for the

present, he has time only to pay his respects to those that have come uppermost.

Why, the subject of painting, or sculpture, or architectural antiquities alone can hardly be gossiped over in less space than a stout octavo volume would exact. I go to the Capitol and look, like one in a trance, at the bewitching Venus of that precious collection. From the Venus, it is but a step in the same collection to him whom Byron has termed the dying gladiator, but whom the rest of the world prefers to know as the dying Gaul. There are other masterpieces in this gallery alone; and this gallery is but one of many galleries, though confessedly second only to that of the Vatican in Rome. What profits it, my reader, to give my brief observations upon these statues, familiar as they are to all the world by models? Is the foot of the Venus too large to fit with our conceptions of true beauty? Are the shoulders of the dying Gaul too narrow to accord with our northern ideal of the strong man? What then? Beauty is an elastic word; strength is not always identical with bulk. Perhaps my reader differs from me. Hence arises argument. And thus as many articles might be written about Roman art as there are statues and paintings in Rome.

It is enough if we may pull an agreeable plum or two from the surface of the cake.

IDLE DIALS.

AMONGST the many mottoes to be met with on sun-dials, old and new, there are none more apt, and therefore none more generally adopted than the Latin line, "Horas non numero nisi serenas." It so thoroughly specifies the function and capabilities of the ingenious antique device for telling the time of day, that it would be hard to find a better. Since, however, it also directly states the plain fact, that unless the hours are serene to the extent of being sunny they cannot be numbered, it must be obvious to the meanest capacity that at least in this country the sun-dial has rather an easy, not to say an idle time of it; for we must admit that for the main part of our twenty-four hours it has to stand still doing nothing, except to look picturesque, more or less according to its design, age, and weather-stained attributes. It cannot even make a semblance of twiddling its finger

unless the sun shines, for without the sun there cannot be so much as a quivering shadow, not to speak of a steady one, cast by the gnomon upon the dial. Its single digit is incapable of doing more than point vacantly into space, with a lopsided, purposeless sort of air, quite befitting the demeanour of the indolent piece of goods it belongs to. The immoveable manner in which it persists in directing your attention to nothing, is part and parcel of the aggravating nature of the thing. What, we might ask, have we done that we should be affronted in this fashion; why should it be for ever calling on us to turn our looks towards that northern sky, when for days together, perhaps, it has presented only a brooding mass of threatening rain-clouds? The very gesture, besides being a hollow mockery, is a derisive gibe; what school-boys call "snooking," or "taking a sight," whilst the very name which the object bears, is an insult to a sensitive human being. Sun-dial forsooth!—Rain and gloom-dial would be more appropriate as a title. It is like a watch that has stopped, a time-piece out of order; and the very silence it preserves, the dumb indifference it displays, and the ostentatious fuss it seems to make about what it would do if it could, only renders more conspicuous its useless existence.

An hour-glass even will better serve man's purpose in keeping count of the hours, if he be only at hand to turn it.

Nevertheless, in spite of these tendencies to affront our understanding, and to jar on our sense of the fitness of things, the contrivance has always an attractive charm about it wherever we see it. Whether placed high up, flat on gable-end, or doing duty as medallion or escutcheon over doorway or window, it still attracts our eye; and if within reach, on lawn or terrace, we are always tempted to go up and examine it, vainly striving, it may be, on the greyest day to make out some line of shadow which will give us a hint of what the hour recorded is, if the sun would only shine. It seems to lend an air of romance and poetry, even to a commonplace garden, giving it a venerable beauty, whilst it offers a rallying-point, a trysting-place where lovers may meet, or merry parties assemble for excursion or pastime.

Without being antiquarians, or sentimental, or in the least learned in the law

of sun-dials, we are all open, in some degree, to their fascination, be the weather never so cloudy and bad, and cloudy and bad, in the sun-dial sense, we repeat, our weather too frequently is. Summer offers no security against cloudy days; and sunless summers, if not the rule, occur sufficiently often to warrant our aspersions on the generally indolent conduct of man's most primitive method of noting the flight of time. It is a sad fact that if we were to consult a tabulated register of the hours of actual sunshine with which these Isles are favoured, we should find an appalling number of summer days, not to speak of those of winter, and the intermediate seasons, when Phœbus gives us nothing but that light which distinguishes day from night. Sometimes, alas, one would imagine that his power of warming the air was a mere mythical tradition of the past, and that his heat was actually dying out altogether, as some scientists declare to be the case. Richard the Third exclaims: "Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass, that I may see my shadow as I pass." But if that wicked monarch had relied entirely on the unbroken rays of the God of Day, to get an accurate idea of his form, as cast upon the ground, he might almost have lived in happy ignorance of his deformity.

The veiled splendour of much of our midsummer weather contributes, of course, largely to that often disregarded blessing, a temperate climate. Were it not for these cloudy reservoirs of moisture which hover over the land and shield us from "the sun's perpendicular rays," they would illumine not only "the depths of the sea" too persistently to suit the fishes, but they would penetrate the very soil itself, when the days are at their longest, to such an extent, that the majority of English people would grumble more than they do at their occasional sunless summers. They protest loudly against the want of sunlight whenever it so falls out that our summers are not bright; but they literally raise a cry of despair if they get half-a-dozen consecutive days of glaring, blazing heat. In the abstract they will concur with the veriest sun-worshipper in his denunciations of cloudy skies, but practically they prefer sunless summers to sunny ones, and, on the whole, would rather have their sun-dials standing idle, than behold them too constantly in the full performance of their duties. They quote the adage, and plead that "a dripping June sets all in tune,"

and that were it not for the rain, it would not have earned the reputation of "the leafy month," and the leafy month they declare to be full of delights.

Still, it may be safely asserted that the words, a sunless summer, have an ugly ring about them, and induce in us something akin to a shiver. For, be it remembered, they imply an unnatural amount of shadow, an undue proportion of time given up to gloomy heavens, and this is not good either for the soil or for its children.

The art of weather prophecy is at present too little understood for any one to exercise it with accuracy, and, like so many things in futurity, it is luckily impossible for us to know what particular store the clerk of the weather will draw upon year by year. Nevertheless, it should be fervently hoped that no summer will be entirely sunless in the sense here implied. That the spring should be so, we may expect from experience. We make up our minds to it, and regard it accordingly. Our warm clothing yet lies handy, and if the fruit and vegetation suffer more than does humanity, there is time for its recovery. The loss of beauty in the blossom is grievous; but Nature is a compensating and generally kindly dame, who will catch up the skirts of the advancing summer, and play the part which Shakespeare assigns to Sylvia :

To bear my lady's train, lest the base earth
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,
And, of so great a favour growing proud,
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower,
And make rough winter everlasting.

Only in exceptional seasons does she abstain from this her gracious task; only on rare occasions does she give us such a sunless summer, as to "make rough winter everlasting." When, however, from an untoward meteorological accident, she carries on the havoc wrought by hail and snow in May, and lands us well into autumn, without having afforded any appreciable heat, her fickle ill-temper is to be deeply deplored! In such a case she suffers, one would think, as much as mankind, judging from the solemn frown her face puts on. It is a calamity which comes to show how entirely man is at the mercy of her inexorable decrees. When she withholds her hand, and refuses to bring forth "the kindly fruits of the earth" in due season, he, perforce, must suffer. For "out of nothing cometh nothing;" and if the soil yields no

growths, starvation is the lot of all. At such sad times—and a succession of bad harvests has proved that of late the goddess is capable of wrath—we can only bow resignedly and pray for better days. She is open in no other way to any propitiation which we can offer. By our prayers alone can we hope to change her mood; to struggle against it in anything but a manly and submissive spirit is utterly vain, and repining is mere idleness, for we are in the hands of a higher power.

The artificial ticking-off of the seasons resorted to by the almanack-makers, is a mere convenient, mercantile tabulation, never allowing us to calculate with certainty that what ought to be, will be, in the way of weather. The consolatory philosophy, therefore, is that which Richard the Third adopts—to quote the wicked King again—when he refers to the cheerless absence of the sun on the morn of Bosworth. Says he :

Tell the clock there. Give me a calendar.
Who saw the sun to-day?

Ratcliff. Not I, my lord.

King Richard. Then, he disdains to shine; for
by the book,

He should have braved the east an hour ago.
A black day will it be to somebody.

The sun will not be seen to-day,
The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.
I would these dewy tears were from the ground.
Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me
More than to Richmond? for the self-same heaven
That frowns on me, looks sadly upon him.

Yes, herein is the key, the turning-point upon which we must all rest, and a sunless summer affects us all alike; the depression is universal. Nevertheless, there is no choice but to go on hoping against hope when such times overtake the land; and, after all, we have good reason for doing so.

"As a rule," an eminent meteorologist has told us, "to all practical purposes, the heat given off by the sun is fairly constant in all summers, the difference in its heating effect being scarcely measurable." He further says: "An English summer is very far from uniform, either as to its temperature or amount of sunshine. . . . In one year the hottest period will occur almost before we have entered upon the so-called summer months, whilst in another the absolutely hottest weather may be delayed until we are fairly into autumn. Sunny days, and still, calm nights are the principal factors necessary to constitute a warm summer, for at this season of the

year, we owe almost all our warmth to the heating power of the sun's rays; and situated as England is, on the very borders of the broad Atlantic, the vapours wafted to our shores constitute an interfering cause to which all else is insignificant."

The cosmical causes, however, are not within our scope here; they must be left to the students of such lore. They must settle whether they are due to the Gulf Stream, or to the condition of that layer of air which, for some forty miles or so above us, constitutes the world's atmospheric wrapper. To us ordinary mortals it signifies little. We have to contend with and face the facts; and when these facts are represented in the form of sunless summers, and, consequently, idle sun-dials, they are deplorable, notwithstanding "apt alliteration's artful aid." For this aid can be found in many another combination with summer which will not set sense and sensation in direct opposition. The mere mention of the two words, "sunless," and "summer," in conjunction is contradictory, paradoxical, inharmonious, and decidedly unpleasant.

Our sense of the fitness of things is again outraged and accentuated by the presence of a sun-dial, and a feeling of something very like a shiver passes through us, as we have said, as the eye catches the Latin motto accompanying that helpless finger. Still, we will forgive the sun-dial, be it never so idle, for the sake of the romance and poetry clinging to it, and in that find consolation for the wet skirts clinging to our limbs; or, further, perhaps, we can associate it not unpleasantly with the dripping skies in the sense that Shakespeare uses it as a symbol for weeping eyes, and say:

Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still in cleansing them from tears.

Ah! if that vacuous gnomon would only cleanse the heavens from their tears, one would have no difficulty in overlooking its general indolence then.

SWIFT AND THE "COBBLER MILITANT."

ONE of the most curious bits of literary history is that which tells of the practical joke which Swift played on Partridge, the almanack-writer.

It was in the days of astrological and

prophetical almanacks, curious productions, full of strange forgotten follies and superstitions. They were at the height of their popularity with the vulgar, and only a few of the more sensible men of the time really despised them.

Partridge was one of the best known and most meritorious almanack-writers. He began life as a cobbler, but finding there was more money to be made by astrology, he became a "student of the celestial science." It was in 1708 that, along with the other almanacks, there appeared Isaac Bickerstaff's, Swift having borrowed the *nom de plume* from a locksmith in Long Acre. He began in the approved style by running down all the other almanack-writers, and complaining alike of their grammar and their common sense. He pointed out the inaccuracy of everybody else's predictions, and then began to make his own.

First of all he mentioned casually that Partridge would die on the twenty-ninth of March, 1708, about one p.m., of a raging fever. It was not an important fact; but still, if it turned out correct, it would serve as a proof of his accuracy in other matters. Then he detailed various other expected deceases, being careful to kill all the unpopular men, and so please the people.

This was followed up, at the end of March and beginning of April, by a revenue officer's "Letters to a Lord," in which the supposed revenue officer states: that in obedience to Lord ——'s commands, and for his own curiosity, he had enquired after Dr. Partridge's health. Partridge had always been in the habit of giving him his almanack in return for a small gratuity. He saw him accidentally eight or ten days before he died. Soon after that Partridge grew ill, was confined to his room, and to bed. Doctor Case and Mrs. Kerlews—two well-known quacks—attended him. The writer sent his servant thrice a day to enquire for him, and finally, on the twenty-ninth, called himself to see him. Partridge knew him, and when asked if Mr. Bickerstaff's prediction had made him ill, said he knew that Bickerstaff spoke by guess, and that he was a poor, ignorant fellow, bred to a mean trade, and that he knew that all pretences of foretelling by astrology were deceits. The revenue officer says he asked him why he didn't calculate his own nativity to see if Isaac Bickerstaff was right.

"Oh, sir!" said Partridge, "this is no time for jesting, but for repenting those

fooleries, as I do now from the bottom of my heart."

"Then," says the questioner, "the Observations and Predictions you printed with your own almanacks were impositions upon the people?"

"If it were otherwise," says Partridge, regretfully, "I should have the less to answer for. We have a common form for all those things. As to foretelling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who taketh it out of any old almanack as he thinketh fit. The rest was my own invention, to make my almanack sell, having a wife to maintain, for mending old shoes is a poor livelihood."

After this, the guardian of His Majesty's Revenues retired to a coffee-house, and in a little while his servant brought word that Partridge died at 7.5 p.m. So that Bickerstaff was a few hours out.

This last touch concerning Isaac's inaccuracy in detail is good, and gives a charming air of sober enquiry and reality to the whole paper.

Partridge was not long in replying to this.

He called his answer:

"Squire Bickerstaff detected;
or, the
Astrological Impostor convicted
by

John Partridge,

Student in Physic and Astrology."

Evidently feeling this an important case, and being uncertain, after recent attacks on his grammar, etc., of his own literary powers, he got Nicholas Rowe, the first man to edit Shakespeare—who, if he did this job, too, showed considerable versatility of talent and inclination—or Dr. Yalden to write it out for him. He takes high ground, and says he cannot think that he, "a Britain born, a Professional Astrologer, a man of Revolutionary Principles, an Asserter of the Liberty and Property of the people, should cry out in vain for justice against a Frenchman, a Papist, and an illiterate pretender to science."

He then proceeds to say that Isaac has foretold the deaths of "Cardinal de Noailles and myself, among other eminent and illustrious persons;" and adds: "This, I think, is sporting with Great Men and Public Spirits to the scandal of Religion. . . . The Cardinal may take what measures he pleases with him; as His Excellency is a foreigner and

a Papist, he hath no reason to rely on me for his justification."

The poor Cardinal! He was indeed deserted and ill-used. How he must have felt it!

Partridge then proceeds to detail his sufferings. He tells how Mrs. Partridge was impressed by the "Sham Prophet's" predictions. We would have thought the lady, from being so much behind the scenes, might have known better. But not so. She was anxious about her astrologer. She henpecked him and scolded him not a little. She looked on him, no doubt, as a poor, weak man, who needed looking after in more ways than one. So when he got cold in March, she grew anxious about him, and at last, on the fatal twenty-ninth, persuaded him to take a sweating medicine and go to bed between eight and nine. The picture of what happened thereafter is very vivid.

The careful wife had sent Betty, the maid-servant—possibly the same Elizabeth Ghanvill to whom he subsequently left one hundred pounds in his will—up to warm his bed. Whilst thus engaged, Betty heard a bell tolling, and being curious—it is a characteristic of the best of maid-servants—looked out of the bedroom window, and asked a passer-by for whom the knell was rung.

"Dr. Partridge, the famous almanack-maker, who died suddenly this evening," said the man.

The girl was startled and alarmed, and abruptly told him he lied. But he said that the sexton had so informed him, and if false, he was to blame for imposing on a stranger.

This was more terrifying than ever. The girl rushed swiftly down and told her mistress.

Mrs. Partridge was even more agitated, and fell into a "violent disorder"; and Partridge himself, although he could not doubt but that he lived, felt discomposed. It isn't pleasant to be told you're dead, even although you know you're not. We like to keep the skeleton as carefully secluded as possible.

In the midst of this disturbance, some one knocked at the door. Betty opened it, and a "sober, grave man" asked "If this were Dr. Partridge's?" Betty, thinking he looked like a city patient, put him in the dining-room, and went to tell her master. Recalled from the thought of his own death to the possibility of preventing that of another, Partridge pulled himself

together, and sedately stepped into the dining-room. To his surprise, he found his supposed patient on the dining-room table measuring the wall with a foot-rule. Partridge, no doubt, concluded at once that the disease was mental, and that the form of mania was new.

"Pray, sir," said the Doctor of Leyden—in some mysterious manner Partridge had become M.D.—with mild sarcasm—one cannot speak all one's mind to a patient—"not to interrupt you, have you any business with me?"

"Only, sir, to order the girl to bring me a better light, for this is but a dim one."

This was too much, and Partridge had to assert himself. "Sir, my name is Partridge."

"Oh, the Doctor's brother," said the patient, unabashed. "The staircase, I believe, and these two rooms hung in close mourning will be sufficient, and only a strip of baize round the other rooms. The Doctor must needs be rich. He had great dealings in his way for many years. If he had no family coat (of arms) you had as good use the scutcheon of the company. They are as shewish, and will look as magnificent as if he were descended from the blood Royal."

Partridge listened, bewildered. Actually the man was an undertaker! He felt "erie" all over once more. He was too depressed to be indignant, and merely asked the man "who employed him, how came he there?"

"The Company of Undertakers, and they were employed by the honest gentleman, who is to be executor to the good Doctor departed; and our rascally porter, I believe, is fallen asleep, with the black cloth and sconces, or he had been here; and he might have been tacking up by this time."

"Sir," says Partridge, "pray be advised by a friend, and make the best of your speed out of my door, for I hear my wife's voice—which, by the way, is pretty distinguishable—and in that corner of the room stands a good cudgel, which somebody has felt ere now."

But Partridge had forgotten that it is only to a husband that a wife is really terrible. The undertaker was unabashed. He retired, but with dignity, saying, "I perceive extreme grief for the loss of the Doctor disorders you a little at present, but early in the morning I'll wait on you with the necessary materials."

Poor Partridge had no peace all night. He prepared again to go to bed, but just as he was putting out the light, there was another knock, and "Ned the Sexton" came to learn if the Doctor had left any orders for a funeral sermon, and where he was to be laid, and whether the grave was to be plain or bricked.

In vain Partridge told him he still lived. The sexton, evidently a muddle-headed person, only got dazed, and said:

"Alack-a-day, sir, why it is in print, and the whole town knows you are dead. Mr. White, the joiner, is fitting screws into your coffin. He'll be here with it in an instant."

A crowd gathered to listen to the curious controversy, and various wags began to "chaff" the indignant Doctor.

"Why, 'tis strange, sir," said one, "you should make such a secret of your death to us that are your neighbours. It looks as if you had a design to defraud the church of its dues; and, let me tell you, for one who has lived so long by the heavens, it is unhandomely done."

"Hist, hist away, Doctor," cried another, "into your flannel gear as fast as you can, for here is a whole pack of dimals coming to you, with their black equipage. How indecent it will look for you to stand frightening folks at your window, when you should have been in your coffin these three hours."

Partridge went on asserting he was alive till morning, and by that time must have felt even his own firm belief in his vitality a little shaken.

He was the laugh of the whole town for months afterwards. All who knew him, teased him endlessly; those who didn't, were bewildered, and couldn't understand the dispute at all, and how no man seemed to know if the person was really dead or not.

One man asked Partridge why he hadn't paid for the coffin he was last buried in. Another man said: "Doctor, how do you think people can live by making graves for nothing? Next time you die, you may even toll the bell yourself for Ned." A third jugged him at the elbow in passing, and wondered how he had the conscience to sneak abroad without paying his funeral expenses.

"Lord, I durst have sworn that was honest Dr. Partridge, my old friend," said another; "but, poor man, he has gone the way of all flesh."

Others, after a "competent space of staring," would say:

"Look! look! Would not one think our neighbour, the almanack-maker, has crept out of his grave to take another peep at the stars in this world, and tell how much improved his fortune-telling is by having taken a journey to the other?"

Even the reader of the parish, a sober enough person, turned facetious, and sent word to him to come and be buried decently, or if interred in any other parish to produce certificates as the Act required. People persisted in calling his wife Widow Partridge; and once in a time she was cited into court to take out letters of administration. A quack successor started business just beside him, and a monument was made for him, and very nearly put up in church.

One would think this was enough; but Swift had not yet finished his joke. He next proceeded to publish an elegy on the supposed departed one. It is not poetry; there is something haphazard about the rhymes, but it is full of a certain rough humour, peculiarly Swift's own. In its original form it was a quaint and curious document. It was printed on a biggish sheet of paper, with a broad mourning-band, and a wonderful head-piece, with Death seated amidst flying skeletons, and a miscellaneous assortment of bones, hour-glasses all run down, and funeral flags finish off each side. It is called:

"An Elegy on Mr. Partridge, the Almanack-Maker, who died on the Twenty-ninth of this instant, March 1708."
And begins:

Some wits have wondered what analogy
There is 'twixt cobblery and astrology;
How Partridge made his optics rise
From a shoe-sole to reach the skies?
A list the cobblers' temples ties
To keep the hair out of their eyes.
From whence, 'tis plain, the diadem
That Princes wear, derives from them,
Adorned with golden stars and rays,
Which plainly shows the near alliance
'Twixt cobblery and the planet science.
Besides, that slow-paced sign, Boötes,
As 'tis miscalled; we know not who 'tis!
But Partridge ended all disputes—
He knew his trade—and called it Boots.

We are afraid this would not be the good Doctor of Leyden's only classical slip; but how very fatal that he should happen to go astray with that particular name! A little further on, Swift gives the origin of shoe-horns, and as to find origins is now a fashionable thing, we add our quota:

The horned moon which, heretofore,
Upon their shoes the Romans wore.

Whose wideness kept their toes from harm,
And whence we claim our shoeing horns,
Shews how the art of cobbling bears
A near resemblance to the spheres.

Swift's wit, though quick, ready, and pointed, is not always of the highest. Did he choose Partridge as a victim because he had been a cobbler, and the occupation suggested such a fruitful crop of jokes? Here are some more of his ingenuities:

A scrap of Parchment, hung by Geometry,
A great refinement in Barometry,
Can, like the stars, foretell the weather;
And what is Parchment else but leather?
Which an astrologer might use
Either for Almanacks or shoes.

Great scholars have, in Lucian, read
When Philip, King of Greece, was dead,
His soul and spirit did divide,
And each part took a different side:
One rose a star, the other fell
Beneath, and mended shoes in hell.

Triumphant star! some pity show
On cobblers militant below.

The wilful misspelling of the name—Partridge—was another artful trick of Swift's, who ever misspells Milton. The elegy winds up with a suitable epitaph for his grave:

Here, five feet deep, lies on his back
A Cobbler, Starmonger, and Quack,
Who, to the stars, in pure goodwill
Does, to his last, look upward still.
Weep, all you customers that use
His Pills, his Almanacks, or Shoes!
And you that did your fortunes seek,
Step to this grave but once a week;
The earth, which bears his body's print,
You'll find has so much virtue in't,
That I durst pawn my ears 'twill tell
Whate'er concerns you full as well,
In physic, stolen goods, or love,
As he himself could when above.

All this, of course, made matters worse than ever; Partridge became desperate. He tried hard to prove that he was still living. He got certificates of the truth of it from ministers and Quarter Sessions. He published an advertisement, inviting the "whole world to convict Bickerstaff of being a notorious impostor in science, an illiterate pretender to the stars," and stated that France and Rome were at the bottom of the "horrid conspiracy," and that "in attempting my reputation, there is a general massacre of learning designed in these realms." Evidently Partridge had no small idea of his own importance. He never dreamed of a mere man opposing him, it was France and Rome, and the whole Catholic World.

Partridge's almanack came out as usual

in 1709, though the bewildered Doctor himself was too broken-hearted to have anything to do with it. The almanack carefully certified that Partridge was alive, and soberly pointed out that Isaac Bickerstaff, being wrong in that prediction, must be wrong in all.

Then Swift published a "Vindication," in which he says that Partridge "has been so wise as to make no objection against the truth of my prediction, except in one single point, relating to himself."

A Frenchman had also written to "M. Biquerstaffe," mentioning that Cardinal de Noailles still lived; but Swift calls on Englishmen to believe him rather than "a Frenchman, a Papist, and an enemy." Then he advances arguments in favour of Partridge being really dead after all.

(1) Those who bought and read his almanack for 1708, said, "No man alive ever wrote such stuff as this."

(2) Death is defined as the separation of soul and body, and Mrs. Partridge had been saying to all her gossips lately, that "her husband had neither life nor soul in him." Oh, indiscreet Mrs. Partridge!

"Therefore," Swift concludes, "if an unfortunate Carcass walks still about, and is pleased to call itself Partridge, Mr. Bickerstaff doth not think himself answerable for that. Neither had said Carcass any right to beat the poor boy, who happened to pass by it in the street crying, 'A full and true Account of Doctor Partridge's death.'"

(3) Partridge tells fortunes, and restores stolen goods, and all say he must do it by conversing with the devil, and only a dead man can do that. And on Swift goes through a list of other similar astonishing arguments. He ends by reproving the revenue officer for accusing him of inaccuracy, and says Partridge really died within half an hour of the time he said. He professes to be much grieved at some people who have insinuated that the whole affair is a jest.

It was here that Swift dropped the joke, but the name he had made so famous in so short a time, was borrowed by Steele when he started the "Tatler" shortly after, and it is with that delightful paper that it is for ever associated. Steele himself ascribed the success of the "Tatler," partly to the use of the already well-known nom de plume.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Jean Vellecot,"
"A Faute Dameel," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LV. BY THE POOLS.

HOEL was lifted out of himself now; how could he be otherwise when he found that a mere girl was so full of courage, though weighed down with a mysterious certainty of evil that had to be atoned for? Hoel had often resisted this doctrine, which he looked upon as opposed to those unvarying laws which ruled the world; but now he found himself brought face to face with it, and the mantle of dread seemed to fall likewise over him, though even now he apologised to himself for his unusual superstition.

Apart from all this, Jesse ought to have been found before. Why should he relentlessly pursue Mr. Kestell because his own brain was clouded by an overmastering idea?

But how dared he ask any reason why, he who had cowardly run away from the problem? As if to expiate his past fault, Hoel hurried on, forgetting all his previous sufferings. He noted, as he passed along, the broken reflections on the troubled water; the grasses and flags that turned their whiter sides as they bent before the wind; the broken-off twigs and leaves that floated or gyrated on the water. Hoel noted all this because his eyes looked here and there, expecting to see Jesse leaning against some tree watching for the return of the master of Rushbrook.

But the first Pool was silent, except for the thousand voices of nature; for the splash of the moor hen as she scuttled along by the reedy margin; for the sudden darting out of her hiding-place of some bird; or the scramble of a red squirrel. To Hoel, all this was only silence, for he had as yet learnt to recognise the signs of man alone, and not those of nature.

He paused at the head of the Pool, uncertain what to do. He feared to miss what he sought for, not being sure Jesse was here. He, who knew every turn and twist, every tiny path and track, was not very likely to be walking demurely up and down the road. After a brief debate with himself, Hoel settled he would go beyond

the second Pool, as far as where the road branched off to the farm. Here he must of necessity wait, as from one or other of these roads Mr. Kestell or Jesse was sure to return home.

There was an interval before the second Pool was reached. A small stream connected the two; a bridge and a road ran in a transverse direction here, but the road only led to Court Garden.

On reaching the second Pool, Hoel was somewhat puzzled. After this, the road was not so close to the water, and there was in some parts a copse-like portion of land bordering the Pool.

All these trees added to the gathering gloom, and Hoel, again pausing to listen, felt an unusual shrinking from penetrating further down this special bit of road. Still, he had not yet reached the spot where the turn came leading to the Home Farm; and he had settled to himself to go as far as that.

He began walking slowly on again. His pulses throbbed painfully—throbbed all the more because he tried to force himself to be calm. It was merely, he said, that blow on his temples that had unnerved him—that, and all he had gone through. But the past must be forgotten. The making up of his mind about Jesse Vicary was the closing act; after that—the deluge of the commonplace, in which many a man has voluntarily drowned himself after life's fitful fever had brought down his hopes to zero.

There was a sound on his left hand—a crashing of small branches, the swish of those that bounded back to their original position, and, in another moment, Jesse Vicary—the man he was looking for—stood before him.

Now, Hoel had come here to find him, and was expecting him; but, in spite of this, he was utterly taken by surprise, and drew back a step. Jesse was taller, broader than Hoel. The old consciousness of being, in a kind of way, commanded by him asserted itself, as of old. This time, the attempt to resist the influence, because of its unsuitableness, did not accompany the feeling.

Jesse had the green background behind him, and the little light that fell aslant from above the trees scarcely served to show his expression; but the little of it Hoel noticed made him at once understand Amice's fear.

"I was lying down here, close by the water," began Jesse, as if this were quite

the most natural statement he could make, "and I saw him, I feel sure I saw him, at the upper end of the Pool. You know, Mr. Fenner, where the ground slopes to the water's edge. He never thought I should be waiting for him here; he fancied he would escape me again. But, no; now it is impossible. Come with me if you will and be a witness. You, at least, know that I have borne it all long enough in silence. But perhaps you can condone it? I do not want your presence."

He turned sharply round and strode on towards the head of the Pool, which, though visible close to the water where Jesse had been lying, was not so from this part of the road.

"Vicary, stop, stop for Heaven's sake!" cried Hoel, starting forward to try and overtake him; "you are mad, you are——"

But Joe had been right; it was impossible for Hoel, certainly in his present condition, to overtake the country-bred Jesse. He gave it up, and walked as quickly as was possible after him.

"The fellow is mad, he will insult Mr. Kestell, he will. Fool that I have been not to have taken measures sooner."

A dreadful fear seized him that Jesse, in his evidently overtaxed condition, would be tempted to lay hands on the old man; but no, surely that was impossible. At the bottom this fellow was a gentleman, he would not attack a defenceless old man. The bare idea, however, induced him to try to run, but this made his head reel. He relapsed into a quick walk, till at last he turned the bend and stood in sight of the upper portion of the Pool, for here the copse ceased, and only stony and broken ground sloped gently towards the water.

A rapid glance showed him something unexpected. The light was clearer here, no trees intercepted the dull grey sky except the hilly ground on either side; but just above the Pool, on the opposite side, the slender larch-trees were swayed by the wind, and looked like nodding plumes, whilst through the taller fir-trees swept the long, sobbing moan peculiar to these trees. Hoel saw all this as one sees the background of a striking picture. On the bank was the figure of Mr. Kestell, he was half-supporting his head on the serpent-like roots of a solitary fir-tree, and half on a grey boulder. That was all Hoel saw, until Jesse Vicary, standing within a few feet of Mr. Kestell, suddenly strode back and met Hoel.

He seized his arm.

"He is there—there; and he is ill. Come and do something for him. How can I, with—with the thoughts in my heart? Make haste!"

"He has fallen," stammered Hoel, obeying the strong grasp. "See that big boulder— Vicary, we must lift him up and carry him home."

"I—I touch him!" said Jesse, in a hoarse voice; "carry him— I wanted—"

A sudden idea flashed into Hoel's brain—a mad idea. For a few minutes he had not had Jesse in sight. In that time had he—? He shook off Jesse's hand as if it burnt him.

"Why did you not raise him up before?" he gasped out.

"I have only this moment gone near enough," said Jesse; "I have been dazed, I think, for two minutes; I could not approach. It was because— Oh, Mr. Fenner, all the words I wanted to say were burning my heart and brain, and then I saw he could not hear them. I think I lost my senses for a moment."

They were close by him now, but it was Hoel who walked up close to the prostrate man, and, kneeling down, called him by name:

"Mr. Kestell, are you much hurt?"

There was no answer.

"Vicary," said Hoel, in an angry, passionate voice, "come here! Can't you be a man, at least, and help me to lift him? I have been ill, and have very little strength left."

"I—I lift him?" said Jesse, still in a dazed voice, though he came a step nearer. "Those words are still ringing in my brain. I wanted him to give me justice, bare justice, that was all; you would have been witness."

"Fool!" muttered Hoel. "Help me to lift him, I tell you; or, better— See— didn't I tell you so—he slipped, and has cut his head; see, here is the blood on the stone. Run and dip this handkerchief in the water. Perhaps he had better lie flat till he recovers consciousness."

Jesse obeyed, and Hoel nervously undid the old man's necktie, and tried to feel the pulse of the chill left hand.

"Oh, God—Elva!" said Hoel. "But he is not alone now. We are here—that was providential. We must carry him home. He will recover from this faint in a moment."

Jesse now returned with the soaked handkerchief, and another supply in his

hat. Hoel took the handkerchief, but rejected the other.

"No, this is enough; he is very cold, but he is only in a faint, I am sure of it; I am a little bit of a doctor. His pulse is feeble, but—but—"

Hoel paused; he passed the wet kerchief gently over the forehead, across which a lock of grey hair had been blown by the wind. There was no sign of recovery. Hoel rose from his cramped position, and as he began taking off his coat he faced Jesse, who stood by, horror-struck and pale, still holding his hat, through which the water slowly permeated.

"Look here, Vicary, we must do something. If he hit himself severely, the injury may be greater than we think. I know this man is—your enemy, but what is the use of your religion if it does not make you forgive?"

"I can forgive my enemy," said Jesse, "but not my—"

Hoel interrupted him.

"This is no time for explanation; it is a case, or it may be a case, of life and death. Mr. Kestell has injured you, Jesse, deeply injured you; but, I swear it, not as you think—far worse. Still, I thought Christianity—"

"Far worse—how?" said Jesse, hoarsely. "Tell me, what can be worse?"

Hoel had made a pillow of his coat, and laid it very gently under Mr. Kestell's head as he answered, looking round to see they were alone:

"I tell you this is not the time for the truth. I was waiting about Rushbrook to tell you, but you have no pity; you will— what matters now, who will listen to you? Mr. Kestell defrauded you when you were children."

"Of what?" Jesse, pale as the pale form lying before him, sank down on his knees. "Mr. Fenner, for pity's sake tell me the truth—of what, of our rights to carry his—"

"Nonsense; of what could have made you independent of every one—of your money, and your father's name."

"My father's name! It was surely—yes, why should I not say it, even here, though he is unconscious? my father's name was Kestell of Greystone."

"Jesse, you are going mad, my poor fellow—quick, take his hand and warm it—leave this explanation, leave it all till afterwards. But, if you will have it, then, it was no such thing; your father's name was John Pellow, my cousin—"

"And my mother?"

"Was his wife—but it was all the same as far as poor John went; had he lived he would have owned you, even if—I—but I—it was all right. Gently, is it getting warm? Forgive him, Jesse; think of his wife and children, and how he loved them."

Jesse was indeed warming the cold, white hand in his; nay, more, he bowed himself now over it and suddenly sobbed like a child.

"Mr. Fenner, why did he not tell me this? Was it only that—of my money, money, only that—he might have had it all—all. I would have given him every penny to have been spared these months, and these thoughts. Tell me, is this my punishment—is this an accident? Am I—merciful Heaven spare me—am I his murderer?"

"Hush, hush, Jesse, be a man, we must act now," said Hoel, deeply moved, but horrified at the last sentence; he knew it echoed a faint thought in his own mind, a thought he resolved should never be disclosed to any one; "and look here, if you forgive, go further—spare those he loved; say nothing."

"If I forgive!" said poor Jesse. "Tell me what to do; he must live to forgive me. I accused him of this base thing. Ay, he did love his wife, I know it; but I was mad. See, if you are weak, I have strength enough left, I will carry him home single-handed."

He tried to put his arm under the white head without disturbing him too much.

"Wait! I remember now, idiot that I am! I had forgotten I have a flask of brandy; so, put your arm under his head whilst I pour down a few drops."

Once more Hoel stood up, and it was now Jesse who made his arm the resting-place of that venerable-looking head, whilst the former undid his flask and poured some of the brandy into the silver cup. As he did so he trod on something which nearly caused him to trip. He looked down instinctively, then quickly stooped and picked up something which he slipped in his pocket.

It was done so quickly that even Jesse did not notice it. He was looking at Mr. Kestell's face.

"Have I lifted him enough? Do give it to him slowly, Mr. Fenner. He is getting very cold. I will put my coat over him directly you have given him the brandy. Say there is hope."

Jesse was pleading like a child for the verdict.

Hoel did not answer. He hastily poured the brandy down, and, to his relief, Mr. Kestell opened his eyes, and seemed to rouse himself from the state of coma he had appeared to be sinking into. His eyes at once rested upon Jesse, who was still chafing the clammy, cold hand, and he was certainly able to recognise him, for a look of intense pain passed over his face, and he tried to speak.

"Forgive me, forgive me," cried Jesse. "I have wronged you deeply; if you were afraid of what I might think about that other thing—that money—you were mistaken. Whatever it was, Mr. Kestell, it is yours, yours, never mention it again, only you must live; think of those who love you. Can you hear me, sir, can you understand?"

"Hush, Jesse, we must do something at once," said Hoel, in a strained voice. "We must take Mr. Kestell home."

Mr. Kestell could evidently understand, for a strange, surprised expression came over his face; he feebly raised his right hand and tried to find something in his pocket.

"He wants to find something," said Jesse. "Mr. Fenner, help him."

Hoel did so. His pocket contained two letters, one directed to J. Vicary, and the other, a blue envelope, on which was written "My last Will. To be given to J. Vicary."

Mr. Kestell fixed his eyes on Jesse.

"Is he to have this letter—and this?" asked Hoel.

The old man's face expressed unutterable relief, his lips moved. Jesse bent down towards him and listened.

"Forgive," the word was more framed than uttered; then another effort, his strength seemed to be sinking, "Restitution—"

Before the words was finished the eyes closed, and he was seized with a slight convulsion, which contracted the lower limbs.

"Jesse, quick, we must not lose another moment. We must carry him home. We must summon medical aid at once. It is not far, there may yet be time to save him."

"To save him?" said Jesse, bewildered.

They lifted him between them, and happily Jesse's superior height and strength now told, for Hoel, unaided, could never

have carried Mr. Kestell, even this short distance.

The grey clouds seemed closer to the earth now, for the evening had drawn in before its time. The gusts of wind swept up the valley more frequently; and, as he was borne along, the grey hair of the sick man was now and then blown hither and thither.

"If only we can get in unobserved," murmured Hoel, thinking of Amice on the watch for him; "it will be a terrible shock for his family to see him brought home in this state."

As it happened, when they reached Rushbrook, no one was about; the house looked desolate, forsaken, as, passing over the bridge, they entered the drive. No Amice was on the steps, no servants even about in the hall.

"It is best so," said Hoel. "This way, Jesse; come and lay him in the drawing-room, whilst I run and tell Jones."

They laid him gently down on the sofa, and then Hoel went off to send a man on horseback to Greystone, for Doctor Pink, and another to the Vicarsage, in case he might be there; and Jesse was left alone with Mr. Kestell. He did all he could think of to restore animation, but nothing availed, and at last he started again to his feet to see if he could find any restorative near at hand, when a side door gently opened, and Amice's voice rang out clearly and terribly.

"Papa, papa!" This time it was no vision, her father lay there with one hand hanging down, and with ashy face and closed eyes. Almost at the same moment Jones and some more terrified servants

ran in, followed by Hoel. This latter went up to her at once.

"Amice, this is no place for you. Go to your mother and tell her he is ill; Mr. Pink has been sent for."

"It has come at last," she said; "what can we do?"

He led her away, and returned to the sofa. In his agony of remorse, which was all the more terrible because it was now silent, Jesse, kneeling on the floor, was holding the master of Rushbrook House in his arms.

When Hoel came up, he noticed a great change; then came another convulsion, that shook the whole frame as if it were a wind-moved autumn leaf before its final separation from the parent stem.

Then Hoel knelt down, too, and listened; he felt the pulse, fetched a small ornamental mirror from the table—on which Elva had once painted a piece of yew with its red berries—and held it to Mr. Kestell's lips. No blurr of slightest breath dimmed the bright surface. Hoel knew it was all over.

"The effect was terribly swift, but painless," he said to himself. "It is over; the truth cannot help any one now. If Pink does not find it out, it shall remain a secret. Man's judgement, even on himself, is less merciful than God's. If he had only waited, and told Jesse the truth; if—and now—Poor Elva, my poor darling. Am I—even I, guiltless of this!"

The door opened, and Mr. Pink entered. He took immediate steps to restore animation.

"In suspended action of the heart," he said, "even when life appears extinct, hope must not be given up."

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